



JUDE - WEEK 1

LIE #1 - "BECAUSE WE'RE
UNDER GRACE GOD DOES NOT
DEMAND OBEDIENCE."

The greek word *hairesis* means "a self-chosen opinion." It's where we get our word heresy, which means to leave the straight line. Orthodoxy means "straight line" or "straight thinking." So, in one sense we are a culture of heretics, because some of the most common things you hear today are things along the lines of, "Well, I think... or I feel... or here's what true for me." We hear self-chosen opinions, based upon the authority of self-alone.

Now, when it comes to the Christian faith some say the same false teachings are continually repackaged through the centuries, because Satan (the father of lies) cannot create new things. He can only distort true things.

This is why the church created creeds, which are summaries of core Christian teachings. The things that matter most.

- Statements of faith
- When it comes to heresy, what matters most is... baseball.

There are two types of lies that we are concerned about — lies about the nature of reality and life. We could classify these as worldview lies in which we analyze life through a faulty lens.

Then there are lies within the church. Though worldview lies often creep into the church and so there is crossover at times. However, the lies that concern us in this series are the lies that come from false teachers within the church. From those who have left the straight line of historic Christian teaching.

John Piper once said, “The greatest enemies of Christian truth are professing Christians who do not hold to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.”

Then he gave the example of the Catholic Queen of England, Queen Mary, also known as Bloody Mary, because she had 288 Protestant Reformers burned at the stake. Pipe said, “Bloody Mary was a professing Christian not a barbarian.” Now, she had so many Christians killed because she strayed from the straight line of what the Bible itself teaches about the gospel.

The New Testament writers were all contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, as Jude terms it. They were fighting for truth by exposing lies about God, the nature of salvation, the Christian life itself.

Nearly every single letter of the New Testament, except Philemon, either explicitly deals with false teaching or touches upon false teaching in some way. This is something the church has always been dealing with, has always been doing — guarding the truth, contending for the faith for the simple old-fashioned reason that people’s souls are at stake.

Contending for the faith. This is where Christian lingo has some nuances. One way the Bible uses the word faith is in regard to trusting in Jesus as in putting your faith in Christ. The other way the Bible uses the term faith is in reference to the truths we teach about Jesus. The truths we teach about the gospel are known as “the faith.”

It is extremely unpopular to deal with false teaching, primarily because false teaching is so prevalent today. Many of us are being influenced by it, so when a particular false teaching is brought up, the correction stings all the more.

The short letter of Jude is distinguishable because whereas other letters deal with false teaching, Jude not only focuses on the false teaching but the severe consequences that will befall the false teachers themselves.

Each week, we’re going to examine one or two lies that come from these false teachers, taking straight from what Jude is dealing with.

Again, Satan doesn’t tell lies that have nothing to do with the truth. He tells lies

based upon biblical truth. When it comes to false teaching his lies are just a perversion of what the Bible teaches.

The first lie can be stated this way: “**BECAUSE WE’RE UNDER GRACE GOD DOES NOT DEMAND OUR OBEDIENCE.**”

Now, as we dive into the first four verses of Jude, that’s the lie we’ll be unmasking this Sunday. But first...

1. Who is Jude?

Jude

Greeting

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

Matthew 13:55

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

Jude

To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

You are called. God is calling you. Have you responded? Everyone is now being called by God to believe in Christ.

Acts 17:30

30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

All people everywhere. Even this very clear biblical truth that God calls everyone to repentance and faith in Christ presented in the New Testament is being questioned today by evangelical Christians, one who has a best selling book out right now.

You are called, you are beloved and you are kept. Have you responded to God's call to faith in Christ? Then you are beloved. And because you are beloved He will keep you and never let you go.

Those facts should lead to:

2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Judgment on False Teachers

3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

2. What does “once for all delivered” mean?

It simply means that the gospel truth about salvation has been delivered in full and nothing needs to be added to it.

So, when someone comes along and adds to it we know for certain they are false teachers. We have the faith (the message) that was once for all delivered to the saints right here in these pages. We have the historical record of what the early church taught about Jesus Christ.

John Piper added this: “Here we are 2,000 years after the faith was first delivered to the church, and we are surrounded with hundreds of people and sects and cults who claim to have a new word of revelation that now completes God's word to mankind. Mohammed offered his Koran. Joseph Smith his Book of Mormon. Sun Moon his Divine Principle. And you meet people every day who consider every contemporary intellectual trend as a suitable replacement for the Bible.”

3. What is the faith for which we are contending?

Acts 2:42

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

3. What happens when we don't contend?

Jude

4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now, when it says they deny Him it doesn't mean they come right out and say, "Jesus isn't Lord." They just don't do what He teaches, so in that sense they deny Him. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." Well, they don't. To disobey Jesus is to deny Him.

The first thing we're going to notice about lies within the church is that lies always justify sin. The grace of God is perverted, so that sin abounds — "who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality."

But the lies are never stated so blatantly as, "We're free to sin." Instead the language is whitewashed and stated as, "Christians are free to fail."

Now, in one sense, this is absolutely true. We are free to fail. We can try a new program or a strategy for outreach or a new method of doing small groups and fail. But attempting something for the sake of the gospel and failing isn't a sin in and of itself is it? The same way that failing at a business venture is not a sin. It's human.

No matter what we believe, we all have trying and failing at something in common. Maybe you trained for a half-marathon, but on the day you ran it you failed to complete it. That's a failure, but not a sin. So, in that sense, it's true that Christians are free to fail.

But many times this statement is given in a context that implies moral failure. This

changes its meaning. It implies we are free to sin. We are not free to sin.

Are you saying we have to be perfect? Well, let's get technical. If you want to get into heaven, you're going to need a perfect record of holiness. "I don't have that. No one does."

True and untrue. None of us have a perfect record of holiness, but Jesus Christ does. As part of the gospel, He gives you His perfect record of holiness and God counts it as your own. Now, even many false teachers in the church will say that much.

But are you free to go on sinning? The Bible doesn't teach that. It teaches that you are given the record of Christ's holiness, but you are also given the Holy Spirit who then begins to move you in actual life toward the holiness that has been given to you by Christ. So, you actually possess actual holiness.

It is true that you are positionally holy. But the Holy Spirit is working out actual holiness in your condition. But this gives us nothing to brag about because it is worked out by faith, by trusting Him to work in us and through us

on a daily basis, which happens through relationship.

There are subtleties to the lies we're told in church. "I'm not perfect, I'm forgiven." This sounds right, but the emphases is all wrong. "I'm not perfect, but I'm striving after holiness." Why didn't that phrase catch on? Because we tend to justify our sin.

This reality that Jesus gives you the record of His holiness is called imputation. But imputation leads to application and application lead to holiness. Because you are free in Christ you can pursue the things of Christ.

But when we want to feel free in Christ, but pursue the things of the world, that is a lie.

Now, when I say "pursue the things of the world", what I mean by that is the things we strive for, the things that take up most of our time, talent and treasure, (often good things like family and careers) — either completely replace or seriously hinder our devotion to the Lord. These things are treated as an end in themselves. They are not pursued in light of advancing God's kingdom and the cause of Christ.

This mindset on just the things of this world is a plague within the church today. But here's what is most frightening. The Apostle Paul writes a pastor by the name of Timothy and describes to him what the church will look like in the end times (which we are in right now, by the way). Paul is not talking about the world here, meaning the general population. He's talking about the church. Those who claim to believe. Listen to this description:

2 Timothy 3:1-5

3 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

- Here's how we know Paul is referring to professing Christians here...

The point is, when they have this character it stems from false teaching. This is why false teaching is so insidious. One, it smears the

name of Christ by having people without holiness claiming to be His.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

This is what it means to pervert the grace of God. It's to turn grace into a reason to disobey. "I'm not under law, I'm under grace," suddenly becomes a slogan to justify our reason for denying the Lordship of Christ.

This is an ancient heresy and it is a modern heresy. In more recent times, this was known as the Lordship debate, meaning there was (and still is) a group of Christians who claim that you can know Christ as Savior, but not know Him as Lord.

According to this teaching, Christ will save you even if you don't obey Him. Some call this the carnal Christian. It's really an argument that you can be saved and go on sinning.

Now, I hope I've made it clear that obedience does not lead to salvation, but salvation leads to obedience. Because there are two components of the gospel, one Christ saves you from the penalty of your sins. Two, Christ sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and He saves us from the power of sin in our actual lives. That's the process of actually becoming obedient from the heart because we have new hearts. We don't have to, but we want to.

False teaching always weakens the witness of the Church, because generally false teaching justifies sin. And whenever sin in the church is justified we begin to suppress other truths of Scripture.

In the middle 1600s there arose a school of thought called pietism. The pietists basically said, "We're focused too much on doctrine and not enough on experience." By the next generation experience superseded doctrine. That was the seedbed for the theological liberalism of the 1800's. Theological liberalism then said, "It doesn't really matter if this is literally true. What matters is if it is true for you."

So, we end where we began with self-chosen opinion.

Because we're under grace we want to obey God.

Because we're under grace we are now empowered to obey God.

Because we're under grace we can obey God.

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;

he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit
and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius
Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to
the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the
Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.
And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is
worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and
apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness
of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the
dead,

and to life in the world to come. Amen.