

Religion That Ruins — Delivery Transcript

Jude 1:11 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, August 10, 2025 · *The Contender*

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Well what a special time of worship. Special thanks to the team for leading us in worship. There's nothing better than the presence of the Lord as we sing to one another. Encouraging one another, building one another up. So thankful for our team putting in the hours that they put in and the thought and the prayer that goes into making a worship service what it is. If you have a Bible, we're going to be in the book of Jude this morning. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you.

And if you don't know where the book of Jude is, you want to go to the very last book of the Bible and turn back one book. It's the second to last book of the Bible. It's very short, one chapter long, easy to overlook, and a lot of people do because it's got some interesting things in there that people don't preachers don't often talk about but it's summertime at Broadview, so we're talking about the crazy stuff. No sh no we're not scared. So Jude chapter one, we're going to be in verse 11 this morning.

And as you're turning there, I was thinking this week when I was in Ecuador about the good news that I wanted to share that is going on in America. And the thing that came to my mind is that in 2004, when I graduated high school, America identified Americans identified themselves with the Christian religion at a rate of 80%. 80% of people identified themselves as Christians, of some sort or another, Catholic, Protestant, all across the board, but Christian. Since that time, after I graduated, over the next 10 or so years, that number decreased from 80% all the way down to 60%, some say even sub-60%.

And simultaneous to that decrease in the Christian religion came the rise of what sociologists call the nuns. And when I say nuns, I don't mean Catholic old Catholic ladies. I mean nuns as an N-O-N-E-S. And what that stands for is people who might or might not believe in God. They're not atheists. They wouldn't claim atheism, but they don't claim any religious affiliation whatsoever. And at first people kind of poo-pooed this and say, well, that's just because people don't want to identify with an institution, but they're still believers. They still love Jesus But I watched as during my college years our country or our culture drifted more and more further and further away from a what I would call a Christian worldview and Christian culture and Christianity became increasingly marginalized with each passing year and I also began to wonder as many were claiming Christianity may be on the decline in our culture.

We may find ourselves twenty years from now, a decade from now, in a distinctively post-Christian culture. You say, how's that good news? Well the good news is over the last three to four years, you

might say really since COVID-19 and 2020, not only has that decline stopped, and not only has the rise of the nuns stopped. There are actually signs of reversal among key demographics. And the most exciting thing for me is that the demographic that is most inclined to re-identify with the historic Christian faith are young men. Young men are once again seeking after truth, seeking to identify themselves with some kind of historically rooted Christian religion.

And I think if you're honest, you can see it in our culture today. You see things like the Asbury Revival. With the largest conferences ever in college to age students. Even in our own church, we see our student ministry and young people in general, college and older. I'd say the millennials and below, there is an awakened appetite for the things of God, and it's a glorious thing to see. And I think the reason why some of that is happening is because of the failure of secularism. Secularism, of course, is this idea that you should and can and should remove God from the public sphere.

Take God out of politics, take God out of the culture, take God out of arts, entertainments, economics, just remove God, you know, put God in your Sunday box. Do your God thing on your Sunday morning, but don't bring him into the real world. And a lot of us were brought up with that kind of assumption and mentality. The problem with that is secularism doesn't work. You can't really remove God from the public sphere because people, human beings, are innately religious. It's as someone said, it's not a matter of whether you worship God or not, but rather what God you choose to worship.

And I think there's a lot of truth to that. We were born with this God-shaped hole in our hearts. And even though there were a rise of quote-unquote nuns, and even though the nuns did not identify themselves with any kind of historic religion in the past. They were religious nonetheless. I think they just absorbed the religion of our culture, which I would describe as a pluralistic secular humanism. Carl Trueman has called it an expressive individualism where the self is supreme. It's a religion in that it has a God, it has a devil, it has a heaven, it has a hell, it has deliverance, it has salvation, it has ways to get from A to Z, and they are just different from the Christian religion.

And so everybody's religious. It's just a matter of what religion you choose. And I think we could all agree that there's all kinds of different religions, but we would also hopefully all agree that all not all religions are equally good. Not all religions are equally true. There's a lot of efforts these days to say, well, you know, Christianity and Judaism and Islam, they all have very similar ethical prescriptions and You know, we all believe in some kind of a God, and so why don't we just all get along and we all believe the same thing and they try to focus on the similarities?

The problem with that from my perspective is the most important things about a religion are not what they share in common, but where they differ. Because they have different answers to the most important questions. What is man? What went wrong? How do we fix it? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? How do you get there? On these questions, the religions of the world differ greatly, and those are the questions that matter most to people. And so it's incumbent upon us. To distinguish good religion from bad religion. In other words, it's not enough to be religious.

Your religion is irrelevant if you're wrong about the truth. Can we agree on that? And so I think the book of Jude is really helpful for us on this question because it helps us to distinguish the true from the false, the good from the bad. Because Jude had a motive or a goal to address a false religion that was gaining traction in a local Christian church. If you don't know anything about the book of Jude, it was written by a Jewish man. He was the half-brother of Jesus. Different dad, of course, same mom.

And he only one of those in the world. He was writing to Jewish converts to the Christian faith. Okay, they were former Jews, they'd become Christians, and culturally it's around sixty-four-sixty-three A. D. And the Roman Empire was putting its boot on the throat of Christians and Jews. It was ruthless persecution. The days of Nero, of course, he's famous for playing the fiddle while Rome burned, and he blamed the Christians for the fire. People were hated. Jews and Christians were hated. And as a result of that hostility, there was a group of people called the Zealots.

There was a Jewish group. But they were a political movement that began to gain traction because of the hostility of Rome against Christians and Jews. They were beginning to mobilize Jews and Christians to say, we need to murder Caesar, we need to overthrow Rome, we need to engage in political violence so that the Messiah can come back. We got to take it into our own hands, in other words. And that was a different gospel. That was not the gospel that Jesus was preaching. Jesus preached a gospel of love and mercy.

He preached a gospel that would advance through persuasion and preaching, not through political force or violence. And yet there were people in that church that Jude was riding to who were becoming persuaded by these apostates, by these false leaders and teachers who were claiming spirituality. They were claiming religion. Even sounded like the religion that was a Christian religion, but it was a far cry from it. And Jude says, I've got to address this. I'd like to preach a feel-good sermon, but I've got to address these people. And he does.

He calls them godless. He calls them delusional. He calls them dreamers. He says they're twisting the grace of God, they're rejecting the authority of Jesus, and he does all of this by appealing to the Old Testament. There's so many illusions in the book of Jude, even though it's super tiny. I likened it to one of those sponges you get from Amazon where you peel off the plastic and it just you know pops open and keeps on growing as you add water to it. And so we've been looking at that over the last couple of weeks.

We've we've seen the Old Testament stories that illustrate the rebellious attitude of these apostates. We've seen their characteristics last week, and he always uses triads. He says. In sets of three, he describes them. This week's text is the last three of a triad of threes, and it's in chapter one, verse eleven. Chapter 1, verse 11. So with that in mind, let's read Jude. Let's pick it up in chapter 1, verse 10. Just so we have a little context, these of course, he's just talked about how they rely on their dreams, they defile the flesh, they reject authority, they slander the angels.

And then he says in verse 10, these people blaspheme anything they do not understand. And then what they do understand by instinct, like irrational animals, by these things they are destroyed. In the text

we're focused on this morning, verse 11, woe to them. Woe to them, why? Because they have gone the way of Cain. They have plunged into Balaam's error for profit, and they have perished in Korah's rebellion. Now I was looking at my Bible, so I couldn't see the looks on everybody's faces, but how many of you saw and heard those three names and went, hmm?

I think I got the first one. I don't know about the other two. And that's understandable if you don't read the Old Testament very often or if you've never read the Bible through, that's okay. But Jude is throwing their names out as if his audience was extremely familiar, and I think one of the things that hinders us from taking the book of Jude at face value is because of our unfamiliarity with the Old Testament. And so we're going to look at their stories this morning, but before we look at their stories, I want you to notice what he does, before he mentions those three people, he pronounces a woe.

And the word woe is not like Disappointed, shaking his head. Oh, I just can't believe these people. This is a woe that theologically would convey condemnation. A curse. We might use the D word. You know what I mean by the D word that I can't say on stage? Dang you. Would you be the that word. That is a good usage of this word. This is what Jesus used. I'm not saying Jesus cursed, by the way, but this is the word that Jesus used in Matthew 23 of the Pharisees and the religious leaders because they had a re appearance of religion, but their hearts were corrupted.

That's what he's saying. These people look religious on the outside. They claim to have some kind of relationship with God, but they are cursed. They are doomed to judgment. And that alone, I think, is a helpful reminder for us as we think about religion that what you believe about God really does matter. Today people treat religion and your spiritual beliefs as it's take it or leave it. We really are in a secular culture. It's if you want to, you want you know you can. If you don't want to, it's you know it's just kind of an auxiliary.

It's an accessory, not a necessity. And it's so far removed from what the New Testament presents as a healthy Christian spiritual walk. What you believe about God is the most important thing about you. That's what A. W. Tozer said in his classic book, the Knowledge of the Holy. What comes into your mind when you think about God, that is the most important thing about you. And so we have to learn to distinguish good religion from bad religion, and Jude is saying these three people are the prototype for what bad religion looks like.

And you need to separate yourself from them. What you believe about God really matters, and your religion is irrelevant if it's wrong about the truth. So who are these people? Well that's what I want us to do this morning. I'll give you the notes up front so you don't worry about writing them down. Cain gives you the root these are all three roots of bad religion. Three roots of bad religion. The first one is Cain, which is religion characterized by empty ritual. It's religion characterized by empty ritual. The second character is Balaam, and I would say Balaam's religion is characterized by a desire for earthly riches.

And then the last one is Korah, and I would say his religious root, the toxic root of his religion, was a desire for inflated reputation. Inflated reputation. So ritual riches and reputation. Now first one's Cain.

Most people understand Cain. They remember Cain. He's in the Bible. He's in the big book. Book of Genesis. Early on, chapter four. Cain killed Abel. Cain, of course, was the firstborn child of Adam and Eve. He had a brother named Abel. They both had jobs. Cain was a farmer, Abel was a rancher. Even though they had different jobs, they both had a responsibility to offer sacrifices to the Lord.

I think that began as soon as the Garden of Eden and God had to make clothing for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness. From that point forward, they were offering sacrifices in faith, resting in God's provision, surrendering their self to the mercy of the Lord. And so Cain and Abel were supposed to do that. And Cain and Abel offer a sacrifice. Cain offers some of the produce of his field, but Abel offers the firstborn of his flock. Some of the firstborn of his flock and the choice pieces of fat.

In other words, Abel offers his very best, first and best to the Lord. And what happens is God looks at Abel's offering and he accepts it. He looks favorably upon it. But on the offering of Cain he does not respect, he does not accept Cain's offering, but looks disfavorably upon it, and Cain gets angry. He gets upset. It says his face fell, he became despondent. And he became angry and resentful at the Lord, at his brother. And the Lord comes alongside of Cain and counsels with him. He says, Cain, I see that look on your face.

You better be careful. Don't don't don't don't entertain that demon in your heart. Sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is for you resist it, but Cain does not heed God's counsel. Cain invites his brother out to I don't know what they did, doesn't say hunting, playing. Slip and slide. And murders his brother. And then covers it up and lies about it when the Lord asks him. What have you done? I think I've got this on the screen, chapter four, verses eight. Cain did his offer. Cain said to his brother Abel, let's go out into the field.

And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. And then the Lord said to Cain, Where's your brother, Abel? And Cain lies. He says, I don't know. Am I my brother's guardian? Or am I my brother's keeper? Some translations will say. And he said, what have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. And as a result of Cain's action, God curses Cain. Really three judgments. He's cursed by the Lord. He's alienated from the ground that he works with, and he is marked with a mark and he becomes a wanderer on the earth for the rest of his days.

And really from that point on Cain goes from bad to worse. If you read the rest of the book of Genesis chapter four not only does he become very godless and wicked in his heart, he begins to corrupt all the people around him. You see Lamech, who is his offspring. Has seven times the anger and vengeance and rage that Cain did, and so he is a poison pill that is godless in his orientation. If you want a idea of what the religion of Cain looks like, I would say it is empty ritual centered on the self.

It's all about him. It's not about the Lord. I'll do the sacrifice so God will give me what I want. And if God doesn't give me what I want, then I don't want anything to do with God. And if God gives him something that I think I deserve, then I don't want anything to do with God, and I don't like that person, and I'm going to allow that resentment to build up in me until the point that I destroy them. That's what empty ritual produces, and it does the same thing today.

There's a lot of people whose orientation towards God is, God, I love you if you'll do for me. I'll go to church, but you got to give me a nice car. I'll I'll You know, I'll tithe, but you got to give me twenty percent more on my money. You know. I'll do if you do. I'll do if you do. And it's e it's really insidious. You I'm kind of giving gross examples, but it's even implied. And sometimes when you get upset with the Lord and you're like, man, Lord, why are you allowing this to happen?

Why why this and why that? And implicitly what you're thinking is, God, you owe me. You shouldn't have done this. I don't deserve this. And that's what Cain is like. That is the empty ritual. You're not giving God what God deserves because he's God. You're giving God what he asked for so that you could be God. So he'll treat you like your God. And that is why God looked disfavorably upon Cain and favorably upon Abel. It's in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 4. By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain.

Why? Because he had faith. By faith he was approved. God approved why? Because he had faith. Abel had no faith. In other words, Abel was giving his sacrifice for what God would do for him, not because of what God had already done for him in making provision for his sin. Fundamental difference. And Judah is saying, avoid people like that and avoid any kind of religion in which you orient yourself towards God, not because he is the ultimate worthy end in himself, but because if you can use God, he'll help you get a better other end.

Using God as a means to an end instead of a good in himself, that is the way of Cain. Ritual without relationship. Self-centered sacrifice is what I would call it. And self-centered sacrifice leads to resentment. If you are sacrificing for God so that he will do for you as soon as he doesn't or as soon as he doesn't do it in the way you think he should, you will become resentful. And when you become resentful, your life will be like Cain's. And he is he is not a good hombre He is a liken to the devil.

He's like his father, the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning. That's how the rest of the New Testament talks about Cain. And so avoid the way of Cain. Secondly, avoid the way of Balaam. Who's Balaam? Well, Balaam, but if you do know anything about Balaam, what do you remember about Balaam? Mm-hmm. That's right, talkie talking donkey. If I was quoting the king James Version, that'd be two curse words in the sermon today, but I'm not going to do that. He had a talking donkey I wowed into me. I got this ridiculous.

You leave the country for 10 days and you come back and you got kind of crazy. Jude is not focused on the donkey. Okay, he's focused on what happens before the donkey and what happens after the donkey. What happens before the donkey is that there's another guy named Balak, not Balaam, Balak. Balak is the king of Moab, and he gets word that Israel is making their way towards him, and Israel had been taken names. They've been crushing people. They'd already defeated the Canaanites and they'd already defeated the Amorites and they'd already taken the land of the king of Dropping the name of Bashan.

There it is. They defeated the king of Bashan. And Balak says, okay, I'm next. Let's deploy some preventative measures. So to do the preventative measure, he hires the world's best diviner, at least in

that area, and he was a guy named Balaam. He was not a Jewish person from what we can tell, but he believed in Yahweh. He worshipped Yahweh, the God of the Creator God. And so he says, let's hire this guy. And we'll hire him to curse the people of Israel so that when they try to invade us, they'll fail.

So he sends dignitaries and the promise of a lot of money to Balaam and says, if you'll come and curse Israel, I'll give you all of this money. And I'll make you a very important person. And Balaam, to his credit, says no. And so they go back, they tell Balak, he don't want to come. And Balaam, Balak says, undeterred by Balaam's response, well let's send even more important people and even more money. I'll give you anything you want, land, money, houses, women, any amount, anything, any privilege, if you'll just come and curse Israel.

And Balaam, again to his credit, says, no. But then he goes to bed and he starts thinking that's a lot of money and what could I do with that money? And I don't know if he bargained with God, but we are told in number 16 or number 22, wherever it is, I think it's numbers 22 God permits Balaam to go and work for Balak, but he says, You can only go if you'll do only what I say. Speak nothing more and nothing less than what I tell you to speak. And so Balaam's like, good deal, I can do it.

So he goes with them and while it appears as though Balaam is on the up and up, we get this information that the Lord begins to resist Balaam on his journey. That's the part about the donkey. The angel of the Lord stands in front of the donkey and the donkey's like, er, Jesus, and he goes the other way. And then Balaam's like, you stupid donkey, and he's beating the donkey and the donkey's like, why are you beating me? And Balaam's like, why are you talking? And they have this inner inter exchange and then the Lord says he's talking because I'm trying to get you get your mind right.

Your mind's all wrong. And he rebukes Balaam and says, listen, you can go, but only speak what I tell you. Nothing more, nothing less. And Balaam says, okay, fine. And he goes. And ironically, that's exactly what he does. He gets up there, he tells Balak, seven altars, he makes a sacrifice to Yahweh. Israel comes into the valley and he says bless Israel. And Balach says, no, no, no, no. I want you to curse, curse Israel. And Balaam says, let's try again. Bless Israel. And he blesses them again. And Balak probably a little more agitated.

No, listen, curse, not bless, curse, not blessed. I want them not to beat me, but for me to beat them. And so Balaam is like, I can only say what the Lord wants me to say. Let's give it one more time. Bless Israel. And not only bless Israel, but curse you and curse all of Israel's enemies. And it's a really epic couple of chapters in numbers 17, 18, numbers 23 and 24. And finally Balaam goes home and Balak goes home and it looks on the surface as though Balaam is a solid, like he did everything right.

But then when you get to numbers 25, surprisingly, Israel is not defeating the Moabites, but rather Israel is prostituting, or they are Engaging in sexual immorality with the Moabite women, and you learn later the reason that the Moabite women had compromised the Israelite men is because Balaam had given Balak advice on how to do it. Because Balaam wanted that money. And if I can't curse Israel, I'll tell you what you can do so that they will be cursed by the Lord. And if you read other literature outside of the New Testament during the second Temple period, it's very specific in the

detail.

He says, I want you to get your most beautiful women. I want them to take off all of their clothes. I want them to shred their stuff in front of the Israelite men and offer themselves to them, but only if they will offer sacrifices to the Moabite gods. And that's what they did. And I don't know how long it took, but eventually the Israelite men said, you know, it's just a little all just a little idol. It's just a little idol. Look how pretty she is. And they offer sacrifices to the Moabite Gods and as a result, God judges Israel with the plague, and the plague kills twenty-four thousand people.

And we learn in numbers 31, a little bit later, after a lot a bit later actually, they are the ones, these women, these Moabite women are the ones who at Balaam's advice incited the Israelites to unfaithfulness against the Lord. In pay in the payor incident, so that the plague came against the Lord's community. And from that point forward, Balaam became a proverb or a prototype of doing ministry for sordid gain. Presenting yourself as loving God, doing for God, blessing God, blessing his people, but doing all of that just so you can get rich.

Because it's all about the money for you. And that is a toxic form of religion that is all over the place today. Ministry that is done with mixed motives, ministry with impure motives makes for a ruse. Let me read these other verses. 2 Peter 2 verse 15, this is the New Testament. Peter rebuking the godless in his day because they've gone astray like Balaam went astray, abandoning the straight path. Following the path of Balaam, the son of Basor, who loved the wages of wickedness. He did it for money. Jude, he did it for profit.

Jesus in Revelation 2. 14, you have a f I got a few things against you, Pergamum. You've got some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balaak to place a stumbling block. In front of the Israelites, a stumbling block of naked Moabite women, to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. To commit sexual immorality when you allow yourself to be motivated fundamentally by financial gain more than the kingdom of God and seeking first the kingdom of God, then your soul will be compromised. And you will have a root that eventually is going to spread its tentacles and invite the judgment of God on your life and you will not be walking in the way of the Lord, nor will you experience the fruit.

Of walking with the Lord, you will experience the fruit that Balaam experienced, which was he was the first one to die when Israel finally went into Moab. Beware of the error of Balaam. Now, what does that look like today? Well, ministry with impure motives makes for a ruse. This looks a lot of different ways. I think it'd be easy for us to point to the health and wealth prosperity preachers. You know, I don't Crestrow Dollar or Joel Olstein or all the different ones. So a sayed into my ministry, you know, they're asking for money and if you give me money then God'll bless you.

They're they're gifted. They know the scriptures. At least they pretend like they do, but they're using the word of God for sorted gain. They're using it to become wealthy. And I would hate to only God knows what the day of judgment will look like for those people. But we don't have to point to the health and wealth people, you can look right in your own heart. Are your decisions for the Lord

filtered fundamentally through the lens of personal finance or faithfulness? You know, God, I know you're calling me to do this thing, but I'm going to be poor or we're not going to be able to financially make it.

And you sacrifice faithfulness to the Lord on the altar of Mammon. And Jesus himself said you can't love, you can't have two masters. You'll love one, you'll hate the other, you'll be devoted to one and not the other. You can't love God and money. You got to choose one. And there's a lot of us, I think, if we're honest, who would say there's a little bit of Balaam yet in me. It's a religious root that is that is toxic. And so do you bear the marks of Cain? Are you going through the motions?

Are you giving to get? Do you bear the marks of Balaam? Fundamentally filtering your decisions through the lens of money and not faithfulness. Building your kingdom for you instead of for King Jesus. I'll never forget pastor David when he was mentoring me before I became senior pastor. We were doing a funeral for one of our members and on the way back from the graveside I was, you know, I was young but I was bragging a little bit and Elmwood had hired me to do two more funerals because the families didn't have a preacher.

And I was talking to David about it, and I made a crass, ungodly comment about money. And you know, looking back on it, uncharacteristic of me to say something like that. And David didn't let it slide, and he rebuked me like a good mentor would, and he said, "You need to settle in your mind right now whether you're going to do ministry for money or for the Lord. And because preachers are paid to do ministry, there is a unique, but subtle temptation for your heart to drift more towards the money than you do the people."

And essentially he said, "You better check yourself before you wreck yourself, although pastor David would never say that. And he said, you need people in your life who will know you well enough to call you out when the spirit creeps up, because you will not make it in ministry if that's what you're doing it for. Or you may make it, but your soul will not survive. And I want to challenge you to let people let have people in your life who can confront you when you're being driven by money more than you are faithfulness to the Lord."

When you're worried and anxious because you're seeking first your kingdom instead of the kingdom of God first and foremost and allowing him to produce all the other things on his timetable and his way. Do you have the marks of Cain? Do you have the marks of Balaam? These are toxic religious roots that will destroy. And then you have lastly the Korah's rebellion. Of all the three, you might have remembered Balaam and his donkey. You probably know Cain, but most people don't know about Korah. How many of you want to raise your hand and say, "I had no idea about Korah?"

Thank you for your honesty. I must confess, I'm seminary trained. I've read the Bible several times through. I forgot about Korah. I had to do like what's that Google thing? Get that Google out. What was Korah? Korah was a Levite priest. His story is in Numbers chapter 16. You can just turn there. We're going to read a couple passages from Numbers 16. Korah as a Levite priest was responsible for taking care of the temple. He was not the high priest, Aaron was, but the Levites were kind of like the

hirelings under the high priest to take the sacrifices back and forth, to cut up the animals, to do all the things.

They had a unique privilege of being in the presence of God. They had a unique influence over the people of God. It was a position of prominence, a position that was a big deal, but for Korah it was not enough. Korah wanted more. And so because he was not satisfied with where God had put him, he enlists 250 other people who had a bad attitude as well. And together they got the whole community riled up and they went to Moses and Aaron and said, we don't think you should lead us anymore.

We think we think you have gone too far. Numbers chapter 16 verse 3. Everyone in the entire community is holy, and the Lord is among them. Why do you exalt yourselves above the Lord's assembly? What makes you so special? You know, I'm a priest. I'm a Levite, and I say we're all good. We don't need you. And it sounds nice, sounds inclusive, sounds, sounds great. But his motives were impure. His motives were, I want to tear Moses down so I can be the new Moses. I want to tear Aaron down so that I can be the main man.

And Moses, I think, sensed that, and so he said, well, let's let the Lord decide. So here's what we're going to do. You get your little 250 ombres and get your little fire pans and we'll let the Lord decide who's going to be the leader. And that's what they do. And he actually rebukes them in verses 8 to 11. Listen, Levites, is it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the Israelite community to bring you near to himself? Is that not good enough that you get to perform the work at the Lord's Tabernacle?

Is it not good enough that you get to stand before the community and minister to them. Is it not good enough that he's brought you near and you're and you got all these people with you, but you're still pursuing the priesthood as well? In other words, you want more than what God said you can have. Why the insatiable appetite for reputation and prominence here's a key phrase. It is you and all your followers who have conspired against the Lord. You think you're fighting me. You're not fighting me. You're fighting the Lord.

You're resisting God's design and rebelling against his appointed leadership. And as for Aaron, who is he that you should complain about it. So what is Balaam? Balaam is religion that is rooted in elevated reputation. I want more. I want people to think more about me. I want think I want to be more important than that person. I don't think that person deserves his role. You see this all the time in the church you see really you see this all the time everywhere. I deserve more. That's the way of Balaam of Korah.

And what happens is on the day of testing the Lord whispers in Moses' ear and he says, tell the people to get away from Korah's tent and Dathan's tent and Abiram's tent because they were all in it together. Tell people to get away from their tent because I'm about to show what I think. And so Moses tells everybody, hey. If I were you and you're not with them, skedaddle. So they skedaddle, and then the Lord brings an earthquake, the earth opens up and it swallows c swallows Korah and Dathan And Abiram swallows them up, and then the 250 other people who were in the company, they were

struck down by flames from heaven.

God sent a consuming fire and burnt them up like smoke. And he told them what he thought about that. The ground beneath them split open. They went down into Sheol with all that belonged to them. When you have ambition without alignment underneath the will of God, it is just rebellion. And you can dress it up all you want. You can say, well, God's called me to do this. God won't call you to do something He said you shouldn't do. You can say the Bible's wrong. The preacher is misinterpreting what the Bible says.

The Bible really says that when you know Clear and well, that's not what the Lord said. I mean it's obvious. And you're just resisting his authority so you can be special. So you can be seen. So you can be looked upon as most important. And that is a toxic religious root that will invite the judgment of God. And so three things very prevalent today. We could go all the different examples. I just want to ask you, do you have those marks in your heart? Or are you contending for the true faith once and all delivered to the saints?

What's the true faith? The true faith is represented not by Korah, Balaam, or Cain, the true faith is represented by the Lord Jesus Christ. Think about Jesus, he's the opposite of these three men. Every temptation they succumbed to, he resisted. Jesus did not make his life about himself. He made his life about the Father. I only go where the Father tells me to go, I only do what the Father tells me to do. Jesus was not in ministry for money, obviously. The Son of man had no place to lay his head.

That was Judas's problem, not Jesus. And Jesus, even though he was God, he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself. And he took the form of a servant. He didn't look for higher position, he went for lower position, and he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Everything they Every sin they embodied, Jesus shows the opposite. And because Jesus was the truth, he was the way, he was the life, and because he died on the cross for our sins.

We can find forgiveness and freedom and cleansing from these toxic roots in our heart, and we can rediscover what true religion looks like. And James, the other half-brother of Jesus, says true religion takes care of widows and orphans true religion isn't about you. It's about the Lord and it's about his people. St. Augustine famously described false religion as *incurvatus in se*. It's a Latin word that means to be curved in on the self. And that's the fundamental problem with all the wrong religion in the world today. It's not about the Lord.

It's about you. And if you've made your relationship with God fundamentally about you, this morning the Holy Spirit may be inviting you. To a much more exciting, much more in enlightening, much more freedom-producing walk with the Lord, which is a walk of denying yourself, taking up your cross and following after Jesus. But in so doing that and praying his kingdom come and his will be done, you find the life you've always desired to live. And so that's what I challenge us to do that as a congregation. I want you to think this morning, not just about you and the Lord.

I want you to think about our family, Broadview Baptist church. And I want us to pray together that we would embody the Spirit of Christ in the way we walk with the Lord. That our religion would be described as true religion that honors the Lord. And not the way of Cain, Balaam, or Korah. And to the degree that these things are in your heart, a love of money, a love of self, a desire for reputation. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life. Would you bring those before the Lord this morning, confess your sin before Him and ask for His forgiveness?

If you're not a Christian this morning, you've been following all these other religions, but this morning the Holy Spirit is saying there's something better than all that. It's not about what you do for me, it's about what I've done for you. And I need you to stop striving and start trusting in what I've accomplished on the cross through my one and only Son. And if you don't have that relationship with Jesus as Lord, you can make that decision this morning as we enter into this time of response the altar is open.

We can pray about anything, but I want you to respond to the word as the Lord leads and use this time wisely. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this word. From the book of Jude, and we pray as we now enter into this time of response that you would have your way, that we would be have hearts of humility and surrender, not resentment or greed protect us from these anti Christ spirits that so easily creep up even in local churches like ours. Protect us, Lord. Make us a vessel of your love.

Make us a house of prayer not a not a house in which the doctrines of demons thrive and gain influence give us wisdom and discernment to know what that looks like as we respond and the power to bring it to fruition for the glory of our Lord in whose name we pray. Amen