

# Jude

August 6, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "Jude. Thank you to Geoff, Ed, Don, and Janet for being involved in the video. The scripture reading is Jude 1-2. Happy birthday this week to Helen and Care, and happy anniversary to Mary and Brian.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

It's so quiet, maybe I'll just start. I don't like an awkward silence. It makes me uncomfortable. Good morning everybody. Happy to see you here this morning. Happy to be meeting with you in the presence of one another and in God's presence. We have some birthdays this week we'd like to make mention of now and then we will really make a big deal of later so happy birthday to Annie and to Kelly and to Mariam. Mariam, how old are you going to be this week? Ten. Wow. So we are going to make a big deal of that and sing about it a little bit later. We also have some good news to share. Daniel and Helene have found an apartment in Beamsville so they are going to be able to stay in the community here and be part of the school communities that they know. So we're really excited about that. That is an answer to prayer and I want to recognize and thank Geoff for his just tireless work on supporting them and to just to please ask you to keep praying for them as they you know it's a big change even within the same community so we ask for you to continue to pray for them. At this time we're going to turn our minds to prayer. I have a number of prayer requests that I will pray during the prayer and then I will end with a prayer of dedication from our time together which will be after the words of King David. So let's, let's go to God now.

Lord, it is good to be together in your presence. It is good to be your sons and daughters, to commune with you and with one another, to know that you are here in our presence and here in our hearts. God we are so thankful for the conduit of Christ that we have to, to come straight to you that we don't need any intermediaries other than him, that he is your son and we are his brothers and sisters. It is humbling and awe-inspiring to us, God, that you, the Creator, the sustainer of the universe, the one who breathed life into all of us cares enough that you know us by name you know the hairs on our heads (as it were) that you love us so much. What, what are humans that you are even aware of us? But we thank you for this great privilege. Lord, we, we bring requests and petitions to you at this time. We ask for healing for Viola that she would be made well in the aftermath of her stroke that you would strengthen her body and strengthen her mind. We think of her friend Cordelia who is suffering heart problems at this time and troubles with her family. We ask for patience in those situations for forgiveness where it needs to be sought and given. We pray for those who care for her and that that she may be returned to the health that that she had been enjoying.

Lord, we are thankful that Ruby our dear sister is continuing to mend that you have put your hand of healing on her and we ask that you continue to do so and to strengthen her to give Art the skills that he needs to, to care for her. We thank you for Jeff receiving a kidney, though we are saddened by the circumstances around it. We ask for your healing for him, your strength for him and for his family and we think of the, the Mowat family who are mourning Darlene's passing that even in, in a dark time for them a light can be shone to another fam- to several other families. Thank you Lord for their generosity to, to look outside of themselves even while they are grieving and sad. We pray also for the Whitfield

family as they mourn Liam's passing at a very young age. We ask for peace for them and for all of his loved ones that they may know that your, your care is, is with them. God, we thank you for the time we've been able to spend with, with Tim and Care here, the blessing they've been to our congregation and to your work in Niagara. We ask as they prepare to move that you would show them their next steps. We pray for the community into which they will come that that they will be blessed there as we have been blessed by them here. We thank you for your work at out at Camp Omagh where Mariam will be headed this week. We thank you for the lifelong friendships and Bible lessons that will come from this coming week and that wil,I will last for lifetimes in those in those lives. God, praise to you Lord the God of our fathers from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom. You are exalted as head overall wealth and honor come from you. You are the ruler of all things and in your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now our God we give you thanks and praise your glorious name. Amen.

Service today centers around the book of Jude and in verse 2 of Jude there are three things emphasize mercy peace and love. So the songs that we're going to be singing today all revolve around those three ideas so I'd invite you to stand as we sing the first three songs together.

## Communion

Yesterday I had the honor of attending the funeral of Darlene Mowat. She was extremely well loved not just here because they were members here but by large numbers of people because of her giving nature and one of the things that we did yesterday was to share communion. That's not something that's very common in in our background; other traditions do that but we shared communion and as I sat there listening I realized that all week I'd been thinking about and praying about this week's theme because Don plans to talk about the book of Jude. And once I heard that I thought "oh, that's gonna be hard to work with at the communion table" because that is a very strong and direct message but I firmly believe that all scripture can be tied back to the centrality of the crucifixion and the resurrection and in a small way I think the spirit moved yesterday when we experienced that communion. Because there we were, all these people from so many different places sharing a cup to remember our God who was so good in the life of Darlene.

The minister yesterday as he spoke about it those of you who were there will remember that he tied things to family and I thought that was really important not just for that funeral but at all times when we meet to break bread. The family of people that surrounded Darlene and the family of God that she was so delighted to be a part of and in a very real way that's what Jude is about. It's about a family with problems. Dear friends although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. You see they had a problem and he needed to address it. He goes on: These ungodly people who pervert the grace of our Lord into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ, our only sovereign and Lord. Later on: These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the spirit.

They were a family that had problems but that's exactly why God decided to institute this to remember his son. That's exactly why Jesus took a collection of motley men and broke bread with them and drank

with them including the one who was going to betray him because they were a family and they needed to understand that. When we read in the Bible that he took the bread and he took the wine it was because he wanted to rebuild that family relationship. He wanted, he wanted us to understand that he is here in our midst. That the spirit is always working with us and as we share this token it represents the meal that he desires to have with us and it looks forward to an even greater meal at the wedding feast of his son. As we break this bread I want you to remember that it was to tie us together. We use that word communion because Jesus wants us to be together. Let's go to God in prayer.

Father in your great love you gave your son for us and as we break this bread we remember that he walked among us that he felt the same hunger and thirst that we do and that he gave up his physical life for a much better life with you but not only that father that he gave it that we might also have a new life with you. As we break this bread we remember that very human sacrifice that he made and the power with which you raised him. We pray through the Son and the Spirit and the Father. Amen.

[Music]

Jude really wanted to exhort them to celebrate their salvation. Instead he felt that he had to write to them about these people who wanted to divide this family. Yesterday at the funeral I saw something I've never seen before at a funeral. At near the end of the funeral there was something on the listing that said there was going to be a presentation. I was unused to that but I thought maybe they were going to take the urn or something like that but it wasn't that at all. Adam already mentioned about... Jeff brought the entire family up to the front and they presented them with medallions that represented the gift that Darlene gave to Jeff and Fraser was at the front. He said now when I look at you I see my wife and we all kind of laughed a bit. He said "not very, not as good-looking as before." The point was he is walking because she gave a kidney and because the family of Fraser led by daughter Cassie realized that Jeff needed a kidney and no one can deny the hand of God in the fact that amongst all of the millions of possible combinations she was a direct match for Jeff and the woman he said that they talked to about it because when she first suggested general organ donation they were understandably a little reluctant. After that and Cassie saying maybe it would work for Jeff she said well that that's against all the odds we can try but I really don't think you should pin your hopes on it and yet Jeff is was there to receive that because the family thought about Jeff and as Fraser put it our families are now inextricably linked. Jesus gave his blood for the same purpose to inextricably link us to him. Let's go to God in prayer.

Father we thank you so much for this blood that washes us clean that draws us together father as a family with Jesus as our, our big brother we have everything we need for life and godliness. Thank you now father for this gift of life for we pray in his name, amen.

So based around the ideas around communion today surely we can stand and sing together come let us all unite and sing God is love.

## Reading

### Jude 1-2

This morning I'm going to be reading from the book of Jude. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James to those who have been called who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

## Sermon

Good morning everyone thank you for being with us. Dr. Charles Stanley was a magnificent preacher. He was the minister at the Baptist Church in Atlanta and he preached there until his death some 60 years. Imagine a preacher standing up behind the pulpit for 60 years and if you ever heard Charles Stanley preach he was a not no nonsense preacher. He was kind, he was wonderful but he wanted to declare the gospel with Authority. The reason I say this is because this very brief book the book of Jude reminds me of Charles Stanley. It's a direct, purposeful writing but before we go on to that I'd like us to notice, if you have a Bible and want to follow along, in Acts chapter 20 verses 22 to 32. In Acts chapter 20 beginning in verse 22 it's the Apostle Paul. Here's what he says: And now compelled by the Holy Spirit of God I'm going to Jerusalem not knowing what will happen to me there I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me however I consider my life worth nothing to me if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me: The task of testifying of the gospel of God's grace. That's Paul's sermon. In fact, that's his only sermon. When you look at all the teachings and the writings of Paul this is the emphasis: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit but then he says, "now I know that none of you among you whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men and women for I have not hesitated to proclaim you the whole will of God." And so then he says, "Keep watch over yourselves and of all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Elders of the church. Be shepherds of the Church of God which he bought with his own blood. For I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come among you and they will not spare the flock. Even from your own number, men and women will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard. Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

It's not what you'd really call a happy passage of scripture but it's the encouragement of staying true to the gospel of God and the reason I say all of this is because the book of Jude which only has 25 verses is quite a remarkable book it's very much a no-nonsense book and that being so will be a rather brief message today but sometimes just a couple of thoughts can maybe stay with us and some of the brief books we never really study but this book of Jude is a remarkable book. I remember when I was younger and also in high school and Bible class I, I have all when I couldn't figure it out why was the book of Judas in the Bible? I was I don't understand why. Judas was such a bad guy, why would he be in the Bible? Until somebody said, "it's not Judas, Don. It's Jude." They're different people, different personalities altogether. Judas was going to betray Jesus; Jude was going to stand up for Jesus and declare the Word of God faithfully even though his message was not necessarily easy. So today I'm gonna read every word in the book of Jude but don't worry it's a very brief book and I think some of these things might be helpful they've been very, very helpful to me.

He begins by saying Jude, I am a servant of Jesus Christ and I'm also a brother of James so there were these disciples together. So Jude and his brother both loved by Jesus Christ he says mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance and may I say that to all of us. May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. Dear friends, he says, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once all entrusted to the saints. This message is for all of us. But then he says for certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord. Again, it was their understanding that because of the grace of God that gave them license to say whatever they wanted to say, to do whatever they wanted to do, even if it didn't honor God and so Jude comes along and says no, no, no, no. This grace that God gives us is an encouragement to love God even stronger; to share with people this freedom of love and joy and welcome and forgiveness of sins and prayer and the encouragement that we can all have.

So many people in this world think the church is boring or that the gospel is boring or that it's all about rules. It's not about rules. It's about the gospel. It's about the love of God it's about Christ living in us, the Holy Spirit living in us, the understanding of the scriptures that can encourage us on a daily basis but it reminds them. But there will be people who will slip in and they'll say certain things but they won't live that way and so he says be careful of all this and then I'm gonna read some things that are pretty strong. I hope that you'll bear with me. He says in verse 6, and the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home these he has kept in darkness bound with everlasting chains for judgment on that great day. You don't hear words like that very often in the Bible and Jude is encouraging Christians: Listen! There's a dark power in this world. Stay away from that. So then he says in verse 7 in a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah (that's a story that many of us remember) and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. So, I've read this book several times this past week and it doesn't get any easier, you can't lighten this, you can't make it easy, you can't laugh about all this. It's just powerful language and even though it's a very, very brief book it's this: A wake up. Donny, pay attention to what's happening. What's happening in the world, what's happening in your own life. Are you closer to God this week than you were before? How can you be of encouragement? How can we demonstrate, not just say, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and [self-]control, is to really go deep and realize that God is with us every minute of the day. And don't get caught up when Satan is trying to pull us away.

He says in verse 8, in the very same way these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, slander celestial beings. But even—and this is a very interesting scripture—but even the archangel Michael, listen, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses did not dare bring a slanderous accusation against him. But he said, "the Lord rebuke you." You know you might say, "do you want to read that again? I've never heard of this before." It's rather strange this comment disputing about the body of Moses. What, what we, we really don't know much about that but it's a reminder that even back in the Old Testament, Satan was trying to do his worst and there was encouragement by the prophets of just leave that alone. Something better is coming and something did come. It was a someone. It was Jesus himself who has come. Don't let don't let slanderous accusation go against you; be faithful to Jesus Christ. If there's encouragement or if there's sin, ask forgiveness and move forward. This very brief book, this real tiny book of Jude is just, boom, hitting really hard. So he says but even the

archangel Michael when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses did not bring a slanderous accusation against him but he said if anyone's gonna rebuke, let the Lord rebuke you. Yet these men speak abusively against what they do not understand and what things they do understand by instinct like unreasoning animals, these are the very things that destroy them. So he's talking about greed, he's talking about rebellion

And this is what he says verse 11: Woe to them! Exclamation point! They have taken the way of Cain. Now, you remember the story of Cain and Abel. How Abel was offering a sacrifice that was more significant if you will than Cain and that Cain kind of wandered off unto himself and he didn't live a faithful life as did Abel. And these things can happen. Here you have God speaking to both Cain and Abel and yet Cain maybe because of Satan's influence pulled him away from God and that can happen even to us today. So he says, verse 12, these people are blemishes at your love feasts and I think love feasts is the encouragement of when we come together and share communion together. Don't, don't let anything interfere with that. As we had communion today or when we gather together in people's homes and we, we pray with one another, we encourage one another, and recently while these last few months. So many people have had so many difficulties, so many hospitals, so many people passing away, and yet as was spoken today their faith was strong. They're resting in the arms of Jesus. We will see them again. And so, this brief book is strong. It's not easy to read. And so, he says, these men are blemishes in your feasts. Eating with you without the slightest qualm. Shepherds who feed only themselves. Listen: they are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind. Autumn trees without fruit and uprooted. Twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea foaming up. Their shame. Wandering stars from whom blackest darkness has been reserved for them forever. I want nothing to do with that and I don't think you do either. And so he says Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men. See the Lord is coming—and this is what we're gonna see some day—see the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone and to convict the ungodly and the ungodly acts they have done in an ungodly way.

This just gives me the shivers when I picture Jude, maybe going off into this room. I think maybe he's a bit angry and he's writing these things down. Bible teaches us that no scripture is made by someone's own hand but by the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and so he, he writes these words. It's not, it's not a book that we read very often because it it's just so difficult but he tells us these are shepherds who feed only themselves and then he skips down to verse 14 and it says Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied about these people. These men. See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone and to convict all the ungodly and they've gone ungodly acts that they have done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These men are grumblers and fault-finders. They follow their own evil desires, they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. It doesn't get any better. So then he says this: But dear friends, remember what the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you in these last days there will be scoffers who follow their own evil desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the spirit. But you, dear friends... Now it's time for real encouragement and maybe some of you here or those who will be listening to this message are going through a horrendous time. Maybe some of you have been caught up in dark places and need encouragement so here's what he says. Up to this point it hasn't been a very happy book but then he says this: But you dear friends, remember what the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold us. They said to you in the last times they'll be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires these are the

men who divide you who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in their most holy faith. Your most holy faith! And pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

And I don't know about you but I remember listening to all kinds of sermons sometimes. Many sermons that basically said the same thing. But I also remember the day, and maybe you do too, we're not just listening to the word but all of a sudden something happens. Not inside your head or it is inside your head and not just in your spirit but yeah it's just in your spirit. It's the understanding of "I want Jesus to be my Savior." Not just the Savior of the whole world (which I want) but I want him to be my Savior. I want to give myself to him. And I remember the day of contemplating about being baptized. That in baptism we were buried with him and raised with him through the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead and I remember that time. That, that contemplating. I don't know about you but for me I kind of pushed it away. I'm not sure that's really what I want to do right now. Maybe a bit longer. But you know the Spirit didn't let go. The Holy Spirit just did not let go. I couldn't think properly; I couldn't eat properly; I couldn't. I just knew there was something. It was the call of God on your life and I don't know if you've ever had that experience but the Holy Spirit was not going to let up. It was almost like he was saying "you belong to God. Come to Christ. Be baptized into him. Death, burial, and resurrection. Realize that you weren't just an accident. That you're not just a product of your parents, but that God knew you before you were born. He loves you and he wants his love to shine through each one of us so we can encourage others."

This brief book of Jude is overflowing with invitation. With the call of God. Remember what Christ has done for us. So you, dear friends. Build yourself up in the Holy Faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit and I never knew what that meant until the day that I wanted to be baptized. Can I do this? Is it the right thing to do? It was the encouragement of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And he was not going to let you go. So he says keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. And maybe that will be that when we pass from this life. We go with God or maybe we'll still be alive when Christ breaks into the universe and there's a new creation where heaven and earth come together as one. And then we'll see Jesus face to face. God face to face. The Holy Spirit face to face. Peter, Paul, John, mom, dad, a child that we lost and now we can hug. It's the promise of God. This brief book.

So he says some people won't believe that and that's okay. Be merciful to those who doubt but encourage others. Snatch them from a fire (it's probably an emotional thing) and then he says the conclusion. Really these words, and I'll read it differently: Don't put out the Holy Spirit's power. If you get a nagging feeling inside of your body and brain about Jesus Christ, don't put it out. Leave it there. God is doing this. He's encouraging us to think deeply. So he says, to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages, now and forevermore. And then he says amen. Do not put out the spirit's fire in our life. It's what's encouraging to me that this very brief book is a reminder of the encouragement that we have in Christ Jesus. And every once in a while just stop and think about what God has done for us, is doing for us, will do for us in the encouragement that we have through him. Amen

## Song Leader Comment

So we've had several examples today of scripture speaking to us. Don's sermon. You know these folks, they would drift away and in this book he's, Jude is calling people back. And Geeff's talk at the table with this gift that, at, Fraser. I talked to him yesterday and I said I can't believe that you could be so thoughtful and so loving in the midst of difficulty to give this kidney to Jeff and that everything worked out well.

The song that we're going to sing now was written, the words were written by Horatio Spofford in 1873. So some, we might say, well, it's a big deal. It's a long time ago. He lived in Chicago and a few years before that there was a fire in Chicago that destroyed a big part of the city. Many people lost their lives. Businesses were destroyed. You just think of buildings built close together out of wood and then the fire gets going and it takes out huge section of the city. Spofford was a lawyer and he had a family. His wife and children, and he decided to send them back to England. Well, he dealt with some of the legal stuff that involved with the fire as, as it were. He, you know, they're going across the ocean. If you've ever been on an ocean boat, you know that the boats today are very stable. Boats back then were very small and you get into a, in a terrible storm and there was a shipwreck and all of his children perished in the shipwreck. Well, when his wife got to England, she sent a message to uh, to her husband and the message said "Saved alone." So he knew and I saw some elaboration to that he knew that his children perished. So he got on a boat and he went to England to be with his wife and where he was, where he's passing over the, the spot of where he figured that his, his children perished, he sat down and wrote the words of this song. And this song has, has been, was put to music a few years later and this song is in every hymnal that I've ever seen in my life. So these words are powerful words. Somebody who believed in God in the midst of the most tragic thing that could happen to him, the loss of his children, could write these words. It's a miracle and we can learn from this. From the story of the writing of these words and the words themselves, that God comes beside us in the most difficult times and provides peace. I would invite you to stand as we sing this last song

## Closing

Solomon's prayer of dedication to dedicate our week to the Lord: Praise be to the Lord who has given rest to his people just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors. May he never leave us nor forsake us, may he turn our hearts to him to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees, and laws he gave our ancestors. And may these words of mine which I have prayed before the Lord be near to the Lord our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people, according to each day's need, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and there is no other. Go with His blessing. Amen.

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