

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Standing Firm

PART

2

TITLE

Dangerous Distortions

SCRIPTURE

Jude 1:5-10



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Good to see all of you. I hope that you've had a good week. And if you're new here, we're thrilled that you have joined us. We believe that the Bible is true, and the Bible tells us that we've been created by God wanting more. Every single one of us have been built by God in such a way that we are magnetized to seeing something and finding something that's glorious and great, and then to give our life to that as the cause. And what we find in the world and in scripture is there is nothing and no one who is more glorious than Jesus Christ, and we make him our cause.

The cause is to introduce all people to Jesus Christ and to grow them up to love and worship him because we've seen in him that he is the treasure that is hidden in the field. He's the one who is the way maker. He's the one who created us, who has, even currently, he is sustaining us by his spoken word. He's saved us, he's forgiven us, he's redeemed us, and he's the Lord of all. And I hope that you know that while you are with us is that you are with a people who is absolutely convinced that Jesus Christ is the reason that we are alive.

One of the greatest things that he has done, truly the greatest for us, is that he proved that he is the one glorious being that we're supposed to live our life for in one principle act, and that is that when he went to a cross and died for our sin, the grave could not hold him. His authority, his life, his being was simply too powerful for the grave. And as a result of that, a people like us, every one of us, were staring down a grave. Whether you'd think about it or not, it's awaiting you. And so it is really important to find someone who's conquered it, and we have, and his name is Jesus. In the Bible, we're told that there's ways to live out this cause, to connect to him and to grow and to serve and go. And so as a church, we've sought to build things for that purpose, and we want to be able to help you walk that journey with us.

And so would you pray with me? Father in heaven, as we open your word, I pray that you would open up our eyes again to help us to see that Jesus Christ is everything, that he is the reason that we are here, and that every part of our life finds its roots and its health and its fruitfulness in being connected to you. I pray, Father, that as we are exposed by your word that you would help us to resist the temptation that we all face, and that is to evaluate it. Would you help us to be evaluated by it?

The sins that this passage presents, Lord, are evident in our lives and in this church body. We have committed the sin of unbelief. We've heard what you've said and we didn't do it because we didn't believe that you would come through. We ask that you would forgive us. Within this text we find the sin of pride. We confess to you as a church family and as individuals that pride exists in our hearts, being discontented with the place that you've given us and demanding more.

Your word tells us you're going to confront the sin of immorality, and we confess to you, God, the lack of holiness in our heart that permeates to every part of our life including our sexual impulses. And so we consecrate our lives, we give you our lives. You are worthy of our trust. And so I pray that you would pour out your spirit upon us, that you would give us eyes to see in your word the glory of Jesus Christ, and would you put a magnet in our heart that we'd be drawn to him.

I ask all of these things in the strong and perfect name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Well, in your Bible, I want to ask you to look with me at Jude. There's only one chapter, so I could say Jude chapter one, or I could say Jude. It's the same thing. It's the second to the last book of the Bible. If you don't have one with you, there's Bibles in the chairs near you, and if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. We want you to be able to have a copy of the Bible, which is God's word.

We started a series, it's going to be one month long, this February. In the first four verses of Jude, we learned there that Jude, the author, is the younger brother of Jesus Christ. He wasn't the only one, but he was one of them. And growing up is he was skeptical of his brother. He probably liked him when they were kids, but when he started going off saying he's the son of God, he didn't like him so much. He thought he was out of his mind. And then Jesus died on a cross and then he rose from the dead. And the Bible says that Jesus began appearing after his death to more than 500 people, including his family, and now suddenly, Jude becomes converted. He's absolutely certain that Jesus, his brother, has conquered the grave and, therefore, he's willing to live his life in such a way that would even bring him to a grave for the name of Jesus Christ, and Jude was martyred along with some of his brothers and many of the early church.

What we learned last week in verse three was that this is not what Jude wanted to write. He says in verse three, "Although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation..." that's what he wanted to write. If there was no urgent need in the people's lives that he was writing to, then we would probably have a letter that instead of urging us to contend for the faith, it would say a bunch of stuff like, "Hey, this is the amazing gospel. Let's talk about it, sing about it. This is how we can apply it to our life." But instead he says there's an urgency. He says, "I urge you. "I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints," and then he tells us why. He says, "For certain people have crept in unnoticed."

Now, you hear the words "crept in unnoticed" and you'd think about structural integrity, and I think about a termite or a bunch of termites. All of us have probably seen the damage of termites. They get in, we love to build things out of wood and termites just love to eat wood. And so it's a challenge on the earth because the termites, they don't just attack the house, they attack the structural integrity of the house. And until their progress actually reaches levels of visual and structural damage, they go unnoticed.

A few years ago we were at my folks house and we were on vacation for the week, and halfway through the week, I look over and I see these bugs walking down the wall, and I'm like, "What is that?" They're like ants with wings, and I thought, "I don't think ants have wings. I don't think it's an ant." And so we start... and all of a sudden, we found termites. Now, this was a family reunion. We had plans of what we were going to be doing, how we were going to be spending our time, who we were going to be calling while we were there, and suddenly, the very presence of known termites changed our plans because now there was something urgent. This is precisely what's happening with Jude, he recognizes.

It's amazing that until Jude's letter arrived to these people, false teachers were literally chewing on the structural integrity of their churches, and they were doing so unnoticed. And so God inspired Jude to write these words, and we'll start in verse four. "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 I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day — just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire."

"Yet in like manner these people," now he's talking about the false teachers, "also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively." We'll stop there because there's plenty there, isn't there?

You read this, as I did or I read it to you, and you hear this and you think, "All right, what is God doing with this passage?" You have to ask these questions. I do. I'm like, "Okay, God, why is this in the Bible, and why is this section in Jude? What's the purpose? You have a plan for our life, and not only a plan, you specifically chose to preserve this for thousands of years, all the way down, so that every generation of your people would actually read this. And so what are you doing with this passage, Lord?" And I believe that there's a couple things I want to show you this morning.

The first is this, is that God exposes the behavior of false teachers. He exposes the behavior of false teachers. Now, I'm going to say something and I'm just going to ask you to just remember this for the rest of the sermon, okay? And that is that when I say false teachers, we normally think of somebody who has a position of authority like a pastor, and we think, "Well, I'm not one of those, and so this may be not... I wouldn't be one of those."

You could also say, instead of false teacher, if it helps you feel the weight of it personally, it's a false believer. It's somebody who identifies with the church, maybe even identifies what they believe with the gospel, and yet they are not with the church, they are not converted, and it is not the gospel. They may not be on TV, they may not have books that are published, they may not have a pulpit where they preach in front of people, they may not have a normal role of authority, and yet they may be your friend and anybody that would be characterized by the behaviors that God is going to expose. He's saying we need to be very careful, in particular, if it's us.

And so what are these behaviors? Well, before we do that, just look what he says in verse five. He says, "Now I want to remind you, that although you once fully knew it..." Now, typically, it's very difficult for us to be able to identify people who are false teachers or believers who are already inside the church because they know enough of the vocabulary to get through the gate. They normally identify themselves with the church and their message with the gospel, and so it's really difficult. It's really easy - when Richard Dawkins writes, as he just published a beginner's guide to atheism - to wonder if he's for us or against us. But here in the church, people can say Jesus and things that we go, "Oh, they're among the church," and yet they may be chewing on the integrity of the wood.

It's really kind of like a Where's Waldo. You've seen Where's Waldo, right? They're fun at first, and then they're just absolutely irritating and annoying as you can't find a little guy. But there's a little guy, who is the same size as everybody else, and he has a shirt, it's red and white, and you're supposed to just look over the entire thing and try to find this person. And sometimes that's how we feel within the church. We're like, "All right, well, there's all these passages in the New Testament about false teachers," and we look around, we're like, "Look, look at all these people. All right, so which one is it?" And they go unnoticed.

And so he says, "I want to remind you..." And this is really important. False teachers say that they have a new word from God and Jude says, "I have an old word. It's a word you already know and it's a word that's part of the faith that was once for all delivered to the church." And then what he does is in verse five, six and seven, he tells three stories from the Old Testament. And then in verse eight he says, "Yet in like manner..." In other words, what he's doing is this. He's saying that there is a particular kind of sin and behavior in each one of the three stories in verses five, six and seven that are characteristics of false teachers and false believers. And so let's look at each one.

Verse five we find the sin of unbelief. Unbelief. It says that Jesus saved people from Egypt, and I love what Jude does here. He actually inserts Jesus' name. He doesn't just say God, he says Jesus. Now, why is this so cool? It's because at one time he was skeptical of Jesus' very claims, and now not only does he recognize that he's the son of God that was born, but he was the eternal son of God who's always lived, and that it was actually Jesus Christ that actually led Israel out of Egypt. It was Jesus, his brother, that actually parted the sea. It was Jesus who fed them the manna, and the quail, and the water. It was Jesus. He's recognizing, in time, as he gets to this place, "My older brother was amazing. He's the second member of the Trinity who has always existed, the son of the eternal God."

He attributes, verse five, when God led the Israelites out of Egypt to his brother, where he didn't lead them out. He led them to the edge of the promised land, and they get to the edge of the promised land and they send 12 spies into the land to search out the land. They come back, they have amazing fruit, they're like, "Man, this place is amazing." But let me tell you something, 10 of them say, "We cannot do it. We can't do it because there's giants in the land and we're but grasshoppers." Well, the other two, they say, "Wait a minute, we can do this because grasshoppers plus God always win."

And the people, after seeing all that God had done and adhering all that God had promised to do and actually leading them into the promised land, the people said, "But God cannot do this." And the Bible says that every single adult over the age of 20, over the next 40 years, perished in the wilderness as judgment for their unbelief.

Well, then verse eight says, "Yet in like manner these false teachers rely on their dreams." Rely on their dreams is actually connected to verse five. This is what's happening here. God comes in His word and he says, "This behavior is a sin." And the false teachers, they do not believe God's word, no. They say, "You know what? I've had a dream. I have new revelation from God, and I want you to know that that's not a sin, so much so why don't you and I go do it together?" It's the sin of unbelief. Jesus comes to the earth and he says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." And false teachers, they come and they say, "I've had a dream, new revelation, there's many ways." God says there is the faith that is once for all delivered to the saints. False teachers come in and they say, "I've had a dream. I have a new faith that is given for the saints." And so the sin of unbelief.

The second is the sin of pride. This is represented in the story about the angels. He's not talking about good angels here where they started good, but they rebel. The angels were in heaven. They enjoyed freedom, they enjoyed honor and authority, joy, God's presence, and then they became discontented with God's placement of their life. They wanted more. Isaiah 14, we read that Lucifer, one of the arch angels, actually looks at God's throne and he says, "Man, his seat's higher than my seat. I want his seat." And God says, "You got to be kidding me, right?" He throws him out, and it says that many of the angels they followed because they weren't content with their placement. And as a result, there was judgment that was placed upon the angels. How so? It says that now, it says that they're chained in gloomy darkness awaiting the day when they will be judged and they will spend forever in hell. What a trade down.

He says, "And in like manner, these false teachers they reject God's authority." How do they do so? They don't sit under the Bible. They assume that that's too low for them, and so they sit over the Bible. And then it says something really important, it says, "And they blaspheme the glorious ones." Now, in Hebrews 2 and Galatians 3, we're told that it's the angels themselves that were actually the ones that delivered the inspiration to the authors. And so it was them who brought the word. And so the idea, what he's saying here is this, is that the Bible has been given to us. Angels have been protecting it, and yet false teachers, they even blaspheme not only the words, but even the angels that would have brought us the word. And then he gives us what is really a pretty strange example. You notice that at the end he goes, "By the way, let's talk about the Archangel Michael disputing with the devil about the body of Moses."

Now, if you've read the Bible through, you'll notice that you didn't find that story in the Bible, and it's because it's not in the Bible. Jude was a Jewish man, and in the Jewish culture there was traditions and even literature that was popular among the Jews, and one of them was a book, it was called The Assumption of Moses. It didn't make the Bible because it wasn't inspired by God. That doesn't mean that there wasn't true events, true things that were written just like all the books in the world today aren't inspired by God, and yet there's true things and true stories within the books.

Well, Jude, just like many of the New Testament authors, it's fascinating when this happens because what they're doing is actually quoting material that would be known by their readers, and yet they would know that the readers know that this isn't in the Bible. Paul does it, Jude does it actually twice, we'll see one next week, and what he's doing is simply utilizing a story that was very familiar to the people in order to make a spiritual point.

In The Assumption of Moses, the story is that when Moses was told by God to go up on the mountain where he was going to die, he went alone. There was no one to bury him. And so God sent the archangel Michael from heaven to go bury him, and suddenly, the devil shows up and says, "I want to bury him." And so they got into an argument. And what he says here is this, he says that even the archangel Michael - you think about all the strength and authority that you would have if you were an archangel - he says that he didn't presume to be the authority in that situation. Instead, he just resisted and he came under the authority of God and he says, "The Lord rebuke you." He says, but false teachers in the world and false believers in the world, they actually say, "Wait a minute, I have the authority and you need to listen to me." And so the sin of pride.

And then the last is the sin of immorality, and that's represented in the story in verse seven. Sodom and Gomorrah was a city, you can read about it in the book of Genesis Chapter 19, that indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire. Unnatural desire is other flesh. He's speaking about homosexuality. You read the story, it's very obvious that that is the sin that was taking place. And they did this until God rained down fire from heaven and destroyed all of them. And then he says, "And in like manner these false teachers, they defile the flesh." We looked last week that they take the grace of God and they pervert it into a license to sin and to be sensual with one another.

And so the sin of unbelief, the sin of pride, and the sin of morality. False teachers or false believers, they will rise above the Bible, they'll speak as if they're the authority even over the Bible, they'll create a new system, and then that system will violate the scriptures, but because they've had dreams, nobody can contest it. Nobody can say, "Wait a minute," because they say, "Listen, I heard from God, this is true." And so they give themselves to all manner of things, and this unbelief and this prideful rebellion literally trickles down to every part of their life, including their sexual impulses. That's pretty serious.

Every one of us have teachers in our life. You read books, you watch sermons, you're here today. And if it is true that God in His grace would expose the behavior of false teachers, and it is our responsibility then to examine our teachers carefully. And so let me encourage you to do just that, to examine your teachers carefully. You need to know that you're never going to find a perfect one, but what you should find are ones who are humble. They will leave you absolutely certain that they are absolutely certain that the Bible is the word of God. They will read from the Bible. They will ask you to turn into a Bible, and you will find their words in the pages of the Bible.

Find yourself teachers who love Jesus, who are absolutely amazed that God would forgive them and are absolutely convinced that God can forgive anyone. Find teachers who believe in the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints in spite of opposition and cultural critique. And find people whose gospel that they preach and proclaim will have reached so far down into their lives that everything down to their sexual desires will be influenced. I urge you again, and I know I've done this many times, I urge you again to carefully examine who feeds your soul, to carefully examine who gets to crawl upon the structure of your life, and make sure you find people that are not going to chew away that wood.

The second thing I want you to see that God does is he declares the awful fate of false teachers. You see, in addition to exposing them, he wants to show us their fate, probably so that we won't be one, and so he uses words like destroy and darkness, judgment, punishment, eternal fire. You're supposed to read these words and take a step back. Not only should we listen to those words and not want to flirt with people's teaching who do this, but we should want to not be one of these teachers and believers.

You see, it's so tempting though, because the words darkness and judgment and punishment and eternal fire, these aren't ones that we like to go to sleep too, and so it's only natural for us to look away. Like the preview of a horror movie that you didn't intend to go see, and all of a sudden, you're like, "I don't want to see that." Or a little kid who's scared, and so they cover up their eyes. We look at these pages in the Bible that talk about judgment and destruction and the wrath of God against sin and we say, "I just don't want to see," but I urge you, don't turn away because this is one of the greatest expressions of mercy, is that God would warn us, and this is why. Who in this room is above the sin of unbelief? Who in this room is above the sin of pride? Who in this room has never committed the sin of immorality?

You see, we're supposed to read this as I did and say, "Wait a minute, verse five, six and seven, that's me. That's my reflection" How many times in my life have I known that God said, "I promise you. You do this, I'll be with you," and I said, "I just don't know if I can do that." How many times have I been discontented with the state that God has given to me and assume that I deserve more, that I needed more glory, or more praise, or a higher seat in my life? How many times have I had to confess, "God, would you forgive me for lust?" You see, he's describing me in verses five, six and seven, and frankly, he's describing you. This is why this is such an abstract of mercy. Not only is he calling us to flee from their influence, he's calling us to see our need.

You see, the wage of all of this sin is death, and the good news is that Jesus Christ loves me and you so much that he came to this earth and he lived without any sin. He's the only person who's ever lived without any unbelief, any pride, or any immorality, the only, and yet you know what he did? He took our unbelief and our pride and our immorality, he put it upon his hands and nailed him to a cross. But Jesus Christ, he rose from the dead because the grave couldn't hold him. He gave us his invitation that I talk about all the time, but it's the greatest one you're ever going to hear, that if you would trust in Jesus Christ by placing all of your weight upon his righteousness and not your own, by admitting that you need a savior, by believing in Jesus Christ and confessing him Lord of all, he says that he takes away all of our sin. He forgives us entirely.

Can you imagine how good of news that is? If you can't, it's because you've not contemplated on how holy God is, how sinful you are, and how long eternity is. He has forgiven us. He tells us that this is the awful fate of the false teachers in order to ask us to look at ourself, and first and foremost, place our faith in Jesus Christ.

So I asked you, have you? Have you trusted Jesus Christ? Have you admitted that you have a need, a spiritual need? Have you confessed to him your need? I urge you today, right now, you can do that right now. This is how you do this, you pray to him, "God almighty, I believe what your word says is true, that I am a sinner and I cannot save myself. I believe that you sent your son to rescue me. I believe that he died on a cross and he rose from the dead, and I confess him as Lord of my life." If that is the sincere prayer of your heart, you know what happens? He rescues you. And so God almighty, he exposes the behavior of false teachers and he declares the awful fate of false teachers, and it is one of the thing He urges us to pursue, behavior consistent with the gospel.

Now, the ironic thing in talking about false teaching and staying from the Bible is this point you're not going to find in your Bible, which is sort of a joke, you'll laugh, but nowhere in our passage does he say this. It's an inference. What he's saying is this, if this is true, if this is the behaviors of a false teacher and believer, and this is the fate of false teachers and believers, and if we are genuine Christians, then let's not behave like that. There must be a different way for us to behave.

See, the Christian who's been made alive, who opens up the Bible and looks at God's word and has the spirit of God living within them, surrounded by other believers, they hear the words and the warnings of Jude and they're motivated to do just what Paul told Timothy, and that is to flee these things, to flee unbelief and pride and immorality, and instead pursue righteousness and godliness and faith and love and steadfastness and gentleness. You see, when he tells us in verse three to contend for the faith, part of contending for the faith once for all delivered is demonstrating the impact in our life of the faith that is once for all delivered to the saints.

And so what I want to show you is basically, it's just the antithesis of the first three, instead of unbelief, the gospel, what does it produce? First, a growing faith. We should ask ourselves, instead of standing over the word and not believing God, is my faith growing as evidence that I have an appetite for Godliness? Hebrews Chapter 11:1 says that, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen." That means that faith is simply believing what God has said is true, and then beginning to organize and live our life as though God's promises were absolutely going to come to pass. In other words, faith evidences itself by reflecting God's promises. And so if you see this picture and you see this amazing reflection of the mountain, you know what happens when there's water, right? You see a reflection.

Now, here's what he's saying. This is what faith is, okay? Let's just assume that the mountain is God's promise and the reflection is our faith. If you could not see the mountain but you saw within the water that reflection, you would have a really good understanding of what that mountain was supposed to look like and what it does look like. And similarly, if there was no water, which means there was no reflection and you just saw the mountain, but if you could imagine with your eyes a lake underneath that mountain, you could imagine what the reflection would look like because it would be basically the counterpoint to the mountain, right? The mountain is the promises of God, the reflection is the faith of the believer.

In other words, when God comes to us and he says, "I desire for you to take some of your resources and give it to kingdom causes." That is a command. And then he says a promise, "And I promise I'm going to take care of your needs." And then all of a sudden, faith comes behind it, and we either believe that promise or we don't. We either distort the image or the reflection of what he's commanded, or we imitate. We give a good reflection or a bad reflection. In other words, in everything that God is calling us to do, the life of faith leads other people to look at our life and say, "You really must believe that God is going to fulfill his promise." So ask, are you growing in your faith?

The second thing that he tells us, false teachers, was pride. And so instead of pride, the gospel produces growing humility. You see, the longer we consider the gospel, the holiness of God and our personal sin, the amazing cross of Jesus and the mercy that is given to everybody who believes in Jesus, the less we mistake ourselves as the hero of this world. And when you understand that you're not the hero of this world or even of your world, your prayer will begin to intensify. Prayer is simply the language of humility, saying, "I can't, I need help." And not only will prayer intensify, but serving will feel more natural and yielding to God's word will become more regular.

Isaiah 66 verse two says this, God says, "Look, this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and who trembles at my word." So is humility growing in your life? I found this to be true in my Christian life and the Christian life, is the deeper and taller I get as a believer, meaning that the more mature I get, the more certain I am that it's not about me. Do you evaluate the Bible or do you allow the Bible to evaluate you? Is humility growing in your life? That's one of the fruits of the gospel.

Last, instead of perverting grace into a license for sexual immorality, the gospel produces growing holiness, a growing appetite for godliness. You see, the false teachers, they pervert grace into a license for sin, but listen to what Paul says grace will do. The grace of God has appeared training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives. This is what grace does. It doesn't say, "Hey, use me as the license for your own sin" Grace says, "I'm going to change your heart and be your coach to train you to love Godliness."

God created sex. Colossians 1:16 says, "All things were created through him and for him," including sexuality. And so when he talks about sensuality, when he talks about sexual immorality and he talks about pursuing unnatural desire, which is homosexuality, all these things are wrapped up in the fact that God created us with sexual impulse. And friends, one of the reasons that God did this was to give us category strong enough in our own life to describe the absolute goodness of being near the Lord and the absolute horror of being far from him.

You look at Ezekiel 16 and Jeremiah Chapter three, and what God does is He looks down upon the earth, and in order to give us a category, he says, "Look, I want to find something that you can identify with of what it feels like to be so close to me." And the metaphor that he chooses among all human experiences is the fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman. And then when He says, "If you want to know the absolute horror of being far from me, of being distant from me and all that that feels like," he chooses the human experience of adultery to compare that to.

You see, you may not know this, but you actually have a sexual impulse not just to have fun and not just to have kids, but to give you a category that points you to Jesus, that you need him more than anything. God gave this gift of safe house called marriage between one man and one woman. I know that culture has normalized immorality and homosexuality, and I know that our sexual desires diverge from God's word every day, but Romans tells us that our own desires, whether they be gay or straight, are not a safe guide for direction because they are all distorted and broken. Romans 1:21 speaks of our heart that's been sinful, and it says that our hearts became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

You see, friends, our sexual desires, on their own, will lead away from God's will every single time, which is why we have to give authority to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. When you rest upon something that is deeper and wider than your own survival and existence, it gives you confidence. This has been given to us from God Himself who loves us so much that He would kill His son to get us back. The gospel is our only hope for healing in this area. Our desires are broken, they are twisted, which is why 1 Corinthians 6 says, "Do not be deceived, for neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God."

You know when people come to faith in Jesus Christ, sometimes he changes the very temptations in our life. I said that really poorly. He changes our ability to respond to temptations, where sometimes the very desires of our heart change instantaneously and for the rest of our life. But for many people, that's not the case. For many people, it becomes a wrestling match until death. But when we give ourselves to Jesus Christ, we consecrate our very being every day to him. What happens is God almighty actually leads us not to indulge in the flesh that day, but to keep ourselves from the edge of immorality in the hope of a greater reward. I urge you to wait for the greater reward.

I know some of you, you're like, "Well, this church clearly is not for me because I have impulses and desires that I do believe are right." I want you to know something, wherever you're at, I want you to know I'm so glad that you're here. You may struggle with unbelief in severe ways. You may struggle with pride in severe ways. You may struggle with homosexuality, immorality, perversion, pornography, whatever it is. You are in a really safe place because the church is supposed to be a hospital for broken people. He wants you to come. But Jesus' own ministry was characterized by two things: truth and grace. One does not minimize the other. What he's saying is this, "This is the truth, this is what is good for you, but I love you so much that I'm willing, if you'll turn to me, to give you grace. As a church family, that is precisely how we want to live.

So let me encourage you in response to all this to examine your heart for evidences of grace. Are you trusting Jesus? Are you reading his word? Are you responding in faith? Are you submitting to his rightful authority? Are you obeying God's good design in every area of your life?

Let me pray. Father, I ask that you would be gracious to us. I ask Father that you would give clarity where there's a lack of it, that you would give encouragement where there's discouragement. I pray, Father, that you would comfort those in the room that recognize, just like myself, that my life is represented in verses five, six and seven. I pray, Father, that you would root out unbelief and pride, that you would root out immorality in our hearts, and you would continue to train us as a congregation to have an appetite for Godliness. And as we sing to you now, the great desire of our heart is to honor you. As we give, the great desire is to honor you. We want more people to know about Jesus because everybody is a sinner just like me and us. So Father, we thank you that you sent Jesus, and Jesus, you became the cornerstone of our life, and we want to build every part of our life upon you. We love you, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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