

“A Hole in the Bucket”

Jude 4

June 20th, 2021

A father and son went fishing one day. After an hour out in the boat, the boy became curious about the world around him. He asked his Dad, “How does this boat float?” The father thought for a moment, then replied, “Don’t rightly know, son.”

The boy returned to his contemplation, then turned back to his father, “How do fish breathe underwater?” Once again the father replied, “Son, I don’t rightly know.”

A little later the boy asked his father, “Why is the sky blue?” Again, the father replied. “Don’t rightly know.”

Worried he was going to annoy his father, the boy asks “Dad, do you mind me asking you all these questions?” “Of course not son. If you don’t ask questions, you’ll never learn anything!”

Today is a special day because it is Sunday, the first day of a new week. It is also the Christian Sabbath, which the New Testament calls, the “Lord’s Day.” Sunday is important because we gather together as the body of Christ in the Lord’s house with His people. It’s a day of worship as we come together for that purpose, it’s a day of rest, and it’s also a day to minister mercy to those in need.

Secondarily, today is important because it’s that day when we celebrate the men we call “Dad.” Happy Father’s Day, Dads! Amazingly, it was last Father’s Day (June 21, 2020) when Trinity Church re-opened for in-person worship during the pandemic (52 Sundays ago). That glorious re-opening followed 14 Sundays where Trinity Church was closed to in person worship. Some have not yet returned for in person worship through all of those Sundays - 66 of them! That’s a year and a quarter! If you’re watching this service virtually, please let us know you are, especially if you’re a member of Trinity Church. I really miss you being here.

Today is the third sermon in our 9 week sermon series through the New Testament book of Jude, which I’ve called “Contending for the Faith.” To this point, we’ve studied the first three verses, and the business before us today is the 4th verse. Remember, there is only one chapter in this book of Jude, it’s 25 verses long. So that we have the proper context of verse 4, we’ll read both verses 3 and 4.

Jude 3 & 4:

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. **4** For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In verse 3, which we studied last Sunday, we learned the purpose Jude had in mind for his audience was that they contend earnestly to defend the Christian faith. Jude's readers were to take up spiritual arms and defend the doctrine taught in sacred Scripture. ***This means the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground.*** It's not for sissies; it's not for the weak, nor for the timid. The threat these Christians were to contend against is spelled out in verse 4 - "ungodly men."

By "ungodly men", Jude means those who oppose God, who fight against Him, who don't honor Him in their lives. It includes their refusal to subject themselves to God, and acting independently of Him. We remember that Christ died for us. In **Romans 5:6**, the Apostle Paul pegs **US** as "the ungodly." That verse reads, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." All people in their sins are ungodly. You're either godly or you're ungodly; either you're in Christ, or you're outside of Christ; you're of the seed of the woman, or you're of the seed of the serpent. *What do you say? Does your life say to others that you're a believer in Jesus, or does it show you're really not a believer in Jesus?*

Notice the method of these ungodly men - Jude writes they "have crept in unnoticed." *Crept in what unnoticed?* Well, they crept into the fellowship and membership of the Church unnoticed for what they really believed and propagated. They may even hold an office in the church, some without first having a saving relationship with Jesus Christ! Unbelievably, some may have even been Bible teachers - pastors - without regenerate hearts or sanctified minds. Imagine that - a shepherd who has access to the sheep with little or no opposition. That is the description of a cult.

To hold membership in a Presbyterian congregation, you must first give evidence of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ to the elders of the local church. The only requirement to hold church membership is to have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The only two parties who know for certain whether you're a Christian are you and the Lord. Elders hearing your profession of faith listen for evidences. You'll remember, for those who hold membership in Trinity Church, the elders asking questions to determine whether you have a genuine salvation or not. Even with your answers, the elders can only go by what you reveal and the experience they may have with you. It's really not hard for a person to parrot what he thinks you want to hear. And, that also means, it's not that difficult for a person to enter the fellowship of the church with impure motives.

Jude says further these men crept in **unnoticed**. The *NIV* has here "secretly slipped in among you." They may have befriended some people in the church family, and were welcomed into friendships with those already within the church. Nobody noticed they held to error or heresy, at least early on.

They were like the boys who wanted to see the circus, but couldn't afford the price of admission. So they lifted up the bottom of the big top tent and snuck in without being noticed.
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Or they were like the burglar who studied your coming and goings during the week, and noticed that you didn't lock your back door. So, one day after you left the house, the burglar walked right in and robbed you of many of your valuables.

In this 2nd letter to his protege Timothy, Paul wrote similar words, "...in the last days perilous times will come: **2**...men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, **3** unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, **4** traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! **6** For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts."

Ungodly men prey upon the weak; they swallow up those with shallow understanding of the Bible (they are typically the ones who don't participate in a Sunday School class or participate in worship on Sunday, or a Bible study during the week). Those who rarely read their Bibles can easily be swayed by those who do and have ill intent. It's a tragic byproduct of the pandemic that those with only a passing relationship with the church before it began, now have almost nothing to do with church. The enemy doesn't have to work very hard on them.

I'll expand upon the next clause in an upcoming message ("who long ago were marked out for this condemnation"). For now, we'll jump to the last two phrases, which teach that these ungodly men were "turning the grace of God into lewdness" and "denying our Lord and Father Jesus Christ."

The word "turn" can also be translated "pervert," to "change," or "alter." Rather than modeling a life dedicated to increasing in conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, these ungodly men exercised their freedom by living however they pleased - in this case, that meant continued sensuality. This means they lived loosely with sexual pleasure. "Lewdness" is indecency, gratifying the lusts of the flesh. They changed the grace of God into a license for immorality. As such they were undercutting the moral imperatives of the Christian faith. We live in a permissive time.

Unless you've taken your television and computer to E-waste because you've become disgusted with our culture, you are aware of the sexual craziness and confusion apparent everywhere you look in our day. Men intimate with men, women intimate with women, men and women intimate with each other outside the bounds of marriage, premarital sex, living together outside of marriage, pornography run rampant, men wanting to become women, women wanting to become men...all of these matters are outside of God's intent for sexual relations and identity within the bonds of holy matrimony - one man and one woman for life.

You've heard the 5 initials often used today to identify 5 sexual perversions (at least according to the Bible) - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer - LGBTQ plus!) Those 5 letters make up another acronym, one that actually reveals how this is happening.

Letting Go of Biblical Truth Quickly (LGBTQ)

To engage in such extra-biblically sanctioned sexual practices is to enslave oneself. These are not freedoms or liberties; they're life dominating sins that only the grace of God in Christ can free people from. To engage in them, to even approve of them, is to deny God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

But, the evil one is working overtime.

Fellow Illinoisians this past week, I attended a conversation with a local state representative who shared with us copies of a children's book that may become part of the statewide public school curriculum in Illinois. The book, the title of which I'll not publicize, is pornography in cartoon form. I cannot imagine Christian parents desiring such filth being taught to their children.

Recently passed legislation on sex education in Illinois schools is awaiting the governor's signature, Senate Bill 818.

The bill, which passed in both the state Senate and House, calls for classes that teach comprehensive personal health and safety and comprehensive sexual health education to be age and developmentally appropriate, medically accurate and trauma informed.

The bill also says course materials may not reflect or promote bias on the basis of family structure, gender identity, sexual orientation or other factors.

Whether you're a Christian or not, if you're against such anti-biblical indoctrination (which is what this is, not education, but indoctrination), then let your local school board know - contact the board members, let them know how you feel, and attend the meetings to air your grievances in public. Contact the governor's office and suggest he not bow to the pressure efforts seeking to overthrow the Christian faith, especially in the public square. Many are now exploring other means of educating their children.

One last point - on denying Jesus the place of ultimate honor and rule, this has been in the liberal church for years. This is the way it goes - "Jesus was a great figure, to be sure, but only one among many." According to verse 4, Jesus is our only Master, our only Lord God. And we answer to Him, not the other way around.

To attempt to accommodate the culture into the church is precisely opposite the way it works. The church, having met for worship each first day of the week, is to then go into the culture and bring the Scriptures to bear there. The church is not to bring the culture into the church. For professing Christian fathers to be lackadaisical about developing their children's faith and not attend worship or participate in the life of the church is to do the work of ungodly men. It's like trying to carry water in a bucket that has a great big hole. You will answer to God for doing little or nothing to bring your children to Jesus face to face.

On the other hand, godly men take the initiative to raise their children in the church. There is no more important responsibility we have, Dads, than to make the church priority number 1 for our children - Jesus did, and He gave His life for the church.

Charles Francis Adams, son of President John Quincy Adams and grandson of President John Adams, kept a diary. One day he entered: "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted."

His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. On that same day, Brook Adams made this entry: "Went fishing with my father—the most wonderful day of my life!" The father thought he was wasting time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time.

The only way to tell the difference between wasting and investing is to know one's ultimate purpose in life and to judge accordingly