

Walk the Talk

Jude 16-19

August 1st, 2021

A bus driver and a minister were standing in line to enter heaven. The bus driver approached the gate and St. Peter said, "Welcome, I understand you were a bus driver. Since I'm in charge of housing, I've found the perfect place for you. *See that mansion over the hilltop?* It's yours.

The minister overheard this and stood a little taller. He thought to himself, "If a bus driver got a place like that, just think what I'll get." The minister approached the gate, and St. Peter said, "Welcome, I understand you were a minister. *See that shack in the valley?*" St. Peter had hardly gotten the *words* out of his mouth when the irate minister said, "I was a minister, I preached the gospel, I taught people about God. Why does that bus driver get a mansion, and I get a shack?"

Sadly St. Peter responded, "Well, it seems when you preached, people slept. When the bus driver drove, people prayed."

As a person thinks, so he acts. As a person acts, so he thinks. This maxim is almost always true; occasionally, however, something comes out of a person's mouth that is contrary to his character. And, at least for a time, some people disguise their true behavior, so that they seemingly operate contrary to their beliefs. Such is the deceptive life our crooked hearts naturally devise for us!

If you find yourself on a path you don't wish to travel, you can change. But, change for the spiritually dead hearts with which we are born only comes through God's Holy Spirit. When the Spirit awakens us from the spiritual stupor with which we come into this world, only then are we quickened to live the life of grace God designed us to live.

As I wrestled with the text before us today from Jude (verses 16-19), themes came to mind like sincerity, genuineness, and integrity. *Who among us wouldn't want to be known for our sincerity, genuineness, or integrity?* Probably very few of us, if any. Your heart's desire, contrary to those Jude targets in today's verses, should be to live as men and women of integrity. We should want to be known as people who carry through on the promises we make, as people who speak the truth in love, and who want our walk to be consistent with our talk. *Right?*

For the final time in his brief letter, Jude once again focuses on the ungodly men infiltrating the church and characteristic traits for which the church should be on the lookout. Steering clear of them and where necessary, confronting them with the true gospel is to be the aim and work of every Christian man, woman, or young person.

Jude 16-19:

“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling *words*, flattering people to gain advantage. **17** But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: **18** how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. **19** These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.”

Two points are evident in these 4 verses:

MP 1 - Walking with the Willfully Wayward (v. 16, 18-19)

MP 2 - Warned with Words (v. 17)

Verse 16 gives five tell-tale behaviors of false Christians.

- **Grumblers.** To grumble and moan are distinguishing marks of man or woman without God. Unfortunately, this describes many Christians. Grumblers are dissatisfied with life. Like Rolling Stone Mick Jagger has sung, “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction.” Grumbling insults the God who gives us all things; to grumble is to forget that whatever befalls us, nothing can separate us from God’s love, nor deprive us of that most priceless of all treasures the Lord’s presence in our lives.
- **Complainers.** Such people bemoan the place God has given them in life and thus they direct their criticism toward God. They consider God responsible for their adversities, losses, and disappointments. Instead of complaining, Christians ought to portray what we find in **Philippians 2:14-16** - “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”
- **People who walk according to their own lusts.** This phrase also appears in **Jude 18** and **2 Peter 3:3**. This is to live by leaving God out of one’s life. These people do not want God to tell them how to live. They want to live like they want to live - without any supervision or oversight from anyone else. If they are professing Christians, they typically no longer attend worship, and no longer watch it on line. They may feel condemned; and that’s a good thing because that shame God intends to bring them back home.

How else can you make sense, for instance, of two professing Christians who live together sinfully, cohabitating with a potential spouse before they are actually married? If this pegs you, friend, please stop living like the world. Get married - really soon - I'll help you with that. Be a person of biblical integrity. You are grieving the hearts of those who love you, to include almighty God doing what you're doing. Make this wrong situation right and do the right thing and get married...or move out.

- **Mouthing great swelling words.** Boastful comments that are empty, without substance, and baseless. It's hot air; fluff; noise. "Mouthing great swelling words" is to toot your own horn, and toot it loudly!

Several of my supervisors during my Air Force time directed me to write my own annual work appraisal; we called them performance reports. Many of you are familiar with this practice - your supervisor lets you know how you're doing in the organization, workcenter, and the like. It's a document you sign and is placed in your personnel folder. The thought behind requiring me to write my own performance report was that I knew all of my accomplishments, awards, and community service, so it would be better for me to write my appraisal so I'd be sure to include them. It was a difficult thing because you had to pat yourself on the back. If you didn't, someone else may get the promotion that could be yours.

- **Flattery.** Flattering people to gain advantage. Puffed up words someone uses to win over the rich, famous, or privileged in the hopes of winning their favor. Flatterers do not typically have anything good in mind for others; they are looking to manipulate others.

Jumping to verse 18, we see another characteristic of the fake Christians Jude writes about - there would be "mockers." Mockers are scoffers, hecklers, needlers, and ridiculers. They make a tragedy of all that is holy and sacred. To mock God is a very serious charge - **Galatians 6:7 & 8** teach that. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. **8** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

Verse 19 is an apt summary of what Jude has taught in the first 19 verses of his letter. "These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit."

- "Sensual persons" are **fleshly persons**. They follow their natural instincts. They exist contrary to people who are filled with the Holy Spirit (spiritual people). This verse says that is so because such people do not have the Spirit.
- They are therefore also **divisive people**. Spiritually unregenerate people (unsaved) - serving in offices/capacities that should be filled with spiritual people

- naturally erect barriers between themselves and others. We shouldn't be spending so much time on what divides us - like politics, skin color, ethnic heritage, vaccines, face coverings, identity; instead, we should be maximizing what we have in common. That starts with a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, you and I have much in common. In addition to being saved, we also know that our identity is in Christ and not in our sin. Our hope is in the Lord, not in "free government money" or questionable healthcare.

Backing up to verse 17 we have a different point, albeit a very short one, for the time being. **We, church, are warned with words.** Jude reminds his readers, "But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Despite what he wrote about the ungodly men attacking the people of God, Jude now highlights where our lifeblood is as Christians - the apostolic Word of God. In other words, he means that the words of sacred Scripture found in the Holy Bible are the key to contending for the Christian faith. God's apostles, through the letters they wrote under the inspiration of God Himself, have given us all we need to know for faith and victory over sin and death.

Michael W. Smith's song, "Ancient Words" captures this well:

"Holy words long preserved for our walk in this world-
They resound with God's own heart, Oh, let the ancient words impart.

Words of life, words of hope give us strength, help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam ancient words will guide us Home.

Ancient words ever true, changing me, and changing you
We have come with open hearts. Oh, let the ancient words impart."

MP 1 - Walking with the Willfully Wayward (v. 16, 18-19) Grumblers, complainers, those who walk according to their lusts, boasters, flatterers, and mockers. Sensual persons, divisive people, who do not have the Spirit of the Lord. In a word - sinners!

MP 2 - Warned with Words (v. 17) God's apostles have warned the New Testament church by their words of the threat of false doctrine to the church.

Henry Heinz was born to German immigrants in Pittsburgh, PA. After graduating from college and getting married, he started a business selling horse radish. In 1875, a national financial collapse drove the young company into bankruptcy. Despite the legal freedom bankruptcy gave him, Heinz regarded each of the company's outstanding debts as a moral obligation and personally paid back every penny.

Heinz went on to found the H.J. Heinz Company with its 57 varieties and became a leading American businessman. A devout Christian, he was known for the generous treatment of his employees and his generosity to Christian causes. Throughout his life Heinz conducted his business and personal dealings with the same integrity that led him to pay back hundreds of thousands of thousands of dollars he technically did not owe. He began his will with these words: "I desire to set forth at the very beginning of this will as the most important item in it a confession of my faith in Jesus Christ as my Saviour."