

October 8, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Title of the Message: "Avoid Disbelief"

- Opening One's Eyes to the Truth -

Text: Jude 1:1 - 7

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

1) We are going to start reading the "Jude." The letter of Jude is 1 chapter and only 25 verses. The author of this letter is Jude. In verse 1, Jude describes himself as the brother of James; however, we don't know which James. There are many theories, so we'd like to put that aside. The name of Jude means "Praise the Lord."

- The recipient of this letter is not revealed. Given the context, it is likely Jewish Christians.

The purpose of this letter is indicated in verse 2.

1:3 Dear friends, 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 for all entrusted to the saints.

2) To understand the reason for its writing, we need to know the historical background of Roman society at that time. Jude wrote this letter roughly in the late first or early second century. At the time, the Roman Empire was in its heyday. The era was called Pax Romana, or the "Peace of Rome." Politics, economics, culture, and religion were flourishing. Yet, it was a time when there was no "true faith."

So, it was a difficult time for Christians. In prosperity, people were concerned only with the things of the world, they were man-centered, and lived as they pleased. There are many temptations in a society that has grown rich, where people cling to their wealth and seek to satisfy their desires. Often, sexual morality is also distorted.

In such an environment, Christians were also in danger of being carried away by the world-centered trends. Therefore, Jude wrote this letter to the Christians, urging them to be aware of "covetousness and immorality." As such, Jude wrote a letter to them, encouraging them to be careful about two things: greed and immorality.

The Roman Empire at that time resembled the state of our modern society. The media outlets of present-day Japan, which include TV, magazines, DVDs, etc., are inundated with vulgar content. They pollute people's minds and make them feel no guilt about wrongdoing and immorality. Many people do not know God and do not fear Him. Rather, their greatest concern is how to live and how to enjoy life in this world.

3) Therefore, the Letter of Jude is also a valuable wake-up call to this modern society, nation, and world. The Letter of Jude, which is almost 2,000 years old, speaks to us today in an important way. This is because the Bible is God's book.

Main Points

1) The Blessed Status of Being a Christian

Jude 1:1 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:

- As I have said, the forces of darkness that seek to destroy the faith are rushing toward the godly Christian and the Church of Jesus Christ. It is carnality that will bring about the destruction of faith. No one can prevail against it. The power of evil is that strong.
- The author of Jude wrote about the blessed status of being a Christian. He wrote that the Christian's position is to be loved by God and protected by Jesus Christ. What a blessed position! We are loved and protected by the Creator God. It is important to remember that we are God's children and that our existence has its roots in God's calling and divine invitation.
- It is difficult for those who do not have the awareness that they are loved by God to walk in peace and love. The awareness (or conviction) that one is loved by God is the beginning of the Christian life of faith.

[Sample Story]

Recently we often hear about child abuse. There was a case in which a young child died after being thrown outdoors in a cold shower in the middle of winter due to the selfishness (greed) of the parents, without receiving any love from them.

The parents were arrested by the police on charges of child abuse, and during the interrogation process it was revealed that the parents had also been abused by their parents. It is very heartbreaking. This is the state of those who do not know the true, living God (ignorance).

- The author Jude wrote at the beginning of his letter that those who believe in God are the beloved of God. He further stated.

Jude 1:2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

- We are given God's mercy, peace (shalom), and love. Those who are loved by God will be able to love others properly. It is not by our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.
- So we can stand worthy in God instead of being defeated by the power of evil temptation. That is what God both desires and delights in.
- How, then, should we live? Jude recommends the following.

2. Avoid Unbelief

1) Fight for the Faith

Jude 1:3 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.

Jude said to fight for the faith. No one wants to fight. It is something to be avoided if possible. But the Bible says, "Fight for the faith." Why is this?

- ① The battle is not just man's fight. It is the Lord's battle. The Lord fights. The One who is the Maker of the world fights in me and with me. It is also for me to know Him (in the battle).
- ② The battle of faith results in growth in the Lord. God trains us in the battle of faith and raises us up to be worthy children of God. Victory is promised to us because God is the victor in the battle.

- So what do we need when we fight for our faith?

⇒ Complete Trust in God

God speaks through His Word, and the Holy Spirit intervenes as "another Helper." There we can experience God.

2) Utilize Grace

Jude 1:4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

- Here is what is written about the one we are fighting (the enemy). The enemy is that which denies Jesus Christ. They are the ungodly ones who sneak in, the evil ones who turn God's grace into licentiousness (license to sin). They will surely be judged.

- The heresy that was popular at the time was "Gnosticism." Gnostics believed that "only the spirit is good, and physical matter is intrinsically evil. Therefore, the body is intrinsically evil. Therefore, man can do whatever he wants with his body. One can do whatever one likes, as much as one likes." This was their assertion.
- God's grace had been perverted and an excuse for open sin had been created. Hence, they became deniers of Jesus Christ. They claimed to believe in Christ with their mouths, but their attitude in life was one of refusal to be ruled by Him and refusal to serve Him.
- So the author Judah said to recall (remember).

3) Recall

Jude 1:5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

- The Israelites once perished in the wilderness because of their unbelief. They were freed from slavery in Egypt by the power of miracles. Nevertheless, they fell into unbelief in the wilderness and turned their backs on God. They lost faith in God and were eventually destroyed by God's wrath.
- Remember that God is the one who judges harshly those who disobey Him.

② Jude 1:6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

- A second example is the judgment of the fallen angels (consider Satan). Angels lived a free life in the light of heaven and had a great position. Even Satan fell because of his own arrogance. As a result, he was locked up under darkness in eternal chains.
- This was a warning to the false teachers who were carnal. This was a warning to false teachers who perverted God's grace and used it as an excuse for their own immorality.

③ Jude 1:7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah 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.

- A third example is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were so morally corrupt that they were destroyed. The punishment of God's wrath was an illustration of what fell because of human sin. God's judgment is not limited to fallen angels. It extends to all who love iniquity.

In Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Avoid Disbelief"

- Opening One's Eyes to the Truth -

- Our Lord spoke to us this morning. During the time of the early church, Gnosticism and other heresies were raging.
- The precious blood of God's Son, Jesus Christ, had been shed, yet the saints who had received God's salvation and were loved by God were being greatly tempted. Some saints were falling away from the faith. Jude was very distressed by this.
- Jude sent letters of exhortation to "Avoid disbelief." And this message still speaks to us today.

Then, how should we live? The Word of God advises the following.

Hebrews: 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

* God bless you !