

2Peter 11-10-21a

This is Friday, the 21st of October, 2011. We are in the book of 2nd Peter. We're looking at chapter 2 and we are putting on our stereo glasses and also looking at the book of Jude.

We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we will begin. Father, we thank you for this day and the opportunity to spend time together studying your word, the blessings that we enjoy through fellowship and through the ministry of your spirit to encourage us, to strengthen us and to equip us for every good work. We ask your blessing on us as we look at this portion of your word together.

May each one of us find in it a meaningful, pertinent, and strengthening truths that will focus our attention and our sense of purpose and help us to fulfill your plan in our lives. We pray it in Jesus name. Amen.

This section, as I mentioned last week in 2nd Peter is very closely paralleled in the letter of Jude. And so I have put a handout together here that gives you the two sections side by side. And one of the things that this helps us with, we've already seen the purpose for which Peter is writing.

And we are essentially very similar to his original audience. He was writing to the Jews of the Diaspora, to people who had been uprooted and were essentially pilgrims, strangers and aliens in a culture that did not support their beliefs, that did not encourage their faith, that did not offer them external sustenance or support for their identity as the people of God. And it is the same with us.

We have to look for our sense of purpose and direction and mission from within. And we are having to, in many ways, fend off our culture and our civilization, our society, rather than finding it a home and a place of welcome and of harmony and of sympathy. It is hostile.

It is contrary. It slows us down and seeks to distract us from the purpose for which God has put us here. Now, it should pretty much go without saying, but I will say it anyway, we need to live in the light of our purpose.

There is no fulfillment, there is no satisfaction, there is no genuine happiness to be found, to be possessed, to be enjoyed in this life, apart from fulfilling our God-given purpose. I was interested to watch, I was having an episode of wakefulness in the middle of the night. I had been asleep.

I woke up. I thought, well, here I am awake, and I remedy that in various ways. But I looked at a documentary on George Harrison, the third Beatle, you know, three out of four.

And he was an interesting guy. But one of the things that came out in that documentary film, as they interviewed him when he was alive, he said, you know, he and John Paul and Ringo hit this great fame and success. And within a short time, they had everything that secular life has to offer

at their fingertips.

They could literally have anything. They could literally do anything, go anywhere. And he said it was a curious experience because they tried a lot of that stuff and very quickly reached its limits.

They very quickly became sated and found that it didn't offer the promise that they figured it would. They had hoped to be successful. They had hoped to achieve some material success, some fame, some, you know, to be able to get these things.

Well, once they had them, they very quickly ran to the tether. And it's a very common theme. Many, many famous people have hit this point and realized that you just can't get to where you think you will go through any form of natural human achievement, any materialistic.

So this is why he ended up going to India. He went on a spiritual journey because the material side of things wasn't getting it. He was no happier with all of these things than he had been before.

And he began to go looking in a spiritual direction. And, you know, the other Beatles went with him because they all came to the same conclusion. This isn't the be all and end all of life.

We've got every measure of success you could ask for. And we're hollow inside where there's something missing. And so they went on this, you know, looking at the meditation deal.

And that's a short way or maybe even a not so short way of saying that we likewise are not going to be happy. Nobody is until we discover the purpose for which we exist. And it is relationship with the God of the universe.

We are built for a relationship with him and we will never be satisfied. We will never be happy. We will never achieve that recognition of purpose and genuine fulfillment, genuine peace apart from him.

And, of course, that relationship is through Christ. Well, this is a truth that the world, the flesh and the devil do everything they can to cover up and obscure, obfuscate, hide, fog up, make difficult to find. So what I want to do is point out, as we do our study in 2 Peter, Jude, short little book, encapsulates this.

And really it's the book of Jude is a lot shorter than it looks. If you turn with me to the book of Jude, I want to point out something here, because most of Jude is support for its central premise. And if you just slip that out of the way, you'll find that the central tenet is expressed in just a very few verses.

So if you have turned to the book of Jude, I'm going to read the book of Jude, leaving out the support, leaving out the explanation, so to speak. Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus

Christ. In other words, Jude is writing to us.

He is writing to people who have figured out that relationship with God is the central thing in life. Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you. 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.

So there is a faith that has been delivered to people who want relationship with God. And Jude says, I am writing to you to contend for that faith, to fight for it, fight to hold on to it, fight to preserve it, fight to keep its truth central and alive. Why? Verse four, for certain men have crept in unnoticed who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turned the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

You've got to fight for it because it is under attack. It is being subverted by sneaky people. Skip to verse 20, because five through 19 is support for the idea that it's under attack and the judgment that is coming to those people who attack it.

So certain men have crept in unnoticed. They deny the Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But you, beloved, verse 20, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.

And this ought to be kind of ringing a bell. This is our memory verse, right? Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto with a view toward, ace, E-I-S, eternal life. On some have compassion, making a distinction, but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy to God, our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. One through four and 20 through 25 are the heart of this letter.

And five through 19 is really an excursus on the judgment that is coming to those who miss it and on the nature of the attack that makes it essential for us to contend, to hold out for, to push for, to be militant on behalf of the faith that has been once for all delivered to us. And how do we contend for it? We build ourselves up on this most holy faith because it is God, our Savior, who alone is wise. There's no other wisdom worth pursuing.

There's no other way of life worth going after than this one. So this is the substance. Interestingly, verses five through 19 are what are so closely paralleled in 2 Peter.

The nature of the attack on relationship with God, on the content of our faith. So this is what we are looking at. Now, if you've got the handout and if you're either listening remotely or remotely geographically or remotely in time, listening to this recording at some time in the future, in the 2

Peter folder, we have this handout that those of you who are here have got printed out already.

And what this is, is a parallel for the verses in Jude and the verses in 2 Peter that we are looking at. You can see that there's even a parallel in the salutation, particularly the second verse where Jude says, mercy, peace and love be multiplied. Peter says, grace and peace be multiplied.

So when you look at that parallel, you can see that what Peter calls grace, Jude calls mercy and love. And that's a great way to define grace. It's God's mercy and God's love toward us.

And both of them call for these to be multiplied. This is the only thing worth multiplying. We try to multiply accomplishments.

We try to multiply money. We try to multiply possessions. We try to multiply friendships.

I'm in the midst of looking at a concept and it has come out in in a couple of different books. A lady has written an entire book about what the current communication technology is doing to the fabric of our human relationships. How do we relate to one another? All of us have seen this, particularly those of us that are a few decades older.

The shift, there has been a huge sea change paradigm shift in how human beings relate with one another through digital technology, through text, through the Internet. The whole phenomenon of communication is different. Watch a movie set back in World War Two.

How do people relate? They go to a party. They go over to someone's house. They'll gather around the piano.

They will sing. They will converse in groups. Even as recently as the 1980s, this was still largely the case.

I don't recommend this movie, but if you have seen the movie, which title I will give you in a moment, with William Hurt and the theme song of it was they started out playing I Heard It Through the Grapevine. But all these people gather to go to a funeral for their friend who committed suicide. No, no, although that might be another one, the Big Chill.

Yeah, the Big Chill. But look at the look at the conceit. Look at the situation that that movie sets up.

A bunch of people get together and spend a weekend all together. And they were college friends. They've split up and now they've all come back together.

It's a terrible movie in a lot of ways, but the music was was not bad. And some. But I mainly pointed out that the whole thing is a conversation.

It's a long conversation between a lot of people. They're not texting each other. They're not emailing each other.

They're not friending each other. They're not looking at each other's wall or each other's Facebook pictures or each other's LinkedIn profiles. They're talking, they're sitting around, they're throwing a football back and forth.

They're riding in a car with one another. They're in a room with one another. They're pairing up in different ways, good and bad to to converse.

Well, this is in many ways disappearing as a part of our culture. It is greatly diminished. Church is one of the last bastions of face to face fellowship for people.

Church and corporate meetings where you're forced into a room with the people you work with are sadly. And if you think that's good, you know, that's some things need to die. But I mean, I can't think of a faster way to waste more people's time than to have a work meeting.

But that's another subject. Here's my point. There is a difference and this everybody can say, oh, isn't it awful that we no longer get face to face and talk? And of course it is.

But think about this. Our ability to meditate, to engage in quality thought is being diminished. The problem with this isn't just that, oh, old langsign, wasn't it great when we all used to gather around the fire and roast chestnuts, et cetera? Here's here's the core difficulty.

Our thought life is being eroded and the way it is being eroded is fragmentation. I will say that again. Our thought life is under attack and the specific nature of the attack.

It's just like what you would do strategically in a military situation. Divide and conquer, split off, drive a wedge, attack the flank, isolate, cut off lines of communication. If you can fragment your enemy, you can defeat him.

And our strength, our identity as believers, hear me now, this is the devil's latest card to play against us. It's the latest spiritual strategy, fragmentation. You think about the day.

Used to be you could be somewhere, whether you're driving, whether you're at home doing a task and. Without radio, without television, without the Internet, without a phone near you that does anything other than ring and convey someone's voice, you'd have long stretches of continuous thought, you could fold a whole basket of laundry and think about an issue, think about a relationship, think about a conversation, pray and think about a recent passage of scripture that was presented or was under discussion that you had read in your devotions. Think about the day we used to have unbroken stretches anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes to a few hours where we could think in a continuous fashion.

You think about now. That text ding is going to happen, somebody has texted, an email has arrived, the phone is going to ring, an email or a instant messenger thing is going to hit. Even when you're at work, you think about the fragmentation, the dividing up of the day.

You don't drive anymore without something going off. You see people all the time walking along. You used to be able to take a walk and be alone with your thoughts.

Now it's earbuds, it's texts. You look around, look around at the number of people that have got something in their hands that they're looking at. And it's you're talking to somebody, oh, here's somebody else.

You're talking to them. Oh, here's somebody else. Here's something else.

I've got a little news notification. Here's the latest news. Qaddafi has been captured and killed.

You know, here's something that's happened in the Wall Street protests. Here's something that's happened with the economy. Here's an announcement from the Fed.

Here's something that's happened in Afghanistan. Here's a headlines, quick little snippets. We get we get these little fragmentary bits of information.

Information is not thought. Information is not thought. Thought is the processing and the analysis and the digesting of information, putting it into a context, weaving it together into something that becomes the basis for conclusions and actions.

Think about the common paradigm we use when we come to scripture. We observe it. Well, that's as far as it gets now in our world.

In many cases, you observe facts are streaming by. You can't even watch the old television anymore without your your attention being diverted. Look at the bottom of your screen.

Now, this never used to be the case. You cannot watch a program without your attention being chopped and divided. Here is a runner.

Here is a logo. Here's people moving around, dancing and jumping in and out of the picture and advertising. We can't just get the commercials in the 17 minutes of the hour that weren't programming.

Now it's got to run during the programming, even become a part of the programming. Patty and I were watching a show a week or two ago, and these people are going to solve a crime. And there's a guy and a girl and they get in the car and they're going to drive somewhere.

And and the guy looks over his shoulder and says, oh, nice third row seating here. Well, Kia is one of the sponsors of the program. They're in a Kia.

And in the dialogue of the program, he's got to mention for no reason at all the third row seating. It's right in the dialogue. Well, you know, I was trying to figure out who done it.

And now somebody is trying to pitch a car at me. But I say all that to say this. We must contend

for our faith.

We've got to contend for our own minds. And because of the onslaught of. Technology that is being pitched at us because this makes people money, every time you divide, there's a gap for commercial.

Every single time you want to go instant message, you ever notice your instant messenger on your on your computer's got a little ad blurb thing down there. Anytime you try to go to the Web, there's ads on both sides, there's ads in the middle. Anytime you try to search for something, you're researching a paper, researching a topic, trying to find out about something so you can make a good decision.

Ads, ads, ads everywhere. These hands that are next to us are soon going to be inside our pocket. And every time there's a division.

You know. It's no longer after watching 15 minutes of something and now a word from our sponsor, remember, Alfred Hitchcock would only come in like at the beginning in the end. Maybe once in the middle, you know, and he would sort of tease the sponsors.

And that itself was entertainment. No longer fragmentation, dividing. Well, the word from your sponsor, every time your attention gets divided and split is the world.

It's not the Holy Spirit. Intruding into our thoughts, it is the world we've got to contend for our faith. This is my this is the premise I want to present as we look at this parallel between second Peter and Jude.

And if you tune out a little bit later, get this much, at least look at what Jude is saying. I am writing to you to encourage you diligently. I am diligently.

I am fervently. I am emphatically writing to you. You must contend for your faith.

If we are passive, we will be washed away. You cannot be passive as a believer. Don't let yourself be carried away.

Men, prophetic men, apostolic men carried the message of Christ because they were moved by the Holy Spirit. We have got to be moved along by that same spirit, not moved along by culture, not moved along by an information stream coming through the fire hose of technology. Our defining purpose, our defining force can't be the information onslaught.

It has to be the faith. There is content in the faith. There is propositional truth.

That is necessary for us to focus on. So with that as background now, I want you to look with me at this parallel and see if you can find a parallel. Both Jude and Peter are writing in the latter days of the first generation of Christians.

Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you. I defy you to find mercy, peace and love being multiplied by headlines and by messages and by blurbs. He doesn't say information be multiplied to you.

He doesn't say, you know, short bits of factoids be multiplied to you. But that's what's multiplied to us today. Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you. If this is going to be true for us, we've got to take steps. Both of these men in their letters, both of these inspired writers in these letters are going to tell us you have got to do something for these things to be multiplied.

Otherwise, other things are going to be multiplied. False teaching will be multiplied, false concepts, false thinking, false attitudes, false conclusions, falsehood and ultimately judgment will be multiplied to us if we don't wake up and take steps. So look under the next heading there, false teachers.

Jude says, Beloved, I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, common salvation. There is an appeal for fellowship. Look at what we have in common.

Notice that right now, and I don't know what technology is going to do, but right now we are constantly split to an individual source. One person texts another person. We don't have or one person tweets a group.

Hi there, I'm Fred Mertz. All of you, thousands of my fans, I just went to the shower. I've just come out from the shower.

I'm now driving to work. I'm coming out of work. I'm a celebrity.

This is what I'm doing today. I'm going to an event. Everybody is at once being told about one individual or individual to individual communication.

Now you think about it, this didn't used to be the case. If you had a one-on-one with somebody, it's because Marge came over for tea or you and Bob went fishing and you had a conversation, not an exchange. That was always a preliminary.

Hi, Bob, how are you doing? Oh, just fine. How's the wife? Oh, she's great. How about your kids? Did your kid get over his broken leg? Oh, his cast comes off next week.

You had this little dance that you did at the beginning, but very soon you would get down to meaningful quality conversation. You would discuss a topic. You would get into a conversation and you would converse.

You would verse with. You would exchange thoughts and pursue thoughts. I think Peter and Jude had a conversation that resulted in these letters going out from each individual man.

They exchanged ideas. They had a quality meeting of the minds. That's fellowship, snippets and bits and little short things.

You cannot engage in thoughtful conversation in snippets. You think about books. I almost brought my Lamartine's History of the Girondists to read a few paragraphs of what thoughtful analysis and commentary is on a topic.

You can't text that, you cannot type that with your thumbs, you can't. You can't do it with emoticons and abbreviations. You know, C-U-L-8-T-E-R, it doesn't doesn't cover it.

You need language. You need complex sentences. Read a typical Criswell sermon.

You need compound complex sentences with vocabulary and with a bringing together of ideas to communicate advanced thought. Our world is getting dumber and the people in it are getting dumber because they don't have time to do anything but snippets. And just trying to ride the flow of information and stay on top of it or ahead of it is all anybody can do.

And what it has done is deflect us from thought. Faith cannot exist on information. Faith requires the content of thought.

And by flooding us with information, we are being separated from our faith. Information alone is a distraction from thinking. So Jude says, I was diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation.

This is something we have in common, something that we share. And I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend, fight earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. The angel Gabriel didn't text Mary.

The angel Gabriel did not write a short note on the wall of the temple for Zacharias telling him that John the Baptist, his son, was going to be born. There was a face to face conversation and there was content communicated that enabled those individuals to either express or fail to express faith. It took Zacharias a little longer than it took Mary.

She picked it right up. Zacharias had to be struck dumb so that he could stop talking and start thinking. And this is what we must have.

We must contend and fight earnestly for our faith. Why? Certain men have crept in unnoticed. As Peter says, there were false prophets among the people.

Even as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in, who will start out, it's just alongside. It's just in my cell phone holster. It's just on my laptop.

It's alongside. Next thing you know, it's in my head. Turn the grace of our God into superficial stimulation.

Ludeness, you say, oh, well, that's porn or something. Ludeness is superficial stimulation. It's a quick thrill.

It's a quick buzz. Oh, did you hear? There's a commercial on TV now talking about how your 4G connection is so much better than 3G because you can find out stuff quicker than the other person. These people are sitting at a tailgate.

Have you seen this? Hey, did you hear? Already got it. I got it 14 seconds ago. Where were you? Now I'm getting information quicker than you.

And that's superficial stimulation. I'm the first to know. I found out before you did.

I can text and tweet and retweet and retransmit and regurgitate and post on my blog. I can be the first. I can I can be in the know.

I've got the I got the pictures faster than you. And jumping from one information fix to the next is ludeness, ludeness, superficial stimulation. It does not partake of quality thought.

It is not beneficial for life, for mercy, for peace, for love. It's a fix. It's a cheap substitute for genuine contentment, genuine progress, particularly for believers in the faith.

You can't think when you're jumping from one little hilltop to the next. They will secretly bring in. They will be beside and suddenly be in with these destructive heresies, destructive paradigms, destructive constructions.

It's a construction that is destruction. And this stuff erodes our minds because it comes so fast there's no longer quality control. I'm trying to follow international events and suddenly I'm finding out about some gal that did or didn't have some procedure.

I'm suddenly finding out about some celebrity because once you get this information stream, you can't block the shallow stuff. It's you there's no way to filter it in a conversation that takes time where there's a group of people in a room, those that have got interesting thoughts can prevail, can argue. You can think you can discriminate.

You can turn off something that is a single source in the room. But when you're getting tweeted and you're subscribed to this that the other and you've got a panoply of friends. By the way, there's been a recent study done and people's Facebook friends, less than a third of the average group of quote unquote friends are actually people that that person knows.

Less than a third are actual what we would qualify as friends. The other two thirds are secondary friends and they are mainly useful if you're in a job hunt and you want to get information about an opportunity. But they're they're an information source.

They are not a relationship of any kind. And most people have got a lot of detritus in their contact

list or in their friend list. It's a friend of a friend.

It's a casual met you once type of thing. It's a it's a security leak more than anything else. Destructive heresies, destructive constructions.

Even denying the Lord who bought them, you say, oh, well, I would never listen to somebody that said Jesus wasn't Lord. Listen, you know how you can deny the Lord that bought you by failing to pay attention to him. You know how a father can deny his children by being so wrapped up in work that he's never there.

You know how a husband or a wife can deny their spouse by being so caught up in other things that they've got no real time, no quality investment in the relationship, in conversation, in sharing heart to heart and mind to mind. You deny them. You deny them yourself.

You deny them the attention they deserve. You deny them what you have covenanted to enter into with them. Marriage is a covenant.

Family is a covenant. Faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ is a covenant. And you deny the Lord by denying him his due.

And the Lord Jesus Christ deserves a piece of our day. The Lord Jesus Christ deserves part of our thought life. And when we allow our thought life to be hijacked and suborned and carried off captive to the world, we deny the Lord that bought us.

It is a destructive heresy. Don't wait for some theologian to come in and offer some twisting of scripture. It has already happened.

The destructive heresy is in the leather holster clipped to your belt or your purse. The destructive heresy is coming out of your laptop or coming off of your flat screen. The perverting and the twisting of the grace of our God into lewdness is no further away than the nearest screen.

We are living in it. Don't think that it was back then or it's over there. It is among us.

It is in our midst. I'm telling you, we are fighting for our survival as believers. We are earnestly contending for our faith if we have any interest at all in trying to preserve it, because it is being washed away by a flood of non-biblical, ungodly information.

By occupying the space where our faith ought to be, it is deceiving us, and we have got to fight for it. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to pick up here in this section on false teachers and see how closely this applies to us in our current situation.