

Hook: The "hidden" mission field of the church.

- There is a vast mission field that goes unnoticed. They are our "lost people" standing toe to toe and linked arm in arm with those who are found.

Our missions month caught me off guard. I was not prepared to talk about missions, but to continue speaking of the resurrection. I feel like how Jude felt in Jude 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 1:3 NIV)

In my case:

- I had eagerly planned to write to you about the resurrection. But I must write to you about something else. - *contending for the faith OR reaching the "unnoticed" lost*

This year we have chosen to focus on our opportunities to be missionaries in our own community and country. When I read the short letter of Jude, I want to add the word "church" to community and country.

The Lord seems to be impressing on my heart this thought of the lost among us — in our midst.

Jude is an interesting little book. It fits into our 3 week time frame of missions month, but more importantly it speaks of missions of a different kind. It speaks of the work of missions not only out there in the world, but right here in the church.

Book: Jude writes to a gathering of believers who are so distracted by self, they constitute a new mission field.

Let's look at a brief overview of the book:

- (1) A description of The New Mission field (Jude 1-16)
- (2) The kind of disciple or the spiritual discipline needed to reach this New Mission field. (17-21)
- (3) The deliverance of those trapped in the new mission field (22-24)

Look at verse 4 - why do you have to contend for the faith? A new mission field has opened up! The mission field of the church.

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. (Jude 1:4 NIV)

I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:4 NLT)

There is a new kind of churchgoer - a member of the church of SELF.

This self-focused habits

- (1) they live immoral lives (8)
- (2) they defy authority (8)
- (3) they pervert supernatural beings (8)

In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. (Jude 1:8 NIV)

In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings. (Jude 1:8 NLT)

Their self-inspired authority
- they claim authority from
their dreams (8)

Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct — as irrational animals do — will destroy them. (Jude 1:10 NIV)

But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. (Jude 1:10 NLT)

- they scoff at things they do not understand. (10)

- they do whatever their instincts tell them (10)

Their self-destructive deception

These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm — shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted — twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. (Jude 1:12, 13 NIV)

When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness. (Jude 1:12, 13 NLT)

- dangerous reefs
- shameless shepherds
- rainless clouds
- dead trees
- wild waves of the sea
- wandering stars

↳ at least MAJOR / predominant
Their only interest - SELF (16)

These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want. (Jude 1:16 NLT)

- (1) They live only to satisfy their own desires.
 - otherwise they are grumblers and complainers
- (2) They brag loudly about themselves
- (3) They flatter others to get what they want.

Look:

How does Jude feel about this situation going on in the midst of this group of believers?

(1) He reaffirms God's faithfulness - you who have been called, loved and kept for Jesus Christ. (1)

(2) He reminds them of his friendship (3)

(3) He can't help but say something.

(i) I wanted to speak of salvation but I cannot ignore the compromising of your faith (3,5)

(ii) I need to remind you of your mission (5,17-23)

We see a change slowly taking place in our churches. Whereas we used to ask the Lord, "does this glorify you please you?" we now ask "what will I get out of it?" Those questions reveal to us who is the authority in our lives - the Lord or myself.

We used to go before the Lord in prayer and seek His plan - unsure of our own strategies. Now it is our custom to tell the Lord what we need - very specific and detailed. We enter into

arguments to ensure that our way will be done. Such conceit is no different from the conceit of those in Jude's day (9-10, 16).

We used to seek to influence the world with the "holiness" of our lives. Now we study the world, see what they have an appetite for and dish it out to them.

Missions has to begin at home and in the heart.

The greatest mistake we could make is to hold the people who are making all these changes in contempt and start a civil war with them.

Jude's advice is to "be merciful" which he stated in his opening comments (v. 2) and will elaborate upon in verses 22-23.

There is a new mission field - the church itself. How do we protect ourselves from becoming churchgoing pagans (see vv. 17-21)?

How do we reach those within who are bearers of the image - the beasts - described in these first 16 verses?

Stay Tuned. We will look at those questions next week.

Task: As we consider missions, remember,

- As much attention must be given to the home front as it is to the field or home may become the toughest mission field to reach.