

**Sermon Night Sermon Series**  
**Jude**

**Sunday February 10, 2019**

**Title: Contend for the Faith, A Call to Arms!**

***Subject: The Faith, The Gospel, Grace, License, Authority, Salvation, Contend, Condemnation, Immorality, Godliness***

***Theme Text: Jude 1:3 (NIV2011) <sup>3</sup> 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.***

**Theme Illustration:** In our text, Jude issues a call to arms that is not expired. Why? Why is there no expiration date to the dangers and assaults on the faith that Jude details? There has over the past 2000 years arisen enemies of the faith who have clandestinely slipped in with the purpose of changing the faith altogether.

All we need to be convinced that this call to arms or vigilance remains true is to review church history and today's headlines. From the news accounts of churches who failed to remove openly atheist clergy, to openly homosexual pastors both male and female, to Christian churches that deny the Scriptures, denied the divinity of Christ, and deny the supernatural and even denying the very existence of God. These "advances in the faith" continue to try to neuter the faith of its power.

Previous calls for vigilance and action against the enemy have happened in the past that serve for us today as cautionary tales. Paul Revere warned of armed aggressors, calling the nation to armed resistance. Prior to World War II, Winston Churchill continually called the world to watchful resistance to Adolf Hitler. After the armistice that ended World War II, the nation continued to field an extensive military to counter the threat of Soviet aggression. After each one, when the threat seemed less imminent, watchfulness always slackens.

Jude's call to open resistance in opposition to the clandestine opposition to the faith has no expiration date. And the reason is the church and the Christian has a relentless spiritual enemy. These enemies still exist and seemed to be tireless and more and more are out in the open. We are being called to contend continually and relentlessly for the faith that is complete and unchanging.

***Read: Jude 1:3-4***

**Introduction:** In verse three, Jude expresses the theme and in verse four expresses the occasion or reason for writing this letter in the first place. Jude says the faith is being challenged by "certain people". The word "contend" carries with it agonizing struggle. The Greek meaning of the word translated contend, means an effort expended in a noble cause. Is there a more noble cause than the preservation of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The word "delivered" is instructive. It is not something we made up, it was something that was handed to us by God. And because it has God as its author, man has no authority to change it.

**Transition:** *We're going to examine this noble cause by examining the completed faith, their perversion of the faith, and the challenge to the faith. First, we see:*

**1. A Complete Faith: Jude 1:3 (NIV2011) <sup>3</sup> 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 says we are to contend for simply "the faith". The faith is worthy of our concentrated efforts and vigilance. What does Jude mean by the faith? He means faith in all its *fullness*. Many people today can still recall some rudiments of the Christian faith. God's creation. Our fall. Separation. Judgment. A big promise. The coming of Jesus. His death. His resurrection and ascension. His grace and coming again.

Hopefully, others would add to its fullness with expressions like the Scriptures, Jesus, David's Son, God's King, Savior, faith, repentance, the Holy Spirit, baptism, church. For Jude, "the faith" is not merely a list of propositions. When defined fully, it includes the life-changing activity of God, conformity to its moral imperatives, and complete obedience to Jesus. Jude means all of this and then some! There is fullness to the apostolic faith.

The second thing we see about the faith is its *completeness*. Again note verse 3: "... that was once for all delivered to the saints." Aren't you struck by that little phrase "once for all"? London's Rev. Dick Lucas, a faithful contender for the gospel, put the stunning reality behind these words this way: "[I]n Jude, the Christian faith is already in existence as a settled and final body of saving truths." Imagine! We are not free to change it, as if the faith were somehow still evolving and making its way in the world. According to Jude, "the faith" is not only full, but it already exists in final form. It is not subject to change!

And so, we come to the end of verse 3. Jude's word to the church is this: "Arise. The time for complacency is past. Contend. Agonize. Exert maximum effort. The Christian faith, in all its fullness and completeness, is worthy of our struggle." May Jude's noble theme shake us from any complacency and bring us into apostolic conformity. With verse 4, Jude's first readers soon discover the reason for the urgency in his voice.

**Transition:** For now, we want to center in on the next two descriptive phrases. These tell us *what* these "certain people" were doing, and it's the *what* of verse 4 that provides us with the reasons why the letter was written.

What were these people doing? The answer is straightforward and clear. Certain people were challenging the faith in two ways: First, they were "pervert[ing] the grace of our God into sensuality," and second, they were "deny[ing] our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." To put it in the form of headings, they were taking advantage of God's grace and setting aside God's authority. These were the two challenges Jude faced. Challenge one is:

**2. The Perversion of Grace: Jude 1:4 (NIV2011) <sup>4</sup> 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.**

The word pervert means to change or to alter. Evidently some leaders were living a life of sensuality. Whether than living a life of increasing conformity to the image of Christ, they lived anyway they chose. In other words, they were gutting the faith of its moral imperatives. They change Christian liberty into carnal license.

Jude's problem is not with outsiders but with insiders. We see that they crept in unnoticed. And in verse 12 we find out they were even seated with the real believers at the Lord's table, **Jude 1:12 (NIV2011) <sup>12</sup> 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.** Jude does not soft sell their effect.

According to Jude, a personal encounter with God's grace does not permit us to play fast and loose with the moral imperatives of God's Word. To be a Christian means being saved *from* sensuality and *to* sanctification. There are things in life to which God says no. And God provides the grace to say no! Calvin defends God's wisdom this way: "It is bad to live under a prince who permits nothing, but much worse to live under one who permits everything." We live in a permissive time. You might call it the days of Jude. Knowing this should give us occasion to contend.

**Transition: The third aspect of the call to contend is:**

**3. The Challenge to Christ's Authority: Jude 1:4 (NIV2011) <sup>4</sup> 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.**

Not only were these people antinomians, they were antiauthority. By their loose living they rejected the truth that Jesus is their Lord and King. By living in denial of God's truth, the apostate contemporaries of Jude denied Jesus' ultimate rule and authority. Such is also the case of those who live in open and obstinate sin.

The church and its theologians and pastors must continue to be vigilant to two tasks. Those tasks are the tasks of interpretation and defending biblical inspiration. In every generation we tend to have a new hermeneutic, faulty, but fresh principles meant to guide our search for meaning. We need people who give themselves to contending for the apostolic interpretation of the Scriptures. Others must get engaged to contending for Biblical inspiration. Why? Because those who would undermine the faith in Christ's authority do so on the grounds of inspiration or their perceived lack of it.

**Conclusion:** The contemporary nature of this ancient letter is astounding. The issues confronting the church in our day are identical to the ones Jude faced. The same challenges flow down through the centuries, like meandering rivers, cut with deep beds and proven to wind great distances.

Jude would have us "contend." He wants us on our guard exerting great energy for the faith. Ours is a noble cause. The faith needs our action. Do nothing, and the gospel will be entirely gutted of her transforming strength. Do nothing, and the glory of Jesus will be utterly dismissed. And how are we to contend? We must "keep ourselves in the love of God" (v. 21). We must build ourselves up in our most holy faith (v. 20). We must keep watch in prayer lest we fall into temptation (v. 20).