

JUDE 1:3-4
FAITH TO CONTEND FOR!
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Jude chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of Jude.

And yes, this is a very short letter, only twenty-five verses and yet it is packed with information that I believe is important for us to understand and apply to our lives today!

Last week we began our four-part study of contending for *the faith* and what that is all about.

I do realize that when I speak of contending for the faith it makes some Christians uncomfortable. They are not looking for any trouble, they just want to enjoy life! There is nothing wrong with enjoying life, but we also need to understand that as Christians we are in a battle!

Paul put it like this in II Timothy 3:12, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**

When you stand up for the things of God, you *WILL* suffer persecution, not *MIGHT!*

And then Paul goes on to give the warning of what we are up against in II Timothy 3:13, as he wrote, **“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”**

Make no mistake about it, this is not a physical battle but a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women! Yes, it is played out in the physical world as Satan and his demonic forces use people to put forth his plans to keep people in darkness and to destroy the witness of Christians!

But again, many don't want to be involved in this battle that is before them and thus, they just want to sit on the sidelines and do nothing. Make no mistake about it, that is not Biblical Christianity. Not at all.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

. . . There is a vast quantity of religion current in the world that is not true, genuine Christianity. . . . It is not the real, that which was called Christianity eighteen hundred years ago.

The true Christian is called to be a soldier, and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death. He is not meant to live a life of religious ease, indolence [apathy], and security. He must never imagine for a moment that he can sleep and doze along the way to heaven, like one traveling in an easy carriage.

If he takes his standard of Christianity from the children of this world, he may be content with such notions, but he will find no countenance for them in the word of God. If the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He must "fight."

- <https://bit.ly/3n8DqKk>

Again, many Christians don't want to talk about this war, they want to ignore the fact that this war, this battle is going on or they may not even believe that there is a war!

How you can say that there is no war is hard to take. All you have to do is look at how evil is permeating this land and you can see there is a war going on out there. There is a battle for the truth going on and when we as Christians sit back and do nothing, then we can't complain about the immorality, the wickedness that is growing in this world.

You see, we are called to be salt and light.

Salt is a preserving force, and this world is rotting away, and we are to be involved in it to pour out this salt and stop this rotting.

We are also called to be the light and as light shines it gives people direction. Let's face it, people in this world have no idea where they are going and thus, as we shine the light of Christ upon this world, they now have a choice in the direction they are going. They can see the right way even though they have a choice to take it or not.

And yes, we are living in the last days but that does not mean we just give up. Jesus said that we are to occupy or continue working until He comes, or we go home to be with the Lord!

Again, this is a spiritual battle that is manifested in the lives of people, and it is a battle.

Listen to what one writer had to say. He wrote,

To understand the battle of spiritual warfare, we need to begin with acknowledging that we are in a war. Battles make up smaller components of the bigger picture.

By definition, battles involve combat between two persons, between factions, between armies and they consist of any type of "extended contest, struggle, or controversy" (Webster-Merriam).

As Christians, we are in a spiritual battle of some sort on a daily basis. In warfare, battles are fought on different fronts, for different reasons, and with varying degrees of intensity. The same is true in spiritual warfare. Our spiritual battles and warfare are real, even though we cannot physically see the attacker. But, we can educate ourselves on how the battles are fought and how they impact our lives on a daily basis. . . .

Keith Green, a Christian song writer, wrote, “I [Satan] used to have to sneak around. But now they just open their doors. No one’s looking for my tricks because no one believes in me any more.”

However, if we choose to ignore or not believe in the spiritual realm, we will find ourselves confused, frustrated, and quenching the peace that God has promised to each of us.

The best defense is a strong offense. Just educating ourselves about the spiritual realm is half the fight and God gives us everything else we need to be victorious with the other half.

- <https://bit.ly/3Nfk80v>

Listen again to what Keith Green wrote, and keep in mind that Keith went home to be with the Lord in 1982, over forty years ago! But when you listen to what he said back then, it is even more heartbreaking today when you see what the church has allowed to come into their doors and lives! They did not heed the warning that was given.

Here is what Keith Green wrote, *“I [Satan] used to have to sneak around. But now they just open their doors. No one’s looking for my tricks because no one believes in me any more.”*

That is what Jude is saying here, **“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Jude 1:4.

Long before Keith Green warned us as well as many others, Jude is warning us of those who are creeping into churches with their false doctrine, their false teaching and they are not even being noticed. In fact, they are being ignored and embraced.

Now you may be thinking, *“Pastor Joe, we live in a small town, Manitowoc. We don’t have problems like that. We are not a big city. These problems are for them not us! In fact, our church is small so no one really cares about us or is threatening us with false teaching!”*

It is true that we live in a small city. I think we have the same number of people on the population signs for our town that we had when I first came up here some twenty-eight years ago!

But it doesn’t matter if you live in a big city or a small city. It doesn’t matter if you go to a big church or a small church. False doctrine and false teaching are flooding into churches today and into people’s lives!

And let me be clear on this. Satan does not bother churches that are teaching heresy or doctrines of demons, he welcomes that. He comes against churches that are teaching the Word of God and living the Word of God to destroy their witness and to keep people from worshipping God as well as keeping people out of heaven!

It wasn’t that many years ago I had to deal with a few people in our church who were bringing in the Hebrew Roots Movement. In other words, like the Judaizers, you needed Christ for your salvation, but you also had to keep the Law of Moses.

And yes, it crept into the church at first but then it began to flood into the church and people were being bombarded with this false teaching. I actually had to take the time and have a church meeting to explain what we believe here. And I shared that here at Calvary Chapel of Manitowoc we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by good works or following the Law!

And I went through the Scriptures that showed that we are not under the Law. And the Scriptures are very clear on this. I will give you just two to show you how easy it is to refute this and there are many more. I spent an hour going through the Scriptures and I could have gone longer to show how the Hebrew Roots Movement is a false teaching.

First of all, in Romans 3:28 Paul wrote, **“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”**

Then, in Galatians 2:21 Paul once again wrote, **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**

It was so clear and the person who was leading this movement in our church refused to stop teaching it to others and I asked him to leave the church.

I realize that some were not happy with me for doing that. They thought it was unloving. But let me ask you this. Would you let your child play with a dog that has rabies? Of course not! You would do everything you could to protect your child from that sick dog!

When false teaching and false doctrine or even more accurately, doctrines of demons are coming into the church, I am going to close the door on it. I am not interested if people agree with that or not, I am interested in what God has called me to do and that is to teach and love and protect the sheep that He has entrusted to me. And if I am in this for popularity, you would be in trouble. And, as you have seen over the years, I am not here to be popular, I am here to teach you the truth!

And this contending for the faith is not just for me to do. It is for every Christian because the faith that has been entrusted to us is under attack from those outside the church and those inside the church as well!

In our first study we looked at – ***FAITH ONCE DELIVERED!***

And as we saw, this is important for us to understand. Jude is specifically speaking of “**the faith**” or the foundational truths that have been written down for us in the Scriptures, the Gospel message.

This morning, in part 2 of our study, we will be looking at – ***FAITH TO CONTEND FOR!***

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Jude chapter 1 beginning in verse 3 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this topic – ***FAITH TO CONTEND FOR!***

JUDE 1

VERSES 3-4

What we see here is that Jude wanted to write a positive message to them, but the Holy Spirit changed the direction he was writing and now Jude is going to write a message of warning!

And this warning is to contend for the faith, to fight for this faith that has been entrusted to us and that does not change. It is a faith that has been delivered to us once and for all!

And please understand that this is not our own personal faith that Jude is speaking of here. He is not speaking of the importance of Jesus saving us, which, of course is very important.

But, as important as that is, Jude is speaking of ***THE FAITH*** or how Jesus saves us, through His death and resurrection – ***THE GOSPEL MESSAGE!***

Why was this so important that Jude had to write this down?

We don't have to guess because we are told in Jude 1:4, **“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

In other words, men are coming in and changing the Gospel message, watering it down, negating it, mocking it and thus, we need to fight against this false teaching and bring forth the truth!

Now some of you may be thinking, *“Hey, I am saved. I know the truth. So for me, why do I have to contend for this faith? I know what I believe so the battle for me is over!”*

Praise God that the battle is over for you! I guess it is time for you to go home to be with the Lord!

Now please don't be offended by that, that is not my intention. But I want you to understand that the battle is not over until we go home to be with the Lord.

I have seen Christians that I thought knew the Scriptures and I think they did, but they were swayed by these deceivers into believing their lies. So this battle is for us as well.

But not just us!

Then who is it for?

This battle is also for the lost. We are doing battle with demonic forces who are influencing these false teachers with their false doctrine. In other words, we are trying to rescue these people, the lost, from these savage wolves that are trying to destroy their lives with this false doctrine, to keep them out of the Kingdom of God!

That is what Jude is saying here. Now, in knowing that, how can we sit idly by, how can we keep silent when deception, not only in the world but in the church is running amok? We shouldn't and we can't!

I like what Charles Spurgeon wrote many years ago regarding his feelings on this. That he was not going to sit idly by and watch these false teachers and their false teachings send people to Hell!

This is what he wrote, ***“If sinners be dammed, at lest let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.”***

If we truly believe that Jesus is the only way, if we truly believe that Jesus is the One who can forgive us of our sins and give us eternal life with Him, if we truly believe that Hell is real and it is eternal for all those who refuse to come to Christ, then how can we not have compassion and love for people and bring to them ***THE FAITH*** that has been entrusted to us!

And I guess the question for us is this, ***“Is there truth worth contending for? Is there truth worth dying for?”***

Let's face it, there is a lot of fake news out there today and it seems to be growing. And what is interesting to me is that Christians will fight against this fake news with all their might. They will read and watch videos and dig into all this worldly news, and yet, when it comes to the Gospel, there is no passion. They don't see that as important as exposing fake news!

Let me say this. Fake news will continue to grow, worldly deception will continue to grow and grow, and you can spend a lifetime studying it, exposing it, but in the end, where does that get you?

Sorry, but in reality, it gets you nowhere!

There are many conservative people out there that are aware of this fake news, they are on top of it, but they are lost. They are not saved!

Our mission is not to expose all the fake news out there, and I am not saying we are not to be aware of it, but that is not our focus. Our focus is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world! That is the only thing that will save people, not being a conservative but coming to Christ!

In fact, in Matthew chapter 28, something that has been watered down to *THE GREAT SUGGESTION*, is really – *THE GREAT COMMISSION!*

Listen to what Jesus said before He was taken up into heaven in Matthew 28, beginning in verse 18, **“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”** Matthew 28:18-20.

This truly is the climax of the Gospel of Matthew; this is what we are to do and as we do share the Gospel message it glorifies the Father.

Now as we have looked at these verses, did you notice that the words **“all”** or **“always”** occur four times.

We first see that Jesus possesses *all authority*.

We next see that Jesus sends us to *all nations*.

From there we are told that Jesus wants us to teach people *all he has commanded*.

And finally, as we go and share our faith, we need to remember that Jesus will be with us *all the days*, or *always*.

Jesus tells His men that, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**”
Matthew 28:18.

The Greek word for “**authority**” is *EXOUSIA*, (ex-oo-see’-ah) and it speaks of His “*official right or power.*” This authority or official right over all of creation is His because He is God.

The command that Jesus gives to us is very simple, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.**”

Because He has the authority, we are therefore commanded to go! It is by His authority that He sends us. It is by His authority that He guides us. It is by His authority that He empowers us. And notice where we are to go! To all nations and make disciples.

Interestingly enough, this word, “**go**” is a participle and should be translated, “**As you are going . . .**”

What does that mean?

It means that as you are going to work, as you are going to school, as you are going to the store, as you are going to the neighbors, wherever you are going you are to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news, with others. We are to be going out, not staying in but it truly speaks of just everyday living, wherever you go share the light of Jesus!

But that does not happen today many times as this story illustrates for us. We are told, Paul W. Powell, in *The Complete Disciple*, described this condition: “Many churches today remind me of a laboring crew trying to gather in a harvest while they sit in the toolshed. They go to the toolshed every Sunday and they study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and then get up and go home. Then they come back that night, study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and go home again. They come back Wednesday night, and again study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and get up and go home. They do this week in and week out, year in and year out, and nobody ever goes out into the fields to gather in the harvest.

- Our Daily Bread

We are to share with them the Gospel message.

What is the Gospel message?

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:3-4, “**For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.**”

That is the Gospel in a nutshell you might say. Man is separated from God because of sin. Thus, you must show them first of all that they are sinners and the best way to do that is to make them tell you they are sinners.

And please understand, there are many ways to share the Gospel, just be open to what the Holy Spirit is showing you because He knows exactly what that person needs to hear.

But many people believe that they are good and thus, how do you show them that they are not good? How can you do that?

Just ask them some simple questions, especially if they think they are good enough to get into heaven.

Ask them,

“Have you ever lied?”

“Have you ever stolen anything?”

“Have you ever looked upon another person with lust in your eyes?”

And of course, the answer to those questions for every person is **“YES!”** Thus, they just admitted that they are a lying thief who has either committed adultery or fornication!

You see, they just told you that they are a sinner!

They must be aware of the problem before you give them the solution. Once they see that they fall far short of the standard that God has set, perfection, you can show them that **“Christ died for [their] sins.”**

That is the Good News and by repenting of your sins and asking Him to be Lord and Savior of your life, all of your sins will be cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more!

Jesus accomplished this by paying in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary and rose from the grave on the third day just as the Scriptures tell us.

It is as Paul wrote back in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

That is the reason that our relationship with God the Father is restored because our sins have been nailed to the cross of Calvary and the righteousness of Christ has been imputed into our lives by faith!

The problem today is that man is trying to preach another Gospel and it is not a Gospel that will save man but keep man separated from God.

Listen to how Dr. Harry A. Ironside put it. He wrote,

Note carefully: The Gospel is God's wonderful story of His beloved Son. It is a message of grace to be received in faith. It is not a code of laws to be obeyed or good advice to be followed. It is not a system of ritual observances or a call to submit to certain ordinances. It does not set forth the claims of any human church organization, however venerable, nor does it exhort men to seek after experiences, however remarkable, though a blessed experience follows its acceptance. It simply sets forth Christ crucified and risen as the Savior of all who believe in Him.

WHEN THE MORMON elder comes declaring that an angel revealed a gospel of salvation through a restored church and renewed ordinances, he is preaching another gospel, and angel and man are alike under the curse.

WHEN THE LEGALIST comes insisting that salvation is by obedience to God's holy law (which in itself is just and good), he is preaching another gospel, for the Word of God declares, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

WHEN THE REVIVALIST comes promising salvation to those “who make a full surrender” of all that they have to God, and who “pay the price of full salvation,” he is preaching another gospel, for the price was paid on Calvary’s cross and the work that saves is finished. It was Christ Jesus who made the full surrender, when He yielded Himself unto death for us that we might be redeemed from the curse of the broken law and forever saved from the judgment to come upon all who refuse His grace.

WHEN THE MODERNIST prates in glowing terms and honeyed phrases of salvation by character, salvation by altruism, salvation by ethical culture, he, too is proclaiming another gospel, for if character could have saved, Christ need not have died; if altruism would have fitted sinful men for heaven, the Lord Jesus would surely have told us so; if ethical culture could deliver from the wrath of God, what place would Gethsemane, Calvary and the Empty Tomb have in the Divine economy?

WHEN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST (falsely so-called) denies the reality of sin, disease and death and lulls sinners to sleep by telling them that “God is all and all is God,” even going so far as to declare the death of Christ was unreal, and His resurrection simply spiritual, and that the blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sins when shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing in His veins, he, or she, is promulgating another gospel, which is not another, for it is a baseless dream, a weird and blasphemous “error of mortal mind” that will leave its votaries at last without God and without hope.

THE SOLEMN FACT IS THERE IS NO OTHER GOSPEL. Every pretended substitute is but a Satan-devised delusion meant to turn men away from the strait gate which alone leads into the narrow way, and make them contented as they crowd down the clear side of the broad way to eternal perdition.

BEFORE there can really be another gospel there must be another savior and another Holy Spirit, and this can never be. Nor is any other gospel needed, for the grand old Gospel of the grace of God is all-sufficient to save “whosoever will,” and has demonstrated its power throughout the centuries by transforming lost miserable sinners into happy joyous saints. Paul says:

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. (Romans 1:16,17)

THE Gospel needs only to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit to hold its own against every imitation and substitute that the mind of the natural man energized by Satan can devise. Like the Bible itself it is divinely inspired and, therefore, preeminently fitted for the needs of mankind. It convinces the mind and satisfies the heart, if men but take the place of repentant sinners and accept it by faith. It is the dynamic of God unto the deliverance of all who believe it. To refuse it is to be lost. To receive its message is to be saved.

IT reveals the righteousness of God, making known how He “can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Satan’s false gospels all pretend to show how man can establish his own righteousness. The Gospel of Christ comes to unrighteous men and tells them of a righteousness that is divine which is imputed to all who believe.

ANOTHER gospel - whatever its outward form - will always be found to center in something that man can be or do in order to obtain merit. The Gospel of God declares what Christ has done in order that the salvation purchased may be justly offered to sinners.

ANOTHER gospel presupposes some strength, some ability to please God, in the natural man. God's Gospel declares that when "we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

ANOTHER gospel will land you in hell! God's Gospel, believed, will bring you safe to heaven.

- Dr. Harry A. Ironside, Another Gospel

Remember that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes and apart from the Gospel there is no power for salvation!

There are many false shepherds in churches today that are preaching *ANOTHER GOSPEL* and it is a Gospel that negates the fact that Jesus is God, it is a Gospel that negates the blood atonement, it is a Gospel that negates man's sinful condition with no way out except through Christ. And because they are spoken by pastors and teachers, people believe them!

That is very dangerous.

Let me share this example with you of what I don't want you to do. I don't want you to tell people when they ask you about the Lord, "*Well, Pastor Joe said . . .*"

I want you to say, "*It is written*" or "*This is what the Bible says*" period.

You make disciples by sharing the Gospel message, by sharing Scripture with them and apart from that, there is no power and a bloodless Gospel is an empty Gospel!

And here's the thing. Is this Gospel message, is this Good News worth our time and effort to contend for it?

YOU BET IT IS BECAUSE APART FROM IT, WE AND ALL WHO REJECT IT ARE DEAD IN OUR SINS!

And here's another thing. Is this Gospel message, is this Good News worth dying for?

YOU BET IT IS BECAUSE WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING WHEN WE DIE AND WE ALSO KNOW WHERE THOSE WHO REJECT IT ARE GOING. THUS, ARE WE WILLING TO DIE FOR OTHERS? I HOPE SO!

Many through the centuries have given their lives for the Gospel message, for Jesus so that others may come to saving faith!

Look at what we have seen here in Matthew chapter 28, the Great Commission.

That ***ALL AUTHORITY*** has been given to Jesus as He commands us to go out to ***ALL NATIONS*** with the Good News and once they receive that Good News that we then are to teach them ***ALL HE HAS COMMANDED*** us and He tops it off letting us know that He will ***ALWAYS BE WITH US!***

This is what we are to contend for – ***THE FAITH!***

And many have risked their lives, and some have lost their lives in contending for the faith that was entrusted to them, as I have said. They refused to compromise, water it down but they shared it with others so they may come to saving faith!

Let me share with you a few examples of what a witness these martyrs left behind, those that gave their lives for their faith.

Polycarp, venerable bishop of Smyrna was a personal friend and pupil of John the Apostle. When he was age 86, he was urged by the Roman proconsul to reproach Christ and be set free.

“Eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?”

The proconsul said: ***“I have respect for your age. Simply say, ‘Away with the Atheists’ and be set free.”***

Polycarp solemnly said ***“Away with the Atheists”*** – pointing to the pagan crowd.

He joyfully went to the stake, thanking God for counting him worthy to be numbered among the martyrs.

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 3344

John Huss, the courageous pastor of Prague, was arrested, condemned, and sentenced to be burned by a church council in 1415. When Huss heard his sentence pronounced, he fell to his knees and prayed, ***“Lord Jesus, forgive my enemies.”***

Then when he was chained to the stake, he prayed, ***“In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed.”*** Then flames snuffed out the life of “The Morning Star of the Reformation.”

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 3345

The persecutors of Bishop Hooper, at his martyrdom, offered a pardon upon his recantation, saying: ***“Consider that life is sweet and death is bitter.”*** ***“True,”*** said he, ***“but the death to come is more bitter, and the life to come is more sweet.”***

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 3347

On July 1st, 1555, John Bradford was burned to death. He was chaplain to King Edward the Sixth of England, and was one of the most popular preachers of his day. But he was a martyr to his faith. As he was being driven out to Newgate to be burned, permission was given him to speak, and from the wagon in which he rode to his death the entire way out from West London to Newgate he shouted: ***“Christ, Christ, none but Christ!”***

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 3346

Having been banished, Cyprain suffered martyrdom in Carthage in 258. When the sentence of death was read to him he said, ***“I heartily thank Almighty God who is pleased to set me free from the chains of the body.”***

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 3348

Also, much persecution comes from those who believe they are Christian against true Christians. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

From 1555 to 1558 Queen Mary, the Catholic ruler in England, had 288 Protestant reformers burned at the stake – men like John Rogers, John Hooper, Rowland Taylor, Robert Ferrar, John Bradford, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, and Thomas Cranmer. And why were they burned? Because they stood by a truth – the truth that the real presence of Jesus’ body is not in the eucharist but in heaven at the Father’s right hand. For that truth they endured the excruciating pain of being burned alive.

- Desiring God, Contend for the Faith, November 25, 1984

And you can read Foxe's Book of Martyrs and see how millions of Christians have given their lives for their faith and the example they left as they were put to death.

In saying that, may we not lose sight that not only in death are we to be a witness of Christ, but also in our everyday life, we are to live out our faith!

Let me share this story with you about someone who was willing to sacrifice all to share Jesus with others.

This man named Joseph and he came to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and to do this he came out of the Muslim religion!

This is a powerful illustration of what we are to be about, the Great Commission. This is what we are told,

One day Joseph who was walking along one of those hot dirty African roads met someone who shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. Then and there he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior and the power of the Holy Spirit began transforming his life. He was filled with such excitement and joy that the first thing he wanted to do was go back and return to his own village and share the same good news with the members of his local tribe.

Joseph began going from door to door telling everyone he met about the cross of Jesus and the salvation that it offered, expecting their faces to light up just as his had.

To his amazement the villagers not only didn't care, they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.

Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a water hole and there after days of passing in and out of consciousness found the strength to get up. He couldn't understand the hostile reception he had received from the people he had known all of his life.

Finally he decided that he must have left something out or not told the story correctly.

So after rehearsing the message he decided to go back and share his faith again. He limped into the circle of huts and began to proclaim Jesus, ***“He died for you so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God.”***

And again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him reopening the wounds that had just begun to heal.

Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die. To have survived the first beating was truly remarkable, to live through the second was a miracle.

Again days later Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scared and determined in his heart to go back.

He returned to the small village and this time they attacked him before he had a chance to open his mouth. As they flogged him for the third and probably the last time, he again spoke to them of Jesus Christ the Lord and before he passed out the last thing he saw was that the women who were beating him had begun to weep.

This time he awoke in his own bed, the ones who had so severely beaten him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health, and the entire village came to know Jesus Christ.

- Michael Card

Look at all the pain and all the suffering that this man went through, for what?

So that he could be witness of Jesus Christ to those around him and he was! He wanted them to come to Jesus as he had come to Jesus, and he was willing to sacrifice all for them! What a witness to us!

For most of us, we will never have to endure what he went through to bring the Gospel message to people. But are we willing to share our faith with others? Are we willing to bring the Gospel message to others?

Remember what Paul said in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God’s power working unto salvation [for deliverance from eternal death] to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**

And The Living Bible says, **“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is God’s powerful method of bringing all who believe it to heaven. This message was preached first to the Jews alone, but now everyone is invited to come to God in this same way.”**

In other words, **“ . . . faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**
Romans 10:17.

That is what has been entrusted to us and yet, it is this Gospel message that is being compromised. Many of you remember the late Robert Schuller. He has impacted many Christians lives, many pastors, and not in a good way. Let me show you what his theology is all about.

He said,

“What does it mean to be saved? It means to be permanently lifted from sin (psychological self-abuse with all of its consequences as seen above) and shame to self-esteem and its God glorifying human need-meeting, constructive, and creative consequences.”

“Salvation is defined as rescue from shame to glory.”

“To be born again means that we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image - from inferiority to self-esteem, from fear to love. From doubt to trust.”

And what is the real effect of being saved? *“Glory restored is the real fruit of salvation.”*

I am sorry, but that is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ and since it is not the Gospel, then what he has taught does not bring forth salvation but damnation!

Now that may seem harsh, but it is a reality. There is nothing about repentance, of turning from sin and to the Lord. It is about self-esteem and being rescued from shame to glory! It is a different Gospel, and this has been taught to pastors like Rick Warren and Bill Hybels as well as many others.

We have talked about this last time and a little this morning, but it is very important for us to understand that when Jude wrote for us **“. . . to earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints”** he is saying that this true faith, the faith does not change. I don't care what period of time you are living in; it is ***ONCE AND FOR ALL!***

And let me drive this home, what this means. It means ***“once, to be of perpetual validity, never needing to be repeated”*** or never needing to be done again and again or to be changed or updated!

Think about it. Look at what Jesus Christ has done for us. Look at what He accomplished for us. His atoning death satisfied in full the justice that God required for our sin. We have a full pardon because the price was paid by Jesus for our sin on the cross of Calvary! That is a done deal! It can't be repeated, nor does it need to be repeated.

That is what we are talking about here when Jude speaks of – ***THE FAITH!***

This is what has been entrusted to the saints and to us, every generation, and that is what we are to contend for and that is what we are to proclaim!

One writer put it like this, and I think it sums it up very nicely for us. He wrote, ***“Once’ means that “the faith” was delivered one time and doesn’t need to be delivered again. Of course, we distribute this truth again and again. But it was delivered by God to the world through the apostles and prophets once (Ephesians 2:20). God may speak today, but never in the authoritative way that He spoke through the first apostles and prophets as recorded in the New Testament.”***

In other words, and we can even expand this because the Bible talks about Jesus Christ from Genesis through Revelation, that the New Testament Cannon is complete!

Then what is the problem?

This is the problem and Jude is going to speak about this.

There are those who will bring in ***“destructive heresies”*** or literally ***“teachings that will destroy a person in hell!”***

That is why this is so important.

But “How could false brethren get into true assemblies of the saints? The soldiers had gone to sleep at the post! The spiritual leaders in the churches had grown complacent and careless. This explains why Jude had to *‘blow the trumpet’* to wake them up. Our Lord and His Apostles all warned that false teachers would arise, yet the churches did not heed the warnings. Sad to say, some churches are not heeding the warnings today.”

And in saying that, this will lead us to what we will be looking at next time – ***FAITH THREATENED FROM WITHIN!***

In other words, Satan and his demons are not only outside the church bringing these damning heresies, but he has been welcomed into the church and is infecting the church with these doctrines of demons!

They are apostates and Jude will speak of them in regard to past judgements upon apostates warning of what is ahead for those who teach these things and for those who follow.

And keep in mind that an apostate is someone who knows about God, knows about Jesus, receives what the Bible says but only superficially, he is not a believer but a pretender!

The problem is that they look like believers, but they are not and that is the danger. They speak with flashy words, they speak as if they have the truths of God, but they do not!

Apostates never make a genuine commitment to God; they only make a superficial one.

Yes, they know the truth, but they never apply the truth to their life! They are not saved!

As I begin to close our study this morning, I want to share this with you from Warren Wiersbe. I shared it last time, but it is important, so I will share it with you again.

Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us like this, as he wrote,

The church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails to guard the truth and entrust it to our children, then that will be the end! When you think of the saints and martyrs who suffered and died so that we might have God's truth, it makes you want to take your place in God's army and be faithful unto death.

What does it mean to "***contend for the faith***"? The Greek word is an athletic term that gives us our English word agonize. It is the picture of a devoted athlete, competing in the Greek games and stretching his nerves and muscles to do his very best to win.

You never fight the Lord's battles from a rocking chair or a soft bed! Both the soldier and the athlete must concentrate on doing their best and giving their all. There must also be teamwork, believers working together to attack and defeat the enemy.

Sometimes you hear well-meaning people say, "***Well, it's fine to contend for the faith, but don't be so contentious!***"

While it is true that some of God's soldiers have been the cause of quarrels and divisions, it is also true that some of them have paid a great price to defend the faith. As Christian soldiers, we must not fight each other or go around looking for trouble. But when the banner of Christ is in danger of being taken by the enemy, we cannot sit idly by, nor can we ever hope to win the victory by wearing kid gloves.

Charles Spurgeon once said that "***the new views are not the old truth in a better dress, but deadly errors with which we can have no fellowship.***"

False doctrine is a deadly poison that must be identified, labeled, and avoided, Spurgeon also said, "***I cannot endure false doctrine, however neatly it may be put before me. Would you have me eat poisoned meat because the dish is of the choicest ware?***"

We must always speak the truth in love, and the weapons we use must be spiritual. At the same time, we must dare to take our stand for ***“the faith”*** even if our stand offends some and upsets others.

We are not fighting personal enemies, but the enemies of the Lord. It is the honor and glory of Jesus Christ that is at stake. ***“Fight the good fight of faith”*** (1 Tim 6:12).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 1024

Absolutely. Remember what the Christian songwriter Keith Green. He wrote, ***“I [Satan] used to have to sneak around. But now they just open their doors. No one’s looking for my tricks because no one believes in me any more.”***

May we be wise and use the discernment that God has entrusted to us because God has given to us – ***FAITH TO CONTEND FOR!***

And make no mistake about it, there are eternal consequences attached to it. We must contend for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and proclaim it boldly because the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation!

“The truth about Christ must come back to the forefront of our battle cry. We must stand for the true Gospel no matter what the cost!”

You see, ***“When the faith is at stake, our salvation is at stake. If the truth is lost, salvation is lost. The apostles and reformers were willing to die for the sake of the faith because they cared about whether the message of salvation would be preserved – they cared about people and about the glory of God.”***

Again, lives are at stake, the eternal destiny of people, don’t lose sight of that and fight, earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to you!