

JUDE 1:3-4
WE ARE TO CONTEND!
PART 4

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

We are currently in part 4 of our study dealing with contending for the faith.

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

Please understand that it is “**the faith**” or unchanging faith. What was given to the apostles and prophets is for us today and it has been entrusted to us to not only believe but to share it. We are not to compromise what we believe or water it down but contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

In part 2 of our study, we looked at – ***FAITH TO CONTEND FOR!***

And we saw that there is faith worth contending for. There is faith that is worth dying for. It is not a faith that is a new fad today and gone tomorrow. Many have died martyr’s death for the faith that was entrusted to them. And today, we don’t think much of it. We think that doctrine divides, so we ignore those things that divide. No, we contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

And in our last study we looked at – ***FAITH THREATENED FROM WITHIN!***

I think we all understand that battle against what we believe from the world. But the bigger problem for us today is the battle we are facing against the so-called church, who are coming against us. They are bringing in all kinds of false teaching and they come against those who oppose them! Again, we must contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

This morning we will finish up our study dealing with contending for the faith. The focus this morning will be – ***WE ARE TO CONTEND!***

The problem today, like in generations past but I think more are involved in this today, is that we have become lazy in what we believe. Yes, many go to church, they may even read their Bible once in a while, but when they face confrontation, they back off and they don't say anything against false doctrine or they compromise and agree with what the person is saying so they don't rock the boat, they don't tip the boat over!

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

Spiritual laziness is the inability to take action because of fear. It's also the tendency to seek an easy way out, rather than the difficult path that God wants us to take.

When we allow fear to rule our lives, it becomes easier for us to do nothing. We become so fearful that we won't even try something new.

However, we all know deep down that we should be doing something different, but we don't want to make any choices to do something different because of the fear of the unknown.

Fear can creep into every area of our lives including our spiritual walk with God. When it controls us, it can lead us down a path of destruction and despair.

Spiritual laziness happens when we think it's too much work to spend time with God in prayer, Bible reading, and meditation.

Therefore, instead of doing the things that will help us grow closer to God, we take the easy way out by trying to do things our own way and relying on our own strength rather than trusting in His power.

And that is how false teaching gets into a person's life and how it gets into the church. No one wants to do anything about it. Maybe it is because of a friendship they have with the person. Maybe because they think this person is a very spiritual person and thus, they would not lie or teach false doctrine.

Let me say this. I don't care who you are. I don't care how many degrees you have in the Christian faith. I don't care how long you have been in ministry. Anyone, and I mean anyone can make mistakes or they can knowingly be leading people down the wrong path or a path that is contrary to the Bible.

Then what should we do?

You listen to what people are saying, what they are teaching and then you compare it with the Word of God.

That is what the Bereans did after Paul taught them. We read of this in Acts 17:11 where we are told, **“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”**

The Bereans were ready to receive God's Word, their hearts were open, they were prepared to hear what God had for them! That should be the way we read God's Word, listen to God's Word being taught, with a heart open to receive all that God has for us!

But that is not all they had going for them. We are also told that they **“... searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”** Today there are those teachers you can't question about anything. In fact, for some, they threaten you by saying that you are touching the Lord's anointed when you come against their false teaching!

The Bereans, they searched the Scriptures, but for what reason? To see if what Paul was saying was true, if that is what the Scriptures were teaching or if Paul was mistaken about what he was saying. How often did they search the Scriptures? They searched the Scriptures daily. What a powerful lesson for us.

So these Bereans not only received the words of Paul with an open heart, but they then searched the Scripture daily to see if what Paul said of the Messiah was true, if Jesus is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets said.

What was their conclusion? Their conclusion was simple, He was! What Paul said was true; the Scriptures confirmed it and they believed! They were saved! May that be our heart, may that be your heart, not only to be open to what God is saying but also checking out the Scriptures, searching the teachings to see if these things are true!

As one writer said,

Folks, the power is in the Word -it's not "What do you think?" or "What do I think?" but "What does God say?" How many problems would be solved, how many questions would be answered if people would only take the time to study the Scriptures daily. Faith comes not by encounter sessions or group therapy, but by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith comes to those who are in the Word, for only the Word can affect lives, change hearts, strengthen faith, and renew minds.

- Jon Courson, Jon Courson's Application
Commentary, New Testament, p. 748

And let me say this. If someone comes up to you and tells you, ***"You have to hear this. No one has ever seen this before in the Bible!"***

Run away!

Let me put it like this. *If it is true then it is not new and if it is new, then it is not true.* It is as simple as that. Let's not make this complicated. Let's search the Scriptures to see if what is being taught is spoken of in the Word of God.

Make no mistake about it, we need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us because the pretenders are coming, the apostates, and they are here but as Paul, said, **“They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”** Titus 1:16.

I want to share these words with you once again from Warren Wiersbe as he sums this up for us. 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

By the grace of God, with His help we will know the truth and the truth will set us free from these lies! We need to stand strong in the faith for our victory is in Him! And may we earnestly contend for that faith that has been entrusted to us!

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 as we study His Word, and we look at this topic – ***WE ARE TO CONTEND!***

JUDE 1**VERSES 3-4**

Why must we contend for this faith?

Paul tells us in I Timothy 4:1, where he wrote, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”**

What Paul is speaking of and what we are seeing in the days we are living in, is this departure from the truths of God found in the Word of God!

We call it – ***APOSTASY!***

And the idea here is that they may have claimed to be a Christian at one time, or they still may claim to be a Christian but what they believe for salvation shows that they are not Christians.

The problem is that many times they remain in the church and many times they remain in leadership positions!

We might call them – ***PRETENDERS!***

They again are not saved, but by their actions, their words they are pretending to be saved as they spew out these doctrines of demons.

And we see this with the cults, but we are also seeing it growing in the church today as seminaries are pouring false teaching into these future leaders. Then, as they graduate and oversee churches, they are teaching these doctrines of demons to their congregations!

Now you may be offended by what I said that they are teaching doctrines of demons.

Let me be frank here. If they are not teaching the Word of God, then they are teaching doctrines of demons. If they are not teaching what God has said in His Word but they are making it say what they want it to say, they are teaching doctrines of demons.

I did not say that Paul did through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

This is what we are contending against, these false teachers, false leaders, these pretenders of the faith!

Keep in mind that it happened with the children of Israel, so why are we surprised that it is happening to us! In Jeremiah 5:30-31 we are told, **“An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?”**

Notice what those who were to be bringing people to God were doing.

The prophets spoke false words and the people loved to hear these false words!

The priests ruled by their own power, they did what they wanted.

The prophets told the people what they wanted to hear, and the priests turned a blind eye to their sin!

And as you look at both of these groups the One person missing in both of them is the Lord! And again, the people loved it this way, it made them feel good about going to Hell, I guess!

We are no different today! As much as the people of Jeremiah’s day loved lies, deception, we see that same mentality today. One writer put it like this,

Unless I am very much mistaken, this is exactly what is happening in the contemporary church. Preaching that entertains more than instructs, soothes more than it convicts, and appeases more than it confronts has become the rule rather than the exception in the evangelical church.

What H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1963) said about the liberals a generation ago can now be applied to the preaching of the evangelical church: ***“A God without wrath brings men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministration of a Christ without a cross.”***

- Philip Graham Ryken, Jeremiah and Lamentation, p. 105

How true that is, and this kind of garbage is flooding into churches today! We need to get back to the basics, back to the Word of God! We need to fall in love with Jesus all over again, not according to what we want but what God wants; we must worship Him in Spirit and in truth! We must earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

Let me share with you this other point and it is in regard to judgment. The great evangelist George Whitefield (1714-1770) wrote regarding these passages here in Jeremiah,

As God can send a nation of people no greater blessing than to give them faithful, sincere, upright ministers, so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, unskillful guides.

- George Whitefield, The Method of Grace, pp. 8-11

We need to speak forth the truths of God found in the Word of God with the love of God to a people who are far from God that they may come to God.

We are to expose false teaching as false teaching and not ignore it or agree with it.

Simple yes but it is what we are to do and once they come to God, we are to build them up in the faith, teach them the Word of God! Not lies, but the truth! We need to present the Gospel message whether people want to hear it or not, we need to preach the Word of God whether people want to hear it or not, this is not an option!

And notice what Jude tells us of these men, how they got into the church. He said that they “**... have crept in unnoticed ...**” Jude 1:4

They get into the schools, the seminaries, the churches, denominations and the like, by worming their way in. By saying what people want to hear and then they go into their false teaching once they have a foothold into one of these Christian places.

How do we recognize an Apostate Church?

First, sound Biblical doctrine is abandoned.

Second, there will be an over emphasis on the sensual and our experience as a means to reach God rather than the word of God.

Third, there will be an attempt to desensitize the masses by an acceptance of social norms and sins condemned in the Bible.

And lastly there will be a move towards ecumenism and a one-world religion under the guise of being socially correct.

During the past thirty years of ministry, I have personally seen a radical change in church culture. Thirty years ago most of the individuals who were professed Christians were willing to sacrifice and do without in order for Christianity to go forward.

The “*Me*” generation of the late 1980s and 1990s has simply changed its name to the “*I*” generation. This self-focus has crept into many churches where the sermons are no longer about the awesomeness of God, His holiness, or the supremacy of His divine will in our lives. Rather, a new gospel is being preached in our age! It is a gospel of compromise.

Where are the sermons of our age that deal with injustice and spiritual accountability before God in a compassionate manner?

An Apostate Church often finds itself on both sides of moral issues. . . .

An Apostate church does not deal with the topic of sin! Rather its message is primarily focused upon the acceptance of social norms rather than truths found in scripture. . . .

Daniel Webster’s Comment in the Year 1823, *“If religious literature is not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end.”* . . .

It is plain to see that the signs of the times are developing before our very eyes. The question we must ask ourselves is, *“Are we living according to the Bible or have we allowed a secular modern view of truth to invade our lives and the church we attend?”*

- <https://bit.ly/3M7ik8L>

Let me share with you some Scriptures to show you that we are to contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us.

First of all, in I Timothy 4:6-7 Paul tells us, **“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.”**

Paul is admonishing Timothy to teach his people the things of God so that they can be spiritually healthy. If they are not spiritually healthy then they will become sick with false teaching as their spiritual body is not prepared to fight off these false teachings!

And we see here that the focus is on godliness or holiness!

In II Timothy 4:2-5 we are told, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

What is the focus for pastor’s, what are they to do?

The are to – ***PREACH THE WORD OF GOD!***

But some may argue that people don’t like to hear the Word of God taught any longer or if it is taught just for 20 or 30 minutes.

What is Paul’s response to that?

He tells Timothy that it doesn’t matter if they want to hear it or not, that is exactly what they need.

Pastor's, leaders in churches need to understand that if they want to fulfill the role of their ministry, they need to preach the Word of God. Again, if you don't, then you are opening your congregation up to false teaching because they won't know the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Now you may be thinking, *“What does this have to do with contending for the faith?”*

You have to teach the people that God has entrusted to you the truths of God found in the Word of God so that they are prepared for battle, they are prepared to contend for the faith that has been entrusted to them!

In Titus 1:9 Paul wrote Titus and said, **“Holding fast the faithful word as has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”**

Keep in mind that the Word of God is called the Sword of the Spirit in Ephesians chapter 6. It is our defensive weapon, and we need to know how to use it against the false teaching that is flooding into churches.

It is that important!

And in I Timothy 6:12 Paul wrote, **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

Make no mistake about it, we are in a battle. Now you may be thinking, *“What did Paul say before this that made him tell us to fight the good fight of faith?”*

We don't have to guess, we can just look and see in I Timothy 6:11, which says, **“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”**

The idea here is to *FLEE* these ungodly, worldly things and *FOLLOW* after godly things, after the Lord.

You see, it is hard to be greedy when you are seeking to be righteous, seeking after godliness, trusting in the Lord by faith, loving people unconditionally, patient and having a gentle spirit! And a lot of the false teaching feeds into this.

And make no mistake about it, we are in a battle! Don't go *AWOL* but continue the good fight.

A good example of this is seen in salmon as they are swimming upstream, against the current, fighting forward, making progress with the goal of finishing the swim in mind.

On the other hand, if they don't fight, if they don't work, they will float back downstream and so will Christians if we just give up.

We will become more like the world and less like Christ.

But, since you have made a decision for Christ, now live accordingly as Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-26, “**. . . ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’**”

That is the correct perspective we need to have. That we have everything we need in Christ, He will supply us and thus, be content and live accordingly!

But why should we live this way?

Paul goes on to tell us in I Timothy 6:13-16, **“I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”**

Again, the question, *“Why should we live this way?”*

Paul tells us here in I Timothy 6:13.

First of all, God the Father, the One who gives us life will hold us accountable for not walking accordingly.

Secondly, Jesus Christ, our ultimate example of how we are to live will also hold us accountable.

And Paul shows us the example of Christ as He stood before Pontius Pilate.

In John 18:37 we are told, **“Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’”**

Jesus did not back down but stated the truth no matter what the consequences might be and so should we! Our life should match our confession of faith.

And this commandment is not just one specific thing, but it encompasses the entire Word of God.

Thus, in knowing who God is, His holiness, that He alone deserves our worship and praise, that He is coming back, it motivates us to live lives that are pleasing to Him no matter what we are going through, no matter what comes our way.

It is not time to compromise our faith but to stand up for the truths of God found in the Word of God!

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 13:6, **“So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”**

Perspective is everything!

And you may not like to hear this, but every genuine believer should contend for the faith, must contend for the faith!

How do we do this?

I have shared this with you but just to be clear, Jude tells us in Jude 1:20-21, **“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”**

If you want to be effective in your Christian walk and be able to defend your faith as others attack it, then you need to be built up in the faith or you need to study the Word of God, meditate upon the Word of God, grow in the Word of God, build yourself up in the Word of God!

When soldiers are in a battle, they better know the weapons that they have, and they better know how to use them.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

Soldiers who have fought in battles say that when bullets start flying the mind goes blank and switches to autopilot. This is where proper training is of paramount importance.

Soldiers cannot be expected to be effective in battle if they have been shown something only once. They must be drilled in military skills until those skills become second nature.

Then when the bullets start flying, trained soldiers will automatically respond with the appropriate action or maneuver without conscious thought of what should be done.

There are many battles in the Christian way of life. At any moment we may suddenly find ourselves attacked for our beliefs. When the bullets start flying, if we are not prepared we will not have an appropriate answer or action to defend our faith.

When suddenly put on the spot, it is common for our mind to go blank. At moments like these we are only as good as our training. If we, as Christian soldiers, are not properly prepared we will be sitting ducks to worldly-thinking that denies God and promotes self. It's only a matter of time before we end up casualties in the spiritual-war.

But if our soul is inculcated with God's Word, we will have ready answers to defend our faith and we will respond with the right action – grace.

When we are occupied with Christ, we will not react with uncertainty, anger, or self-righteous judgement. We will be imitators of our Lord: calm and graceful under fire; confident in our belief and considerate of others in theirs.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:11

I can tell you from my own personal experience, not in the military but as a Registered Nurse working in the Intensive Care Units.

When a Code Blue is called, when a person's heart goes into what we call ventricular fibrillation or it is just quivering, not pumping any blood, for some nurses, they panic, their mind goes blank! And that mostly happened when a patient coded on the nursing floor, not in the ICU. And the reason being is that they were not prepared for this, they were not trained for it, but the ICU nurses were.

And for me, I was trained in what to do. When that happened, I would never go to get the bag to help the person breathe. I would not do chest compressions. There is nothing wrong with that but that is not the problem. The problem for them is an electrical problem and their heart needs to be restarted or it needs a shock to go back into a normal rhythm.

So I would grab the pads off the crash cart, place them on the patient, and yell "*Clear!*" and I would shock the patient. Usually I would have at least one shock done and hopefully the patients rhythm returned to normal by the time the doctors got down to the unit!

Why did I respond that way?

Why wasn't I nervous or anxious or just throw my hands up in the air and scream?

Because I was trained in what to do and when things went bad, my training was seen in my actions!

As Christians, we are no different. How many times do we get put on the spot and have to respond in situations we face. I am sure all of us have. And yet, we were able to respond, maybe not the way we wanted as we look back on it, but maybe the way that God wanted us to respond.

Peter put it like this in II Peter 3:17-18, **“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”**

The way you prepare for battle is that you need to train, and specifically to be trained up in the things of God, knowing what you believe so you can defend your faith before others!

And Peter's point is that we would continue to grow, that is what the Greek is saying here. Never stop but keep on growing in the grace of God.

Peter tells us we need to grow in grace and in our knowledge of Jesus, to have that intimate relationship with Him because the more we do, the more of Him will be seen in our lives.

The more we learn of Him the more we learn of ourselves and the more we see the bountiful, the never-ending grace of God.

It is as Paul said in Colossians 3:1-4, **“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”**

And Jude gives us some insight into what this contending for the faith is all about. He tells us in Jude 1:22-23, **“And 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.”**

The battle is not to see if you can win or not. The battle is for the souls of men. And as you encounter those who believe in the lies of the Devil, have compassion for them. Reach out to them in the love of Christ. The whole point of contending with them is to see them saved!

Paul speaks of this in Romans 2:4, that it is the love of God that leads to repentance, and I think that the majority of the unsaved need to hear that. Yes, we are all sinners, but God loves us and died for us so that we can have that fellowship with God the Father, and we will spend eternity with Him.

We have seen in that in our study in the Gospel of John, all that Jesus did for us to save us!

On the other end of the spectrum are those that you have to dangle over the fires of Hell, put the fear of God in them before they too will come to saving faith. Jude will deal with that as we read on.

He will show us how God judged the false teachers in the past and what the future judgement is for false teachers, and it is not pretty, nor is it intended to be pretty. God takes this very seriously because it is a matter of life and death!

Some 282 years ago a sermon was preached entitled *“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,”* and Jonathan Edwards preached it at the church of Enfield, Connecticut, on July 8, 1741.

E. H. Cady points out, *“the focus of the sermon is on the predicament of the sinner, how dreadfully he dangles just before he plunges to eternal agony, and while he has time to repent and be saved.”*

Listen to this excerpt from this sermon, for I think it is very appropriate for today.

This is what Jonathan Edwards said, *“You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.”*

Not a touchy, feely type of message but it is the truth and there are so many today who want to ignore that there is a Hell, that it is a real place. And yet, Jesus spoke more about Hell than anyone else in the Bible.

And some people need to understand this, that apart from Christ, that is where they are going! But you don't have to go there, you can choose to go there, but if you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, you won't go there!

For us who are contending for this faith, we need to wake up and be aware of what is being taught, what is being said because the Devil and his forces are very good at spreading these doctrines of demons. And, like I have said, the people he is working through creep in unnoticed because people are not paying attention.

Make no mistake about it, the more passive the sheep are, the more passive the leaders of churches are and the more they don't want to contend, the easier it is for wolves to come in and pluck these sheep away from the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Paul shows us how deceptive Satan is and his workers in II Corinthians 11:13-15, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

Make no mistake about it, these guys are good. They are slick. They will tell you that they know Hebrew, they know Greek, they found secrets in God's Word that many have missed, and yet, when it comes to the ABCs of Christianity, the basics, they don't share that because they don't believe it!

Hughes tells us that *“an individual has only to make the most preposterous claims for himself in order to gain an enthusiastic and undiscerning following.”*

That would be funny if it were not so true. How easily people are deceived by the most outlandish false teaching. And I have seen it, and like Paul, it breaks my heart!

Now when we think of Satan, we think of him wearing red underwear and having a pitchfork in his hand and an ugly face, but that is not what he looks like. That is what artists have pictured him as, not what the Scriptures teach us!

Notice what Paul says of Him, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, he looks like a teacher of righteousness, but he mixes the truths of God with subtle errors that will lead people to damnation and not salvation!

And not only does Satan do this, but so does his workers, these false teachers that were in Paul's day and in Jude's day and they continue on today working their deceptions, their lies and many fall prey to them.

Let's be wise, let's pay attention, let's bring everything to God and lay it alongside the Word of God to see if it is true or not because the angel of light and his ministers are working hard to confuse people and lead them astray!

One writer summed it up like this and he hits the nail on the head. He wrote,

We shouldn't be surprised when false teachers seem to live so righteously, when their standards seem to be so moral, when they stress the importance of family and separation from the defilement of the world.

We shouldn't be surprised that their TV commercials sound so right and look so warm and fuzzy, nor that their temple in Salt Lake City glows with light - for Paul says Satan himself transforms into an angel of light.

You see, Satan will go either way with people. If people want to be dark and devilish and heavy, he'll meet them there.

But if people want to be exemplary and upstanding, he'll meet them there.

As an angel of light, he'll say, "You don't need to admit you're a sinner and need a Savior. Just live morally.

It's interesting to me that so many who talk about near-death experiences report seeing a warm, bright light beckoning them - the implication being that if we are "good people," regardless of the route we choose, we'll all make it to the bright light at the end of the tunnel.

But wait. That bright light may not be the Father of Lights. It may be the one who transforms himself to appear as an angel of light. It might be a train barreling down the track in your direction.

Because Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, we should be wary about the conclusions of those who write about such experiences.

- Source Unknown

Be alert, be warned, and cut off those workers of deceit, don't allow them to confuse you with their false doctrine, their false teaching, I don't care how good they sound, I don't care if they are your friend or not.

The fear of God should cause you to draw close to the Lord no matter what!

Again, remember how Paul warned the Corinthian church and he is warning us, and this is from The Amplified Bible, "**For such men are false apostles [spurious, counterfeits], deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles (special messengers) of Christ (the Messiah). And it is no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light; So it is not surprising if his servants also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. [But] their end will correspond with their deeds.**" II Corinthians 11:13-15.

Make no mistake about it, the apostates are here and there false doctrine, these doctrines of demons are being spread in churches all over the world!

That means it is time for us to awaken out of our spiritual sleep and to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

It is as Paul said to the Romans in Romans 13:11-14, **“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”**

Let me ask you this question. *“Do you think the Church of Jesus Christ is asleep today?”*

It saddens me to say this, but the church is not just asleep, it seems to be in a coma!

Now some of you may be thinking, *“What is he talking about, we see things happening in the church today! The church is not asleep!”*

Think about this for a minute. Is there a real concern for false teaching?

I don't see it and when you start to come against it, you have a fight on your hands!

You see, the church has allowed into it all kinds of immoral activities. We see homosexuality being embraced by the church. Divorce is not even an issue anymore; it is a common practice in the church. We see drinking and drunkenness come into the church. There is even a church today that serves beer!

You still may not believe me but let me share with you a few things that the church has allowed in, and they don't see it as wrong. They are not earnestly contending for the faith that has been entrusted to them!

This is what is happening,

The absence of conviction of sin!

A lack of the fear of God!

Little sense of outrage over the godlessness of society!

Watching pornography and feeling justified!

Materialism, greed and lack of financial integrity!

No sense of outrage over the Church's lack of credibility in the world!

Little or no concern about people going to hell!

Little concern about the lack of knowledge of God's Word!

Indifference to the biblical view of marriage!

Indifference to holding grudges and unforgiveness!

Indifference to talking to people about Christ!

Tolerating heresies and false teachers!

Indifference to the teaching that the Bible is infallible!

Indifference to how much time is spent in prayer and quiet time!

No interest in Bible prophecy and the return of Jesus Christ!

Let's face it, we are going to face opposition as we stand up for righteousness, as we stand up for the things of God. Opposition is a fact and the Christian who is not conscious of being opposed had better watch himself for he is in danger.

Paul said this in II Timothy 3:12-15, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”**

We are going to face battles, not doubt and these evil men are going to grow worse and worse as the Lord’s return gets closer and closer!

That means we need to persevere, to forge ahead and to contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us. And we might feel like we are not making much of an impact. That we are not important. But you are part of the Body of Christ and thus, you are important for the function of the Body of Christ. In a sense, we are like the immune system fighting off deadly infections. Never give up as this story illustrates for us.

We are told,

Are you ready for a baseball trivia question?

Who is Clint Courtney?

If you’re unsure, don’t bother requesting the answer from Cooperstown, N.Y. Clint never came close to making it into the Baseball Hall of Fame. In fact, it’s very doubtful that his picture appeared on any bubble gum cards. This guy wasn’t a legend in his own time - not even in his own mind. He was only a memory maker for his family, and a few die-hard fans who were inspired by his tremendous fortitude.

Clint played catcher for the Baltimore Orioles in the 1950s. During his career he earned the nickname of Scrap Iron, implying that he was hard, weathered, tough. Old Scrap broke no records - only bones. He had little power or speed on the base paths. As for grace and style, he made the easiest play look rather difficult. But armed with mitt and mask, Scrap Iron never flinched from any challenge.

Batters often missed the ball and caught his shin. Their foul tips nipped his elbow. Runners fiercely plowed into him, spikes first, as he defended home plate. Though often doubled over in agony, and flattened in a heap of dust, Clint Courtney never quit. Invariably, he'd slowly get up, shake off the dust, punch the pocket of his mitt once, twice, and nod to his pitcher to throw another one.

The game would go on and Courtney with it - scarred, bruised, clutching his arm in pain, but determined to continue. He resembled a POW with tape, splints, braces, and other kinds of paraphernalia that wounded people wear. Some made fun of him - calling him a masochist. Insane. Others remember him as a true champion, because he persevered.

- <https://bit.ly/41pvSRa>

It truly is a battle out there and we must contend for the faith and the best thing we can do as a church, as a body of believers to contend for this faith that has been entrusted to us, to fight against these apostates or these pretenders is to be well built on the faith, to know the Word of God!

And I will close our study this morning and our series on earnestly contending for the faith with this. What Jude has admonished us to do, **“Beloved, my whole concern was to write to you in regard to our common salvation. [But] I found it necessary and was impelled to write you and urgently appeal to and exhort [you] to contend for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints [the faith which is that sum of Christian belief which was delivered verbally to the holy people of God]. For certain men have crept in stealthily [gaining entrance secretly by a side door]. Their doom was predicted long ago, ungodly (impious, profane) persons who pervert the grace (the spiritual blessing and favor) of our God into lawlessness and wantonness and immorality, and disown and deny our sole Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).”** (The Amplified Bible)

WE ARE TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH THAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO US!