

Contending for the Faith

Jude 3-4

Our last study was one that presented a great challenge and encouragement to the believers. After reading Jude's introduction, it would appear that his letter was going to be very similar to many of the other epistles. However, it doesn't take long for the mood and direction to change.

Clearly that was what Jude desired. He wished to write a letter of encouragement and exhortation to the church, but he was confronted with a battle instead. Jude was not one who was looking for trouble; the trouble had come to him. He realized that he could not ignore it. The apostates had made their assault and they must be dealt with.

There is a great lesson for us in the attitude and approach of Jude. It is not within my nature to look for trouble. I had rather avoid conflict. But there are times when trouble comes looking for us. There are issues that arise in our society and today's culture that must be dealt with. We must be aware that what we have been entrusted with is precious and worth defending. There are some things worth fighting for and our faith is certainly one of those things.

If we are to be successful in our efforts we need to understand the nature of the battle and the character of the enemy. Simply ignoring the problem will not solve it. There are times when we must rise to the challenge. I want to consider the **conflict** we are engaged in as we think on: **Contending for the Faith.**

I. A Passionate Devotion (3a) – Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation: It is apparent that Jude was passionate about the church and the saints of God. We will never be successful contending for the faith if we lack passion in regard to our faith. We live in a day where many church-goers have a take it or leave it mentality when it comes to the things of God. We need passionate people. We need the devotion that Jude had. Notice:

A. His Concern – Jude was actually concerned about the church. He addressed the **beloved**; those "*esteemed dear, worthy of love.*" Jude was willing to stand and fight for his fellow believers. He was willing to contend for the faith that was so vital in their lives.

- We need that same passion and devotion for the beloved. We need those who are actually concerned about the well being of fellow believers and the good of the church. Are you really concerned about Fellowship and the saints of God? Do you pray for them and encourage them in the faith? I fear that our emphasis is placed on a lot of things other than the beloved of God.

B. His Commitment – I gave all diligence to write unto you. This was not just a passing idea or careless whim that Jude had. He was actually concerned and committed to the well being of the church. He literally gave all diligence to write unto them. That has the idea of “*haste, an eagerness to accomplish something, striving to promote.*” This was the heart of Jude’s being. He longed to write unto the church. He was consumed with being a help to God’s people and His work. Serving the Lord was the priority!

- I hate to admit it, but if the church is lacking one thing in our day, it is lacking commitment. Many are willing to attend church and serve the Lord as long as it is convenient. They are willing to identify with the church as long as it is comfortable. We need those who are committed to making the Lord and His work the priority rather than the occasional occurrence!

- Where are the Lord and His church on your list of priorities? We will deal with the dangers that are present among believers in a moment, but I can assure you that we will never overcome without commitment.

C. His Conviction – Jude was concerned and committed to writing to them in regard to **the common salvation**. He had believed on the Lord in salvation; he had received the truth, and he wanted everyone else to accept Christ as well. Jude had no doubt that Christ was the Messiah, Savior of mankind.

- The modern church needs to regain her vision. We have been left here as salt and light in a dark world. We are here to spread the gospel message and reach the perishing. I fear that many have lost their convictions and have sought to promote their own agenda rather than reach the world.

I. A Passionate Devotion (3a)

II. A Pressing Decree (3b) – Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude had an idea in mind regarding the church, but present matters were more urgent. Notice:

A. The Intervention – Jude declares that when he gave all diligence, had all intentions, of writing to them concerning salvation, there was an issue that was more needful. This reveals that it was “*necessary, imposed by circumstances or a sense of duty.*” Jude’s heart was a message of salvation and exhortation, but the circumstances within the church required a different message. He was aware that danger was present and must be dealt with.

- Just as Jude was aware of circumstances within the church, we too must be vigilant and aware of the needs of our day. Simply ignoring the situations of our society and the attack

upon the church will not make them go away. There may be times when we have to take a stand in order to intervene in a situation. We can't sit idly by while the world invades the church and seeks to destroy the very foundations of our faith.

- There is another valuable lesson to be learned here as well. Jude had one message in mind, but realized that he needed to address another issue. He was not so narrow minded and set in his ways that he refused to change course. Now, I am not implying that we compromise our faith for the world. In fact, I am implying just the opposite. We must be willing to face the tough issues and take a firm stand when it comes to our faith. We must be willing to meet those challenges and overcome them, without fail.

B. The Inspiration – it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. This was an issue that couldn't be ignored. There was no room for debate or compromise. There was an urgent need at hand and the church had but one option, earnestly contend for the faith. Jude wanted them to sense the urgency and stand for truth and right. This would not be an easy battle, but it was one that was necessary and one they could win!

- As a pastor I am aware of various needs within the church. The Lord deals with me so that He might speak to you through the preaching.

- As I began to study this timely letter of Jude, I realized the need for us to earnestly contend for the faith as well. We live in a day where many have abandoned their faith for the ways of the world. Many have decided that it is no longer worth the effort and have compromised with the world. Others have bought the lie that we need to bring the world into the church if we are to reach this generation. If I could inspire you to do one thing, it would be to contend for the faith. Hold on to the truths that will never change!

C. The Implication – Jude urged them to **contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.** I looked at that phrase and wondered of its significance. Surely Jude was making a profound point to the church, but what was it? What was he really saying? The key is in the words **once delivered.** They had received the same truth that the saints before had received. They experienced salvation through the same Jesus! The faith that former generations held was still relevant for them. They had embraced truth and truth never changes. This was the foundation of Christianity and they must remain true to the truths of God.

- The point in all of this for us is: this is really all that matters. Without faith in Christ all is vain. There are fundamental truths that we cannot ignore. There are paths that we must take. There are times when we must stand and make our voices heard. God's truth has never changed and it never will. If we abandon truth for the lies of the world, what do we have left?

- I can assure you that taking a stand won't be popular, but we have no other option. We need God's presence and power, and if we are to experience that, we must stand for truth!

I. A Passionate Devotion (3a)

II. A Pressing Decree (3b)

III. A Present Danger (4) – For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude reveals the character of the enemy and the danger they present. The enemy still possesses these characteristics.

A. Their Deception – For there are certain men crept in unawares. They had crept in secretly, slipped in among them unaware. The enemy was already among them and the people didn't even notice.

- This is how the enemy continues to operate. He sneaks in unaware and begins to divide the flock. He never comes in an obvious way.

B. Their Devotion – For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These men were before of old ordained to this condemnation. They were not new or unwise to their craft. They have followed the path of apostates before them. They are committed to hindering the church and the cause of Christ.

- We need to be aware that we face a determined and devoted adversary. He has been on the attack since the creation of man. He knows how to deceive and destroy. We need wisdom and help from God to overcome.

C. Their Depravity – The apostates are described as **ungodly men**; those who are “*destitute of reverential awe toward God, even condemning God.*” Have we not seen a rise of this even among the church? There are those who are ungodly, with no reverence or fear of God whatsoever. Their desire is not to worship the Lord, but to promote their own agendas.

D. Their Deeds – They had **turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness.** This has the idea of “*unbridled lusts, excess, shamelessness.*” They had no desire for the things of God or His way, but sought to please the flesh.

- I have known people within the church who did the exact same things. They were not concerned with the well being of the church or maintaining a positive witness. They were

determined to have their way regardless of the cost to the church or the lost around them.
Their personal desires were of more importance than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

E. Their Denial – denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. In that day these were likely Judaisers, those who denied that Christ was the Messiah and sought to hold onto the Law rather than embrace the grace of God that brings salvation.

- Certainly we have religions today that refuse to accept Christ as Lord. There are many who teach another way, but that is not the most pressing danger facing the church today. We face a more imminent threat from within the church itself! There are those who identify with the Christian faith, but fail to embrace the deity and sovereignty of Christ. They refuse the notion that He lived a sinless life. They question the resurrection and His second coming. Many go so far as to say that Christ is not the only way of salvation.

- We must ensure that we maintain the truths of God's Word. Christ is the eternal Son of God. He came to earth, lived a perfect and sinless life, was crucified on the cross as our Sacrifice for sin, died, was buried, and rose again. He is right now seated at the Father's right hand and will come again in power and great glory. He is not one of many ways; He is the only way!

Has God spoken to your heart through His Word this evening? Are there areas that you need to address in order to serve God in a way that pleases Him? Do you need strength and wisdom? If so, come to Him.