

Contend For The Faith

5-1-22

Jude was the half-brother of Jesus. His brother James also the half-brother of Jesus and was the leader of the Jerusalem church in Acts 15 who also wrote the book of James.

Jude 3 (ESV)

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude had wanted to write on the general subject of our common salvation. But news reached him that his Christian friends were threatened by a dangerous heresy. Thus, he wrote a very different letter.

This dangerous heresy made it necessary to alert believers to contend for the faith. The word, *contend*, only occurs only here in the NT. It literally means the intense effort in a wrestling match. Contend signifies “contend as a combatant.” The verb form shows that the Christian struggle is to be continuous. As used here “contend” means to emphasize that the defense of our faith will be continuous, costly, and agonizing. Jesus even warned us of these heretics.

Matthew 7:15 (ESV)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

In the last letter the Apostle Paul wrote, he too warned about false teachers.

2 Timothy 4:3 (ESV)

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

Elders are especially called to be alert to false teachers.

Acts 20:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

To contend for the faith, Jude writes this letter to a specific group of people, “Beloved, dear friend, loved one.” The Beloved are those with a vibrant, vital personal relationship with Jesus which inflames, invigorates and permeates every aspect of personal life who will contend with this heresy.

Jude identifies these wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Jude 4 (ESV)

For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The first warning we have is that they crept in unnoticed or literally *quietly settled in alongside*. Such an incursion was serious just because it was subtle. It is always more serious when the danger comes from within the church. But it ought not to have been surprising. The Old Testament, the teaching of Jesus, and that of the apostles all contain warnings against false teachers. These are ungodly people who long ago were designated for this condemnation. Designated literally can mean written beforehand. Thus, the condemnation of these men *was written about long ago* or 'foretold in writing'. The NIV says it clearly "Men whose condemnation was written about long ago." **These ungodly people, "pervert the grace of our God into sensuality or a license for immorality."**

These people bring in a perversion of the truth. In this situation these are heretics who would turn our freedom into a license to sin. Very seldom will this be a frontal confrontation but a subtle watering down of the truth. The author of these chipping away at the Word of God is Satan himself. Therefore, this letter is written to the Beloved. We are those who are committed to Christ, the Scripture and one another. The Beloved are those that are saved and live by the Grace of God. Grace means the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life. Likewise, those under Grace "Are led by the Spirit, and not under the law." As the Beloved we embrace the Scriptures and are led by the inner prompting and restraint of the Holy Spirit. Today the church is under attack by those who would pervert the Grace of God into a license to sin.

Think of the whole list of sinful behavior embraced the world and now being accepted by the church. Think of how people discount Scripture necessary to solve man's social and moral problems. Bottom line these people are godless having no reverence for God. They despise God's laws. And because do not rely on God, they are self-assertive promoting their perverted grace. As the Beloved we must recognize that even though these people profess to know God that they are denying HIM by their actions.

Titus 1:16 (ESV)

They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.

They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Grace is power and favor from God. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God living within us. Therefore, the Grace of God is power that transforms us to behave like Jesus. It is up for the Beloved, the church, to Contend for the faith. We are not like the godless. We are the temple of God where the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us with all the power of God. We are witnesses that Grace transforms and tears down strongholds that hold people in bondage.

Beloved, Contend for the Faith. Stand strong!

Colossians 1:29 (ESV)

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.