Contend for The Faith

Zanesville, OH | December 22, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Jude 1:3

**Intro**:

* Jude, the brother of our Lord, only wrote one simple yet very profound letter to some of the saints living in the 1st century. It cannot be known for certain which Christians Jude specifically sent this letter to, but we do know its timeless message suits us just as well today as it did for them. Jude begins with the general salutation as is customary for most of the epistles (cf. Rom. 1:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; 2 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:1-5; Eph. 1:1-2; Phil. 1:1-2 etc.) before telling us the main message of the letter. What does it mean to ***“contend for the faith”*** and how can we use Jude’s message to be better Christians?

1. **Fighting for the Exclusivity of the Gospel**
   1. Jude makes it very clear to his readers: **Fight for the faith!** We would do well to note the exclusivity with which Jude is making his emphasis. He is not encouraging his audience to fight for a faith or whatever faith they may believe is best but rather he is encouraging them to fight for **THE FAITH!**
   2. Although Jude’s purpose is not necessarily to argue if there is one gospel or a multiplicity of gospels, he does not shy away from stating the reality that there is indeed only one gospel. It is exclusive and it was handed down once for all! This will play an important role in relation to Jude’s overall message.
   3. During the 1st century and the early years of Christianity, the NT authors repeatedly warned of occasions where opposers of Christianity, enemies of God, and false teachers seeking their own glory would give their best effort to draw the saints away from God and from His holy pattern.
   4. They would be very convincing and unfortunately many were persuaded by them (cf. Gal. 1:6-9). It began shortly after the church was established and many have fallen prey to the predators that strongly oppose Jesus and His standards.
   5. As a result, the encouragement and the message all Christians everywhere, both then and now, need to adhere to is the reality that we need to fight for the faith which was handed down once for the saints. Notice how Jude words that exhortation.
   6. He says that it was ONCE handed down. This is essential because Jude is claiming that what Jesus established, what He taught and what He proclaimed was distinctive, unparalleled and unrivaled.
   7. Jesus did not die twice, He died ONCE! What Jesus said was written down and it is as authoritative today as it was back then. The Faith Jude speaks of is not our belief in a God we cannot see.
   8. We certainly must grow in this faith, but the faith Jude speaks of is the set of standards and beliefs Jesus Christ established. We must fight for that because it is constantly being attacked and diminished by our culture, our leaders the so-called religious community and our enemies.
   9. 2000 years later and not much has changed at all. Yet, Jesus continuously calls us to stand up for the truth and for His principles which He expects us to keep in uniform and humble subjection until the day we die or the day He returns (vv. 24-25).
   10. So, how to we keep fighting for this faith? The principle here is to combine small changes with humble service. We should ensure we are staying on top of our bible studies and ensuring we know what God has outlined for our lives (vv. 17-21).
   11. This will equip us to better speak with our neighbors and as such we can humbly correct the things, they have wrong and we can point them in the right direction. The priority as Jude says is to have mercy on some and save others from Hell (vv. 22-23).

**Conclusion:** If we don’t contend for the faith, no one else will. Expecting that other people will do what we are responsible for is foolish and dangerous. Jesus tasked the Israelite nation in the OT with the responsibility of being a shining light not only among themselves but also to all the nations among which they lived. Not only did they fail to be an example to their neighbors but they became worse than them (Amos 3:9-10) and they failed to appreciate and preserve the message God gave to them (Judg. 2:10-13). They took in all the false doctrines and self-satisfying messages to their own destruction.

This is why it is important for us to contend for **THE FAITH** and this is why Jude took the time to write to his audience to fight for what they knew was true and exclusive . God preserved it for us so that we could continue this fight. All this points to the fact that there is nothing more important that preserving and spreading God’s exclusive life-giving message. May we learn from Israel’s mistakes and may we fight the good fight and cling to eternal life!