

Theme: All Christians are called to receive, contend for, and pass on the one true faith that was delivered once and for all to God's people.

I. Intro - Athanasius Contra Mundum

- A. He was a young assistant at Council of Nicea
- B. The one, true faith was recognized and affirmed
- C. Politics intervenes & Arianism takes control
- D. Athanasius stands firm for the true faith - exiled 6 times!
- E. His gravestone - Athanasius Contra Mundum!
- F. Thanks to his labors (and others) the true faith survived and the false faith was pushed back
- G. We are also called to fight to contend for the true faith

II. Gospel Resources for the Fight

- A. Introducing Jude, brother and servant of Jesus
Jude, **a servant of Jesus Christ** and a **brother of James**
Jude 1:1
 - 1. Jude is the brother of James - and Jesus!
I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother. Galatians 1:19

"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers **James**, Joseph, Simon and **Judas**? Matthew 13:55
 - a. Jude is the brother of James - and Jesus!
 - b. James was more well known and he identifies himself by that designation
 - c. The brothers of Jesus never used that fact to give themselves recognition or power.

- 2. Jude identifies himself as a servant/slave of Jesus - this is what is important to him!

- a. The word had layers of meaning

- 1. Used of great men of God in the OT (Abraham, Moses, David)

- 2. A title that was given to church leaders in NT

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God — Romans 1:1

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. Colossians 4:12

- 3. A title that was given to all Christians in the NT
Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as **servants of God**. 1 Pet 2:16

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become **slaves to God**, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. Romans 6:22

- b. For Jude this is the ultimate reality - he is the servant and slave of Jesus Christ. Everything else one might say about him grew out of this.
- c. For a Christian, the most important and fundamental fact of life is being a servant and slave of Jesus Christ.

- B. Our Gospel realities and blessings

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been **called**, who are **loved** by God the Father and **kept** by Jesus Christ: ² **Mercy, peace** and **love** be yours in abundance. Jude 1:1–2

- 1. Two triads of Gospel realities and blessings

2. Gospel realities: called, loved, and kept
 - a. Christians are those who have been called by God into His family, who are loved by God, and who are kept by God's power until Christ returns.
 - b. These are all terms used of Israel in Isaiah 40-55 to speak of God's work in saving Israel in exile and restoring her to Himself
 - a. Through the Gospel, we have received and are filled mercy to forgive our sins, peace with God, and God's saving love.
 - b. These are not our in small measure - they are multiplied to us in Christ.
3. Christians are those who have been called, loved, and kept by God, and who are given mercy, peace, and love in abundance through Christ!
4. These powerful realities are the foundation of who we are and resources to sustain us in the fight for the faith.

III. Our Call: Contend for the True Faith!

- A. An urgent call: contend for the true faith

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3

 1. Contend is an athletic term calling for the effort of an athlete competing to win the crown to be applied to the fight to not let the faith be corrupted.
 2. The faith - the Gospel and essential Christian doctrine, not our personal subjective response of trust
 - a. It is the faith once for all entrusted to the saints

- b. It is therefore corporate, not individual
- c. It does not arise from within the individual believer but rather is handed down (entrusted) from the apostles to all succeeding generations of believers
- d. The NT speaks of "the faith" in this way many times

They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now **preaching the faith** he once tried to destroy." Galatians 1:23

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became **obedient to the faith**. Acts 6:7
3. Despite the claims of heretics down through the ages, there are not many "faiths" but only one true faith, which God has given to His people to embrace, protect, defend, and pass on.

- B. We must contend for the faith against false teachers and false forms of the faith

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 1:4

 1. False teachers and fake believers have slipped in among the true believers and church.
 2. Very often, rather than having the integrity to start their own new religion, false teachers attempt to distort the true faith and deceive true believers.

I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:29-30

 - a. They came in among the church and wreaked havoc

- b. These wolves distort the truth, trying to change the faith once for all delivered to the people of God.
- c. This has been repeated down through the ages and continues into our own day.

C. How they try to distort and change the one true faith

1. Some groups try to change the essential beliefs of the faith

For **what I received I passed on to you as of first importance**: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 1 Corinthians 15:3–5

- a. Received and passed on, first importance - this is unalterable truth
- b. This heresy denied resurrection of the body
- c. The essential beliefs became known as the “rule of faith” and were the core Christian beliefs which are not open for negotiation and are generally written down in the early creeds of the Church.

2. Some groups try to change the essential moral teachings of Christianity and want it to change to match current moral beliefs.

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who **change the grace of our God into a license for immorality** and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 1:4

- a. The change here is moral - they have changed grace into a license for immorality
- b. The word for immorality (ἀσέλγεια) denotes lack of self-restraint and was often used for sexual excesses

- c. We see this error trying to change the gospel in many places in the NT, down through church history, and in our own day.
- d. Many groups who initially changed or challenged core doctrines in the 20th century are now openly calling for the church to abandon biblical ethics regarding human sexuality and morality. To do so is to abandon the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- e. To change these core moral beliefs is to deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. It is to deny that we are servants/slaves of Jesus Christ.
- f. To abandon the biblical moral code is to deny Jesus as our Lord and Master and to worship a god of our own making.

D. Who is called to contend for the true faith

1. Leaders have a special call to contend for the faith

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you. 1 Timothy 6:20–21

- a. No man should be ordained as an elder unless he knows and will protect and pass on the faith delivered to him.
- b. Sadly, many heresies in the church have arisen from unfaithful church leaders, who distorted the doctrinal or ethical teachings given by God to His people.
- c. Do not follow those who alter the essential Christian beliefs!

2. All believers must contend for the faith

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and **urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints**. Jude 1:3

- a. Jude is not just writing to leaders, but to all believers
- b. The faith was entrusted to all believers, not just to leaders
- c. Every Christian is responsible to know, believe, guard, and pass on the great doctrinal and moral teachings of the Christian faith.

- 3. In a moment we will recite biblical confessions together (see communion prayers)
- 4. We will then receive the elements of the faith in faith

IV. Applying the Word

A. Am I contending for the faith?

- 1. Do I know what I believe and why?
- 2. Do I know the essentials of the Christian faith - both doctrine and morals?
- 3. A tool to study, learn and understand the faith - the catechism
 - a. We are publishing a question each Wednesday on our new blog page
 - b. I will be teaching the first 4 questions during July
 - c. It covers essential Christian beliefs on God, Christ, the Gospel, humanity, sin, salvation, etc.
 - d. It summarizes the teaching of Scripture and has the Apostles Creed
 - e. It teaches biblical morality via the 10 Commandments
- 4. Please use the tools we provide the learn, understand, and pass on the faith!

B. The Table of the Faith

- 1. This Table is a regular reminder of THE FAITH
- 2. Here we rehearse and receive the Gospel in faith

Contending for the True Faith

Jude 1:1-4
June 23, 2019
Communion

Jude 1:1-2, 24-25 paraphrase

Teaching keywords: discipleship; catechism; false teaching and heresy

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance, from Him Who called and loved You, and who is able to keep you from falling and present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy ... through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Jude 1:2, 24–25

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: ² Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. ³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 1:1–4