

The Call, the Command, and the Commission

Jude 1-4

April 26, 2020

INTRODUCTION: What did you just see?

You may have caught the wolf in sheep's clothing

When I showed it to my daughter, she said, "sheep!". She didn't notice the wolf in sheep's clothing until I pointed directly to it. She didn't notice what she didn't notice until I pointed it out.

So, it is with the church and apostates

Although apostates and false teachers abound on the pages of Scripture and in the professing Church today, they are not always easy to detect. In part because of ignorance and in part because of complacency and carelessness

To be forewarned is to be forearmed;
to be prepared is half the victory

My goal is to help equip every true Christian for the lifelong spiritual war so that they may be victorious in Christ all by His glorious grace and all for His glory

Some Things Never Change! Peter, John, and Paul predicted that apostates would distort the good news about Jesus

Acts 20:29-30- *"I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them."*

2 Peter 2:1- *"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction."*

2 John 1:7- *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist."*

And the Apostles themselves were echoing Jesus' early warning about apostates

Matthew 7:15-16- *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits."*

Matthew 24:11- *"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many"*

Following in the footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles was a man named Jude who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write an alarming letter to expressly wake up all Christian soldiers from their slumber throughout the ages and to call them to fight for the truth

I pray that you see this divine letter of exhortation not as a historical picture but a window through which we see our present day reality

Let's Pray- Please read along

Jude 1-4- *“Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. 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. 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.”*

T/S Before we unpack this powerful passage, I want to lay before you the context of this letter

CONTEXT: Brother of James and half-brother of Jesus

Directed to the whole society of Christians

Jude undoubtedly wrote to a region recently plagued by false teachers

Devoted exclusively to confronting apostasy

“Jude wrote to condemn the apostates and to urge believers to contend for the faith. He called for discernment on the part of the church and rigorous defense of biblical truth”

THE BIG IDEA of today's message is this:
*Christians are Commanded to Contend for
Christ*

T/S: By way of preview, today we will look at 3 major points laid out in this text

PREVIEW:

I. Christians are Called by Christ

II. Christians are Commanded to Contend for Christ

III. Christians are Commissioned to Contend Against Creeps

T/S: First, let's unpack what it means to be called by Christ

I. Christians are Called by Christ

Illustration: Video- What is Effectual Calling?

Letter is addressed to “the called”

Who are “the called”? God wants every Christian to know what it means to be named among those He has “called”

We will dig a little deeper into effectual calling, but let's first dig into the first verse of Jude's letter

A. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James (v1)

i. Christians are called to belong to Christ

The word servant used here is the Greek word for slave

A servant gives service to someone, but a slave belongs

Total, absolute submission to the control and the directives of a Master – slavery, not merely service at one’s own discretion

Fully devoted to Christ to the disregard of one’s own interests

Service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his GOSPEL among men

Romans 6:22- “*But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*”

Revelation 5:9- “*And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.” That’s you and me, Christian*

Christ has delivered us from bondage to sin and rebellion against God SO THAT we might serve Him without fear in holiness and in righteousness before him all our days

B. To those who are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ (v1)

i. Christians are called

God commands His children to consider their calling

Video: John Piper Call of God (3:30)

**The call of God should fill every Christian heart with awe
filled worship**

**You didn't make yourself a Christian which is why you
should feel incredibly loved**

Beloved in God the Father (v1)

ii. Christians are eternally loved by God

**They are the objects of God's
never ending, inexhaustible, incomprehensible special love**

**I want to open one window to God's special love for
Christians**

Video: Jesus Doesn't Love Everyone the Same

Those He loves, He calls, and those He calls, He keeps

Kept for Jesus Christ (v1)

iii. Christians are eternally kept

**Christ carefully watches and guards His sheep
He will not lose one that His Father has given Him
but will preserve him for glory**

Beautiful timeless truth

Psalm 27:1-3 “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

Even though Satan is still orchestrating his evil system against believers and seeks to destroy them, God is always their strong protector

The children of God enjoy the blessings of their Father

C. May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you (v1)

i. Eternal blessings belong to believers

Jude wanted these special blessings to be multiplied in the lives of his fellow Christians

These Blessings are connected to and flow out of the Gospel

Through Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, Christians experience God’s mercy and love and enjoy eternal peace with Him

Let’s briefly look at these blessings

a. Mercy of God

God in His mercy does not give Christians what we deserve instead he gave their punishment to his own Son on the cross

b. Peace of God

“Because of Christ work on the cross believers enjoy peace. The unsaved person is at war with God and cannot please him but when he trusts the Savior the war ends and receives God's peace”

c. Love of God

The death of Christ for sinners is the ultimate expression and evidence of God's love. The Christian experiences this love once the Holy Spirit comes in their believing hearts

APPLICATION: Christian, consider your calling

Consider your belonging

Consider God's love demonstrated at the Cross for you

Consider the promise and power of Christ to eternally preserve you

Considering these things with the help of the Holy Spirit will produce in your mind and heart a divine dose of eternal assurance from which love, obedience, gratitude, praise, and worship spring forth

Where this doesn't take place and the promised security of God is used to justify sin, it may be an indicator that you are either in a stumble or you are not likely a Christian.

T/S: *“When God promises that his church will be kept from defeat, his purpose is not that we lay down our sword and go to lunch, but that we pick up the sword of the Spirit and look confidently to God for the strength to fight and win”*

II. Christians are Commanded to Contend for Christ

Illustration: As a soldier fights in order to protect his countrymen and honor his country, so Christians are commanded to fight for the Lord Jesus Christ to preserve and defend His word and protect His people from all forms of error and perversion, and thus honor Christ’s name above all names

A. Beloved (v3)

i. Eternally loved by God

Dear fellow Christian, loved by the Lord

B. Although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation (v3)

i. Eager to exalt Christ

Excited to celebrate his salvation with his fellow Christians

Excitement to celebrate Christ in every true Christian

“I would much rather encourage the saints than declare war on the apostates. But when the enemy is in the field the watchmen dare not go to sleep. The Christian life is a battleground not a playground”

Letter takes a 180-degree turn

C. I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (v3)

i. A command for Christians to contend for the faith

Necessity was laid upon Jude to sound the alarm and command the church to *“contend for the faith”*

Something occurred- Jude is not standing idle- From celebration to contention

What does it mean to *“contend for the faith”*?

“Contend”- usually describes an athlete striving with extreme intensity to win the victory

A living trust in God and a vigorous striving empowered by the Holy Spirit in the defense of the Gospel and living a life worthy of it for the glory of God no matter what!

“Jude wrote this urgent command for Christians to wage war against all forms of error and fight strenuously for the truth”

Christians are fighting for something very particular

“the faith”- whole body of revealed salvation truth defined in the Scripture

Once for all delivered to the saints (v3)

ii. The Deliverer was delivered

“Once for all delivered” - God’s revelation that was delivered once as a unit, at the completion of the Scripture, and is not to be added to or subtracted from

In particular, ***“once for all delivered”*** refers to the biblical revelation of the work and person of Jesus Christ

Christ was delivered- From to heaven to earth through His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection

The Deliverer was ***“once for all delivered”*** for the deliverance of sinners transformed into saints!

Who are ***“the saints”***?

“The saints”- are the called out, set apart people of God who have been miraculously transformed by His grace for the purpose of worship and service to Christ

Saints find the lost and grow the find

Saints are blood bought contenders for the faith

APPLICATION:

Contending for anything less than the faith that is compromise and thus standing for lies

To stand on and for God's word is to stand for and believe on Jesus.

To not stand on and for God's word is to stand against Jesus and thus dishonor, deny, and disobey Christ and His commands

Christians will stumble and fail-repent- receive forgiveness

Pattern should be one of faithful loving obedience

If you love Him, you will obey His command to contend for the faith

Contending is not a condition of acceptance with God, but the fruit of it

T/S: We've looked at the call of Christ, the command to contend, and now we will look at the commission to contend

III. Christians are Commissioned to Contend Against Creeps

Illustration: As a thief camouflages himself to blend into the dark night in order to creep into homes to steal goods, so apostates love to creep into the church to rob the church of their sound teaching and purity

A. For certain people have crept in unnoticed (v4)

i. Creeps champion creeping

“Certain people”: Apostates-defect from the true faith-crept into the church to corrupt it

“Crept in unnoticed”- to slip in, to settle in alongside, lodge stealthily, enter secretly

Not just into the church building; creeps creep into your living room, birthday parties, cook outs, and into your heart

When was the last time you noticed what snuck by you unnoticed?

The issue and basis for the letter: We don’t know what we don’t know even though we think we know what we don’t know

It is a grave error to underestimate the dangers of apostasy and overestimate our own strength

This is why Jude blew the trumpet to wake up the church

B. *Who long ago were designated for this condemnation*

i. Designation of damnation

Apostasy and apostates in general were written about and condemned many centuries before

“*this condemnation*”- the judgment spoken of by others
“long ago”

C. *Ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality (v4)*

i. Creeps corrupt Christ’s grace

“*Ungodly people*”- impious, irreverent, and without worship

Claim to belong to God, ungodly in thinking and living

Form of godliness, but they lack the power of godliness that lives in the true Christian (2 Timothy 3:5)

Infiltrate the church of God to expressly corrupt beliefs and behavior

What makes them ungodly people?

“*Pervert the grace of our God into sensuality*”-

We need to have a biblical definition of the grace of God in order to understand how creeps pervert the grace of God

Video- “What is Grace?”

“Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase?”

The answer is, *“may it never be”*

Creeps irreverently flaunt God’s grace by indulging in unchecked and open immorality

How does a rich person flaunt their riches?

Through expensive possessions

How does a creep flaunt the riches of God’s grace?

Through sensuality

They turn the grace of our God into a license to sin

“sensuality”- gross immorality; associated with excessive sexual indulgence

Creeps bring porn, fornication, homosexuality, and adultery into the church

Gal 5:19- One of the works of the flesh

Mark 7:20-22- Proceeds from the evil heart of man

Eph 4:19- Named among unbelievers

Gal 5:21- Those who practice will not inherit the K.O.G

We don’t magnify the grace of God through sensuality

I am not saying that salvation is earned

Anyone whose basic character is summed up in the uninterrupted and unrepentant practice of sin cannot belong to God

They reject the purpose, power, and promise of God's grace

The purpose, power, and promise of God's grace:
To set sinners free from the slavery to sin and enable them to embrace and live out the Gospel and genuinely love others for the glory of God

Purpose of Grace: *If grace is disconnected from its purpose, namely, bringing glory to God, then the sad result is a false, self-centered Christianity that bypasses the heart of God and the truth of the Gospel*

Grace of God is not a base from which Christians can sin freely and w/o consequences

Grace is not self- fulfillment but serving one another through love

The Father commands Christians to live self-controlled,
 upright, and godly lives in this present age
The Holy Spirit empowers the Christian to be holy
The Son of God brought forgiveness for when Christians fail
 and stumble

D. And deny our only Lord and Master, Jesus Christ (v4)

i. Behavior betrays belief

Contender's champion the Lordship of Christ by their lips
 and lives VS.

Creeps who profess to know God but by their deeds they
 deny Him as their Lord

Our lips and lives reveal what we truly believe

Matthew 7:16-17- *“you will recognize them by their fruits. Are
 grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So,
 every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears
 bad fruit”*

Bad fruit reveals bad theology
Bad theology produces bad fruit

APPLICATION: The ramifications for not contending for the faith are eternally devastating for many

Contending brings salvation to the lost, sanctifies the church, and glorifies God

Christians are commissioned to join God in the war against Christ and His word by contending for the faith

Only the truth of God's word can defeat satanic falsehoods, win souls for Christ, and sanctify the church

T/S: It is my prayer and earnest desire that you remember these three timeless truths

REVIEW:

I. Christians are called and eternally kept by Christ because of His great grace and unending love

II. Christians are commanded to contend for Christ and His gospel passionately and strenuously no matter what

III. Christians are commissioned to join Christ in the war against the enemies of the faith and to champion God's gospel

T/S: As we close, I want to leave you with the overall takeaway and application

CLOSE:

If you are a Christian, then Christ made you a Christian and He will make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy

It is from this blessed assurance that the Christian faithfully obeys God's command and commission to contend for the faith by the Lord's power, the strength of His Spirit, and the force of biblical truth

Contenders are walking, witnessing, working worshipers of God

“Let us fight as if it all depended upon us, but let us look up and know that all depends upon Him”

Jude 25- *Now to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

LET'S PRAY!