

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

BATTLE FOR HEARTS (JUDE 1:1-25)

MARCH 24, 2019



SERMON OUTLINE

Church Provides

No outline, missions weekend.

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

God's people are called to contend for the faith we have been given.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. How often do you hear the phrase “spiritual warfare” and when you do, what comes to mind?

2. Is spiritual warfare an inevitable part of the Christian life? Why

Leader: Scripture does not go into a lot of detail about the dynamics of spiritual warfare, but it clearly indicates that spiritual warfare is real and that believers need to be ready to do battle with Satan and his demons on a daily basis. As Christians, God has equipped and empowered us to be contenders for Him and for the Christian faith in the face of this real enemy.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JUDE 1:3-23.

3. In your own words, what does it look like to be a contender for the faith?

4. According to verse 4, what are characteristics of the false prophets (or charlatans) Jude warned against?

Leader: Jude explained why he appealed to his readers to contend for the faith. Certain people had crept unnoticed into the church. Jude described these condemned people as ungodly. Jude made two specific charges against these heretics in verse 4. First, they turned the grace of our God into licentiousness, morally unrestrained behavior. The heretics' misunderstanding of grace and forgiveness led them to view God's grace as a license for sin. Second, the false teachers denied Christ. Jude did not state specifically how these people denied Christ. Certainly, they denied Him by their immoral living and disregard for His commands. Perhaps they also denied Jesus by rejecting either His full humanity or His full deity.

5. Verses 8-16 include further charges against those who polluted the church. What are some specific things in our world right now that we are up against as contenders of the faith? Which of these do you feel most concerned about?

6. Look at verses 17-23. What are some of the truths we must keep in mind about God and the Christian faith?

Leader: For further insight on verses 5-23, see "Spotlight on the Passage." The truths of the Christian faith are eternally true and unchangeable. We must understand the basic doctrines of our faith so that we can recognize false teachings and prevent them from undermining our faith and hurting others. We can faithfully defend the eternal truths of the gospel against those who deny Christ by word or deed. We demonstrate our faith by our deep respect for God and our sincere desire to live according to the principles in His Word.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JUDE 1:24-25.

7. In the context of this letter, what do you think "stumbling" means?

8. Why is it significant that God will present His children "without blemish and with great joy?"

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

9. What should it mean for our lives that all “glory, majesty, power, and authority” belong to God? How can you contend for the faith in a way that acknowledges this reality?

Leader: Christians are to contend for the faith in Jesus Christ against all detractors so people will see that all glory, majesty, power, and authority reside with God our Savior. Every other “gospel” that people preach tries to take for people what rightly and only belongs to God. So we contend for the faith to hold ourselves accountable and to call others to fulfill the purpose for which they were created—to give all glory to God.

10. How does the doxology at the end of Jude’s letter relate to the call to contend for the faith delivered to the saints once and for all?

Leader: Christians contend for the faith, but their success is not dependent upon their own wisdom and power. It is dependent upon God’s, since He alone has all power and He is the One who can keep His children from stumbling in the ways of false teachers who deny Jesus. We are not God’s gift to humanity—Jesus alone is.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

11. How does verse 23 convey a need for urgency and boldness? Why is it important that we not only defend the truth, but also proclaim it faithfully?

12. What are some specific ways you can engage those around you with the truth of the gospel as a contender for the faith? What step will you take this week?

PRAYER

Close your group time with prayer. Thank God for His gift of the Holy Spirit who empowers us daily to contend for the faith. Ask God for opportunities this week to share with others the truth of His Word and the grace Christ offers.

MEMORIZE

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. - Jude 1:3

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

JUDE 1:3-25

3-4. Jude's preference was to write a pleasant and encouraging letter on the subject of their common salvation. Circumstances pressed upon him, however, so that he wrote a brief but intense and potent warning against false teachers in the church. He jumped right to the point, urging them to contend for the faith. Why? Because false teachers, godless people, had secretly slipped in among them.

He described the faith as having been once for all entrusted to the saints. "The faith" is seen also in Galatians 1:23 and 1 Timothy 4:1. This refers to the body of information believed by the early church. It is the gospel, the message of truth that brings salvation to the person who believes it. "Faith" refers to a body of objective truth, not the subjective experience of believing something.

These godless men were not true believers. They were people whose condemnation was written about long ago. How long ago, we can't say for sure. Some interpreters think this refers to the prophecy of Peter in 2 Peter 2:3. Others look to the prophecies of Paul in Acts 20:29-30. Some think he refers to Jesus' teachings, such as Matthew 7:15; 13:24-25; or Mark 13:22. Still others take it back all the way to the Old Testament.

These godless people are charged by Jude with two serious sins. First, they change the grace of our God into a license for immorality. They were the forerunners of people called Gnostics (see Deeper Discoveries, 1 John 1), who believed that the spirit was good (created by God) while the flesh was bad (not created by God). The spirit was not touched by the flesh, or it would be contaminated. Therefore, they assumed that they could indulge every fantasy of the flesh, since their spirit was not affected. This theory resulted in flagrant immorality and perversion. They twisted the grace of God, claiming that God would overlook any sin, because sin was a product of the flesh.

The second sin they are charged with is denying Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. These false teachers might have taught that since the flesh is bad, Jesus could not be the Son of God. In their view, God could not assume human flesh without contaminating himself. They denied the true humanity of Christ and perverted the biblical truth of Jesus. "They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him" (Titus 1:16). Like later Gnostics, they may have denied that the Creator God was the only or highest God, and they may have claimed that Jesus was a mere man on whom the Holy Spirit descended at his baptism but left before his crucifixion.

5-16. Jude pictured the heretics as deserving to receive God's judgments just as the unbelieving Jews, the sinning angels, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had merited judgment.

He showed that the false teachers were arrogantly defying God by their perverse moral behavior. They disdained angelic creatures whom they failed to understand. Jude commended the example of the angel Michael, who did not deal with the devil's protests on his own authority. Jude used this story from the apocryphal Assumption of Moses to demonstrate a proper attitude toward the supernatural.

In verses 10-13 he used historical examples from the Old Testament to characterize the false teachers as materialistic and immoral. They were as greedy as Balaam and as rebellious as Korah.

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

In verses 14-15 Jude cited a statement from 1 Enoch to prove the reality of divine judgment upon the ungodly. Jude was not necessarily viewing 1 Enoch as inspired, but he was referring to a book his readers would know and respect.

17-23. Jude reminded his readers that the apostles had warned against the divisiveness and spiritual emptiness of the coming false teachers. The recipients were to build themselves up with prayer and obedience. They also were to offer help to wandering believers who need both an experience of divine mercy and the wisdom to avoid corruption.

24-25. The letter concludes with perhaps the loftiest doxology found in Scripture. It begins with the comforting affirmation that God is able to keep you from falling away from the faith. Joy permeates us when we grasp the power and glory of our Lord. False teachers, false doctrine, and false fears of failure cannot make us fall, for God keeps us. We affirm his glory, majesty, power and authority, which he works through Jesus, who will present you before his glorious presence without fault. Final judgment has no fear. God will be our representative there. His saving work in Jesus will speak for us.

We do not have to defend ourselves. Joy, indeed! Too good to be true! This greatness of God has always been true, is true now, and always will be true. With that triumphant note, this valuable letter ends.