

Fighting for the Faith: Contending for the Truth of Christ (Jude 1–4) Douglas Humphrey

Fighting for the faith: Jude's call to stand bold. / Jude 1–4

Central Idea for the Series: Jude's letter serves as a call to stand firm in the faith amidst increasing spiritual deception and ungodliness. This series explores Jude's urgent message on defending the truth, identifying false teachings, and maintaining spiritual integrity in our journey of faith.

This series uncovers Jude's challenging yet deeply relevant message for the church today. It will encourage believers to recognize the signs of falsehood, reject the allure of watered-down faith, and renew their commitment to contend for a faith that transforms lives. Just as Jude wrote with urgency to awaken the church in his day, we too are called to be unwavering in our devotion to Christ, courageous in confronting spiritual threats, and compassionate in extending mercy to those on the brink. This is the faith worth fighting for, and it demands nothing less than our full allegiance and perseverance to the end.

In the Marvel Cinematic Universe, there's a group of unlikely heroes known as the *Guardians of the Galaxy*. These ragtag individuals—each with their own flaws, doubts, and complicated past—band together to protect the universe from threats that would seek to destroy it. They are not the traditional heroes, nor do they always play by the rules, but they share one thing in common: a deep commitment to defending what's right, no matter the cost.

Imagine, for a moment, what it would be like if the Guardians stopped defending the galaxy. If they gave in to the pressures of their broken world and let evil spread unchecked. The consequences would be catastrophic. That's the kind of urgency Jude is expressing in his letter to believers.

He calls the Church to be *Guardians*—not of a galaxy, but of the precious faith that has been handed down to us through Jesus. We are called to defend the truth of the Gospel against those who would distort it, to remain vigilant in a world that is increasingly hostile to the truth.

Just as the Guardians are tasked with defending something worth preserving, so are we. And like them, we can't afford to sit on the sidelines or grow complacent. The stakes are too high. In a world filled with confusion, lies, and counterfeit gospels, we must rise to the challenge and remain steadfast, just as the guardians do, to protect the integrity of the Gospel.

I've titled this sermon series: Fighting for the faith: Heeding Judes call to stand bold.

Turn with me to the book of Jude, where we can clearly see the urgency of this call. As we dive into this passage, we'll gain a deeper understanding of what we're up against and what's at stake. We'll also examine how we, as defenders of the faith, can and should fight for the faith.

To get us started I have....

Four timeless exhortations for answering the call to stand firm against christian imposters...

Recognize and own your identity. v1

As in if you are in Christ, you're not like everyone else. Jude identifies himself as...

"1 a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James:

Although Jude is a brother of both James and Jesus, he doesn't introduce himself as Jesus' brother. Rather, he calls himself a servant. He does this for two very important reasons: No.1 he wanted to ensure that he was set apart from Jesus. Jesus is the God man, and Judas and James, although his biological half brother's he relegates himself to the status of servant. Secondly, he wants his readers to see that he lives to serve Jesus. He places himself under Jesus. Not next to, but below.

Like Jude, in Christ we are his servants. We belong to Him.

Imagine being selected as a social media influencer for a major global brand like Gucci, Prada, Apple. Your job isn't to promote yourself but to embody the brand's values, share its message, and act in its best interest. Everything you do reflects on the brand you serve. Similarly, in Christ, we are His servants—living under His authority to represent His mission. His Values, not our own.

And so the first thing we learn regarding recognizing and owning our identity is that **you are/we are Lord's servants**. And as his servants, His will is our pleasure.

Jude continues...

To those who are called, loved by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.”

Now Jude expands his letter to include and address the broader Christian Community. And from this we get three more distinctions regarding our identity in Jesus.

“those who are called” is direct reference to the fact that Christians have been called, **You are called** selected by God for salvation. Called up and separated out from your previous life.

Picture a bride on her wedding day. Before the proposal, she lived independently, making her own plans and decisions. But when her groom proposed to her, calling her to build a life together in marriage, everything changed. She left behind her old way of life to enter into a new, committed relationship. And the groom did the same thing. Now their identity is intertwined, and their priorities will forever change.

In the same way, when God calls us to salvation, He separates us from our old life. We leave behind our former ways and embrace a new identity in Him and live for His purposes.

So, we are **called** and “**loved by God**”, that’s the third identifier. Christians are “**loved by God**”.

There’s something about knowing God loves us that makes life sweeter, challenges more bearable, and sacrifices worth it.

Yes, God loves all people because we’re all made in His image ([Genesis 1:27](#)). But for those who are called and committed to Him, His love is different.

Imagine a child adopted into a family. Before, they had no home or security. Now, they experience the full weight of their father’s love, protection, and care. This father doesn’t provide for them out of duty; he delights in them. He knows their fears and dreams, comforts them when they’re scared, and sacrifices for their good.

While this father might feel compassion for all children, his love for his own child is unique. It’s personal and enduring—the kind of love that stays up all night when they’re sick, cheers the loudest at their games, and offers grace when they fall short.

In the same way, God’s love for His children—is personal and enduring. It’s a love that sustains us in trials, secures us in His promises, and transforms us day by day. You are loved by God in a way that goes beyond anything we could fully grasp.

You are loved by God, but He didn’t stop there. As his child you are Kept. That is our next truth: **You are kept**.

Jesus protects us through every moment of this life until one of two things happens: either He calls us home to heaven to begin our eternity with Him, or He returns while we’re still here.

The key is that: Jesus keeps us. He shields us, guides us. He’s like invisible hands holding us up and full-coverage insurance ensuring we’re never left unprotected.

He protects our faith. He keeps us from stumbling, even when we’re tempted to give up—when every part of us asks, *What’s the point?* or whispers, *I’d be better off without God*. When life feels too heavy to take another step, Jesus steps in and sustains us.

Jesus keeps us— he protects us from giving up on the Christian faith. Oh, I dare not imagine where we’d be if it had not been for Jesus and his sustaining power that protects us.

Like Jude we need to Recognize and own our identity in Jesus:

- You are the Lord’s servant
- You were called by God and set apart for His purposes.
- You are loved unconditionally by Him.
- You are being kept in the faith through Jesus.

Recognize and own your identity as a Christian, that's our first exhortation. The second is...

Remember what God has given—and continues to give—to you.. v2

Jude continues in v2 and says... 2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude prays that these things be multiplied to you: Mercy, peace, and love. IOW God has given these to his children and he continues to give them. He wants His audience to have an abundance of mercy, peace, and love.

The question is why does Jude ask these things on our behalf? And why do we need a constant stream of them? We're going to answer those questions in a moment, but as for now, let's explore what the gifts of mercy and peace are in this context.

Mercy is God's deep compassion and concern for us. It's more than just feeling sorry for us—it's an overwhelming desire to step in and help. Mercy draws God close to, to supply the care and support we desperately need. It's God refusing to let the weight of our problems, struggles, or even our failures crush us.

Consider a firefighter who runs into a burning building to rescue someone trapped inside. They don't just feel bad for the person—they act. They carry them to safety, refusing to let the flames overtake them. That's mercy.

God sees us trapped in the fires of our struggles, failures, and sins, and He doesn't just watch—He moves. He draws close to , protects us, and provides the care we need.

God's mercy stems from a heart of love; the more love he has for us, the more mercy he shows us. In addition to mercy, he also gives us **peace**.

Peace : means being assured, confident in, and secure in God's love and care. It's the deep trust that God is always at work in your life.

Peace is calm confidence that comes from knowing that God is sovereign and that he will never let you go. It keeps you motivated to press on when your flesh and those around you scream quit, it's too hard, you won't succeed.

I'm reminded of a young woman who was determined to make a better life for herself, so she decided to go to college. She chose a school 800 miles away, even though she had never left her home state before. With prayer on her lips, and faith in her heart, she bought a one-way plane ticket and headed off to this unfamiliar place.

Though the experience was new and filled with challenges, she felt a constant peace—a deep assurance that she was on the right path. There were moments of homesickness and uncertainty, but she trusted God's guidance and provision. By His grace, she graduated four years later with honors and went on to have an incredible career in business. Today, she uses her story to encourage other young people to step out in faith and trust God.

That's what peace looks like: the calm confidence that God is with you, even when the road ahead feels uncertain. It's the assurance that He's guiding, and protecting you through every step of life. Which is yet another way that God extends his love to us.

So, Jude prays that both mercy & peace will abound in our lives. Thankfully, God has and continues to answer those prayers.

Always remember **that God has given you—His mercy and peace—and that He continues to give it to you**. That's our second exhortation. The third is **to ...**

Resolve to contend for the faith. v3

Jude is not simply asking for God's mercy and peace, just for the sake of having them. He's addressing a pressing issue that requires action. In verse 3, he urges believers to "contend for the faith", he pleads...

3 Dear friends, although I was eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to **contend for the faith** that was delivered to the saints once for all.

Initially, Jude wanted to encourage believers to deepen their trust in Christ, but a more pressing concern arose. He calls them to resolve—to make a conscious decision—to fight for the faith.

What does it mean to contend for the faith?

Think of an athlete defending their title or a soldier protecting their homeland. Right now, thousands of Ukrainians are fighting to preserve their country from invaders. They stand firm, willing to sacrifice everything to keep their nation from being overtaken.

Jude calls believers to defend the faith with the same urgency. The “faith” he speaks of is sound doctrine—the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ and the teachings passed down by the Apostles. This faith was entrusted to the saints, all generations of believers.

Now, like then, we must safeguard the gospel from corruption. If we fail—if we lose focus—heresy creeps in, perverting the church and leading to false professions of faith. Once the core tenets of Christianity are distorted, the faith itself is compromised. And once our faith is compromised it becomes useless, like salt that has lost its saltiness. Good for nothing.

Loved ones, Jude sounded this alarm in 60 AD, and the body of Christ has been fighting ever since—sometimes effectively, sometimes not. Let’s look at a brief history of when heresy invaded the church:

Slide with all

Early Challenges (1st–3rd Century): False teachings like Gnosticism (secret knowledge, denial of Christ’s physical reality) and Docetism (Christ only “appeared” human) undermined foundational beliefs about Jesus as fully God and fully man.

Then there was...

The Rise of Arianism (4th Century): Arius denied Christ’s divinity, claiming He was a created being. The Council of Nicaea (325) affirmed the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as co-eternal and co-equal.

Next came...

Pelagianism (5th Century): Pelagius denied original sin and divine grace, claiming salvation could be earned. The Council of Carthage (418) upheld salvation by grace alone.

next, and probably the most well known was the...

Medieval and Reformation Periods (Middle Ages - 16th Century): Schisms and unorthodox views paved the way for the Reformation (16th Century), led by Luther and Calvin, who opposed heresies in the Catholic Church, emphasizing *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) and *sola fide* (faith alone).

Currently we have...

Modern Challenges (19th–21st Century): Liberal theology questioned Scripture’s inerrancy and Christ’s divinity, while movements like the prosperity gospel distorted the gospel by prioritizing wealth and health over salvation.

All these people are guilty of apostasy: Apostates are guilty of defying God’s authority and rebelling against His truth. They may pose as Christians or claim to have once followed Christ, but they never truly belonged to Him. Instead, they spread distorted versions of the Gospel, leading others astray.

Throughout history, the church has had to contend for the faith. The war against false doctrine continues today. Satan remains relentless, seeking to infiltrate the church and distort sound teaching.

The question is: Will you resolve to contend for the faith? Will you stand firm, knowing that greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world?

Here’s how you can start:

1. Resolve to fight for the faith. Make a conscious decision today.
2. Pray without ceasing for God’s Word to remain uncorrupted and for His people to pursue righteousness.
3. Learn the faith. Study the Bible for yourself and commit it to memory.
4. Proclaim the gospel boldly, sharing salvation through Christ alone with non-believers.
5. Encourage your fellow believers. That’s why we gather every Sunday at 10 a.m. and in Bridge Groups.

The battle rages on, but victory is certain because the Lord is with us.

Make the decision to... Resolve to contend for the faith and get to work... That's our third exhortation, our fourth is...

Resist those who seek to rival God. v4

Now we get to the heart of Jude's letter, his reason for writing. Danger had slipped in...

4 ... some people, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

Let's be clear about who they are and what they're doing:

They infiltrated the church: They didn't storm the gates; they snuck in quietly, disguising themselves as believers. They talk the talk, but their motives and lifestyles tell a different story.

They're marked for judgment: Their rebellion didn't surprise God. He has known from the beginning their intentions and what will become of them.

They're ungodly: Their lives bear no evidence of genuine faith. They may speak spiritual words, but their hearts are far from God.

They pervert God's grace: Instead of seeing grace as the power to live righteously, they twist it into a free pass for sin, mocking God's holiness.

They deny Jesus Christ: Their actions and teachings reject Jesus and His authority. They promote a version of christianity that says, *"You don't have to submit to Jesus, do what feels right to you."*

Now, you might be thinking, *"Well, I used to be guilty of some of those same things before Jesus changed me. Maybe these people just need time and mercy for God to work in their hearts."* I understand that sentiment, but: **God has already seen their hearts.** He knows they have no intention of repenting. They are not confused; they're corrupt.

But what makes them especially dangerous is **their seductive behavior.**

-They offer a Christianity that is easy and self-serving.

-They appeal to our carnal desires, promoting *"freedom"* without responsibility—sin without consequences.

-They encourage you to live for yourself while still expecting God's blessings.

It's the spiritual equivalent of that childhood friend whose parents let them do whatever they wanted. It seemed fun at first—no rules, no consequences—but deep down, you knew it wasn't right. That kind of "freedom" is not freedom at all. It's chaos wrapped in a lie.

And if we're not careful, we can fall for the same trap. Deep down inside, our flesh craves an easy faith. It whispers, *"Why submit to Jesus? Why deny yourself what this world has to offer?"*

Our flesh tries to twist grace into permission for sin. It says things like:

- If you look at porn or read romance novels... it's okay God made you to be a sexual being, plus you're not hurting anyone.
- If you step out on your spouse, it's fine—God knows you really love your spouse, and His grace will heal your marriage.
- If you lie on your taxes or cheat in your business, no big deal—just confess it later, and God will understand that we're in inflation.
- If you blow up in anger at your spouse or kids, it's okay—everyone loses their temper sometimes. You're just being passionate.
- If you skip church or reading your Bible, it's not a problem—God knows your schedule is hectic, and He won't hold it against you.

And all it takes is one seemingly godly person—an apostate—to creep into your life or the church and convince you to challenge God's authority over you. Just like satan with Eve... *"Did God really say that? Did God really mean what he said?"* And if you're not vigilant, that influence can give way to sin.

The Apostle Paul warns in (1 Cor 15:33)... “Not to be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.” if you give an audience to your flesh. If you keep company with bad people . Ungodly people, it’s only a matter of time before you become corrupted. Rebelling against God just like them.

Jude’s warning is bold and clear: **we must resist anyone or anything that rivals God’s authority in our lives.** Don’t let what looks like a better option. An alternative to orthodoxy pulls you away from the truth.

True grace doesn’t free you to sin; it frees you from the bondage of sin. Thus empowering you to live for the One who died to save you.

Summary/conclusion

Be-lo-ved, the call to stand firm in the faith isn’t optional—it’s essential. We are servants of the living God, called, loved, and kept by His grace. But with that privilege comes responsibility. In a world where truth is under attack and imposters can creep in unnoticed, the question isn’t *if* you’ll face opposition. Rather, it’s *how you will* respond when you do. Will you allow falsehoods to take root, or will you rise as a defender of the Gospel?

God has equipped you with His Spirit, mercy, peace, love, and His Word. He’s entrusted you with a faith worth contending for—a faith sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ and delivered to the saints once for all. The time for passivity is over.

The battle is real, and the stakes are eternal. Heed Judes exhortation to fight for the faith: Contend for the truth of Jesus. Which starts by: **Recognizing and owning your identity. Remembering what God has given-and continues to give-to you. Resolve to contend for the faith. And resist those who seek to rival God.**

Next week we’ll explore more of the history of apostasy and how to safeguard against it. As for now, take a moment to consider what you just heard. And to ask the Lord how this text needs to be applied to your life. Then I’ll lead us in prayer

Let’s pray...

Lord you have been so good to us, thank you for opening our eyes to see you as our savior. Thank you for gracing us to profess faith in you. And now lord we get to identify as your servants, who were called, being loved, and are protected by you.

Thank you for your mercy, showing us compassion when we deserved to be punished. Thank you for giving us peace - calming our hearts when things are out of our control.

Lord grant us the spiritual fortitude to protect your Holy Word and to only believe what you have already written.

Thank you for making us aware of the interlopers, the apostate that seek to pervert your church. By your power we will do our best to protect BFC from such intruders.

Finally, if there are some here today who are guilty of taking your grace for granted, let them confess that right now and be forgiven. Help them to move forward in integrity and godliness.

Thank you for this timely message, Lord. Grant us the power to change what depends on us, and the courage to trust You with what lies beyond our control. It’s in Jesus’ name that we pray and trust... AMEN!!

Closing

CC, Prayer/questions, Open table, Thanks giving, LGLP