

Contend Earnestly for the Faith

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Jude 3

Throughout the New Testament, our efforts in the cause of Christ are likened to our involvement in a military conflict (cf. 1 Timothy 6:12; Ephesians 6:11). Jude also used this type of language in our text: “Contend earnestly for the faith.” What does this mean? How do we do this? And why is this necessary?

What Is “Our Common Salvation”?

- This was Jude’s original topic before addressing the topic we are going to discuss – but it is important to understand what this means; it will help us see why he changed the subject
- First, what is salvation? – salvation from sin (Matthew 1:21) and the hope of eternal life (Romans 6:23); only possible through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Acts 4:12); the gospel is the message of salvation (Romans 1:16-17); we are saved as we obey the gospel (Acts 2:37-41, 47)
- What does it mean that this salvation is common to all? – it is available to all (Titus 2:11; Acts 10:34-35); Jesus came to die on the cross for the world (John 3:16; Acts 2:39); the gospel appeals to all people to be saved (Acts 2:40); Jesus is the author of salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9)

Why Did Jude Switch Topics?

- He was originally going to write about their “common salvation” – this was important, but he changed topics; why?
- This is what the Holy Spirit wanted him to write (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16)
- If they were led astray by false teachers, they would lose their salvation (Galatians 1:6-7; 5:4)

What Is the “Faith...Once Delivered” (KJV)?

- “The faith” is not A faith or OUR faith – it is the body of teaching that came from heaven (cf. Romans 1:16-17); the word of God produces faith in us (Romans 10:17)
- This message has been delivered by inspiration (1 Corinthians 2:10-13) – the apostles were specifically commissioned to be Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20); the Holy Spirit was going to help them reveal the Lord’s message (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13)
- This message has been delivered once – “once for all” (NASB); “once for all time” (NLT); it is not going to be changed; therefore, we should not follow those who change it (Galatians 1:8-9)

What Does It Mean to “Contend Earnestly”?

- Contend – from a root word that means to strive/fight; not physically (John 18:36), but spiritually
- Earnestly – part of the same Greek word; carries the idea of diligence/zeal
- We are to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)
- We are to defend the gospel against attacks (Philippians 1:16)
- We are to combat error (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
- We are to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12) – do so earnestly

Why Is It Necessary to Contend?

- Because false teachers threaten the church (Jude 4; Titus 1:9-11)
- Because sin finds its way into the church (Jude 4; 1 Corinthians 5:6, 11, 13)
- Because Satan never stops trying to destroy God’s people (1 Peter 5:8)
- Because people in the world are trapped in the bondage of sin (1 John 5:19; cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5)

Conclusion

- Salvation in Christ is a great blessing – it is open to all; we must never forget the hope it gives us
- Yet we run the risk of losing this salvation if we fail to “contend...for the faith”
- Satan is always trying to pull Christians back into bondage under his control – we need to “contend earnestly” in order to defend ourselves and others from his attacks