

RCC in the Word
Week of November 26
Jude 3-7

³ 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. ⁴ 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.

⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved^[a] a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire,^[b] serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

During the time that Jude wrote this letter, the Church was under extreme political attack from the Roman Empire and there were many heretical teachers who were sowing doctrinal error and discord in the Church. Except for John, all other apostles had been martyred and Christianity was vulnerable. From this, we can see why Jude was prompted by the Holy Spirit to write this letter.

“to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” is a verse we are very familiar with. We are to contend for the work of Christ and all He accomplished. His work does not ever change and has been the same and always will be. Spurgeon says “...the faith of Christians is not variable quantity. It is not a thing which changes from day to day, as some seem to suppose, vainly imagining that fresh light is bestowed upon each new generation. No, the truth was delivered once and for all, it was stereotyped, fixed; and it is for us to hold it fast as God has given it to us.”

Why do we need to contend for our faith? Verse 4 reminds us that wolves will try to sneak into the church and try to tear down and undermine the Gospel. Our elders are charged with not only leading the flock but also to protect it. Just as these insincere, fake pastors pretend to be Christians, there can be those in the flock who can also appear to be Christians. Spurgeon comments on verse 5 saying “If we have no real faith, we may appear to go a long way towards heaven, but we shall not enter the heavenly Canaan.” There may have been a time in your life that you were one of these persons who lacked true faith. Most likely you have come across friends, co-workers and even family who boast of the faith but are swallow in its truth.

I was given the opportunity to witness and mentor a young man a few years ago. I came to know him as I frequented the drive thru window he worked in a few days each morning as I got breakfast. After many short conversations over almost a year, he finally agreed to meet me for

lunch. During our short convos, he had professed to be a Christian. At our first meeting, he agreed to allow me to mentor him and I was very excited about this opportunity and we agreed to work through a few books together. Over the next year, it became clear that this gentleman was not displaying fruit of one who had repented and walked with the Lord. If you viewed his FB page, he was saying all the right things. He quoted scriptures and more, but his actions were completely opposite. I also knew that he had began to tell me what he thought I wanted to hear. He would not visit our church for many reasons and was not even open to looking at other churches even if I went with him. My goal was to get him into a church family who could love on him and continue to instruct him. Sadly, in year two of the mentoring relationship, I had to make the decision to walk away. I stayed in touch with him through FB messenger a few times a year. This past month, I received a message from him that he had plugged into a local church and had recently been Baptized. Halleluiah!

This example turned out to be wonderful, but it serves as a reminder to me to always try my best to show my faith in God through my actions and not by my words. There are other instances we see in our daily lives where many around us are destined to undergo the punishment of eternal fire v7.

We will all agree that we do not want wolves to enter the church with the intention of entering the pulpit and spewing venom and discord but what about those others around us who are misled? How do we treat them? For those of us who have been Christians for many years and even decades, we may find it hard to show mercy to these. I know that I constantly battle a “superiority complex” of such when I am faced with some who are misled or are fooling themselves into thinking they have a true faith. It is often hard to climb down in the trenches to walk along beside these and love them and try to instruct them in the ways of our Lord.

Jude concludes his letter with a great reminder of how we are to treat these. In verses 20-23 he states “But you beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. AND HAVE MERCY ON THOSE WHO DOUBT, save others by snatching them out of the fire, to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

We had the opportunity to study this book with Nathan in our adult Sunday school a few years back and every time I read this book, I am encouraged even more, and I hope and pray that you are also. May we continue to show mercy to those around us who are lost. May we pray for each other, build up one another, and cheer each other on to live out our faith more and talk about it less.

Written by Gregg Childers