

ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS #12

Introduction

We want to continue to teach our series on 'asking for the old paths'.

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls."

Theme

One of the causes for the current critical condition of our country has been how much of the American church has fallen away from the faith that our forefathers handed down to us.

My title for today is...

I. "Contending for the Faith"

A. The Book of Jude

1. We're taking our text from the little Book of Jude, (next to last Book in the Bible), only 1 chapter, 25 verses.

2. Jude, the brother of James and the ½ brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, wrote this letter at a time when the Church was being overrun with false teachers and counterfeit Christians. In other words, a time similar to ours.

a. Jude's little letter is written to the true believers, (verses 1-2), that he calls "beloved" of the Father and "preserved" in Christ.

3. Our title is taken from the main subject of the Book, found in verse 3:

Jude 3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that *ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

4. Notice that we are to 'contend' or 'fight' for the faith.

Albert Barnes

The reference here does not refer to 'contending' by arms or violence, but by argument, reasoning, and holding fast to biblical principles against all opposers. The rule here requires that we should contend for all 'truth'.

The Biblical Illustrator

Christians are not called upon to contend for forms and ceremonies, nor for speculative opinions. We are to contend 'for the faith once delivered to the saints', not for any notions of our own, not for any private views or personal feelings, but for that which God has revealed.

5. Notice that we are to contend for THE faith, not A faith; it is specific.

- a. The Christian faith is not a matter of personal preference.
- b. You are not allowed to make up your own version of what it means to be a Christian or create some 'new cart' to take you to heaven.
- c. The question is not do you have 'A' faith; but are you in 'THE' faith.
- d. This is what Paul meant in...

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

e. Look at your life to confirm that your faith is THE faith; the same faith that was 'delivered' to your forefathers.

Albert Barnes

The faith 'delivered' to the saints refers to that given us by revelation, the system of truth which God has made known in His word. Everything which He has revealed, we are to defend as true. We are to surrender no part of it and maintain it at all times, in all circumstances, and at every sacrifice.

6. Why do we need to preach this today?

- a. Here's I read this just this morning that stopped me in my tracks!

Steve Lawson

You tell me the most bizarre thing you want to believe and I'll find you a church within 5 miles where you'll fit in perfectly. They'll put you in leadership.

a. I made up a short list of bizarre things professing Christians believe today, and I can tell you that you can find a church right here in Nashville that preaches these things.

- **We believe in Jesus but there are many ways a person can come to God**
- **We believe Jesus is OK with same-sex marriage; after all, who you love is your business**
- **We believe in Social Justice and we support Black Lives Matter**
- **We are the true remnant; only members of our church will go to heaven**
- **If you're sincere and do your best God will accept you**

b. I can personally testify there are churches within a 10-minute drive of us tonight that believe one or more of these things; yes, they have a form of faith; but it is not THE faith Jude told us to fight for!

7. Notice that Jude says this is 'the' faith 'ONCE' delivered to the saints...

Jude 3-4 NCV

...fight hard for the faith that was given the holy people of God once and for all time.

a. There is a mini-message in the Greek term here...

'Once'

The Greek word 'once' (hapax) means 'once for all', in the sense that it was then complete and would not be repeated. it was done 'once' in the sense that it is not to be done again, and, therefore, since complete, nothing was to be added to it.

Summary So Far

We are to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

8. The book of Jude could end here and be worth our study. But it doesn't.

9. Beginning in verse 4, Jude switches gears and comes to the 'why' we are commanded to contend for the faith; it amounts to a warning; not from a danger from without but danger from within! There are wolves among the sheep who are perverting and frustrating the grace of God.

B. Who Are the False Teachers and What Do They Teach?

Jude 4

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The danger is wolves that look like sheep.

Jude 4

**For there are certain men *crept in unawares* (KJV)
...some ungodly people have *wormed their way* into your churches (NLT)
...shameless scoundrels have *infiltrated our ranks* (Message)**

2. In verse 3 Jude says we must 'contend for the faith'; verse 4 tells why...

Jude 4 NLT

I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives.

a. The main mark of false teachers is teaching that grace excuses us from punishment for willful sins...

Jude 4

**...who pervert the grace (the spiritual blessing and favor) of our God into lawlessness *and* wantonness *and* immorality (AMP)
...who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality (ESV)
...who turn the grace of our God into lewdness (NKJV)**

3. Every translation agrees: the great and dangerous sin then, AND NOW, is perverted teaching about the grace of God!

Jude 4 The Living Bible

...(who) say that after we become Christians we can do just as we like without fear of God's punishment.

4. History is repeating itself! The new so-called 'Grace Movement' has swept through America's Christian churches and millions have fallen for it!

5. People prefer those who preach a perverted grace...

Jude 4

**...saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. (NLT)
...who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality (NIV)**

6. This is not a new problem!

a. In Bible days, Jude called it 'perverted grace'

b. During WWII, Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it 'cheap grace'

c. More recently in our own day, Dr. Michael Brown wrote a book about it: "Hyper Grace: Exposing the Danger of the Modern Grace Message".

Dr. Michael Brown

"Hyper-grace is the great deception of the 21st century."

d. Dr. Brown's book documents dozens of false teachings by some of modern day's most popular preachers. (Joseph Prince's "Grace Revolution")

Dr. Michael Brown

"There is no doubt in my mind that some of this new teaching is unbalanced, overstated, at times unbiblical and sometimes downright dangerous to the well-being of the Body of Christ."

7. Christian writer Randy Alcorn gives us a good test of true and false grace:

Randy Alcorn

Any teaching of grace that makes us more comfortable sinning is not biblical grace. God's grace never encourages us to live in sin. On the contrary, it empowers us to say 'no' to sin and 'yes' to truth.

C. A Second Mark of False Teachers

1. They despise authority.

Jude 8

**Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. (NASB)
despise authority (ASB)**

- a. Jesus taught that to have authority we must be under authority; but false teachers despise the idea of authority and accountability. (Expand)
- b. Rejecting authority is in the Pews as well as the Pulpit
- c. Testimony: I will never forget a debate in my office with a young man who 'despised' authority: "You can't show me one place in the Bible where any man is to be under the authority of any other man!" I asked him if he would accept authority if I could show it to him 3 times in 1 chapter. He said yes.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Heb 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:24

Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints.

- d. He got angry and stormed out of the office. Alas!

Summary

What are we to do? We are to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints...

Why? Because false teachers have crept in among us.

How do we know them? 1.

1. They pervert the grace of God

2. They despise authority

C. More Marks of False Teachers

Jude 10-11

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

1. Jason and I were talking about the Book of Jude and he made the insightful comment of how Jude expected his readers to know their Bibles!

a. He expects you to know that Balaam was a prophet for profit; he prophesied what he was paid to prophesy.

b. He expects you to know that Korah was the man who led the rebellion against the authority of Moses in the Wilderness.

Jude 11 NASB

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Numbers 16:1-2

Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.

Numbers 16:3

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them,

and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

c. God rejected Balaam and opened up the earth to swallow Korah and his family.

But what does Jude mean when he warns us about those who go the 'way of Cain'?

D. The Way of Cain and the Emergent Church

1. Remember the 1st 2 sons of Adam, Cain and his brother Abel.

a. Each brought an offering to the Lord.

b. God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's offering.

c. **Cain killed his brother; the 1st murder in human history; and it was all over how to do religion. What is the proper way to come to God?**

2. Cain's offering to God was the fruit of the ground; but Abel brought the firstborn of his flock, a sacrifice of blood.

a. God had taught their parents that the only atonement (or covering) for sin was the blood of an innocent. (Genesis 3:21)

b. Abel came to God by way of the blood; Cain came to God with the works of his hands.

3. Cain had his own (subjective) ideas about how to come to God! This was 'the way of Cain' back then, and still is today!

The Biblical Illustrator

Cain was willing to worship, but it must be a worship dictated by his taste, and not one in obedience to God's will. Cain's religion is now the most respectable and popular religion of the day. It involves no humble confession of sin. It flatters man's pride, exalts his reason, and suits the carnal heart that wants a religion to make his respectability complete.

The Biblical Illustrator

Cain's religion is the curse of our own day. It chloroforms men into insensibility and indifference. Had they no religion at all there might be hope for them as

they might see themselves sinners. But as it is they put themselves down as part of 'the religious world' when all they really have is a worldly religiousness.

4. The most recent mass manifestation of what Jude calls the 'way of Cain' is something called the Emergent Church Movement.

a. Most of you never heard of it.

b. Yet just about all of you have been affected by it, or one near you.

5. I was pastoring in Austin, TX when the Emergent Church movement sprang up and began to sweep through America.

a. Millions fell for it; but many more millions of churchgoers are affected by it who don't even know what it is. So just what is it?

StandUpForTheTruth.com

The Emergent Church movement is a progressive Christian movement that attempts to elevate experience and feelings on a par with Christian doctrine. Many do not believe man can know absolute truth and believe God must be experienced outside of traditional biblical doctrines.

6. The Emergent movement is to the church what the modern socialist/Marxists are to the Democrat political party-they like to call themselves 'progressives'; the socialists/Marxists want to remake America; the Emergent progressives want to reimagine the Church. There's no way to calculate the damage done.

StandUpForTheTruth.com

In the past decade, there is no doubt that the Emergent Church movement has done more harm to the Bride of Christ than any other trend or movement, by giving people the freedom to re-imagine basic doctrines of the Bible and reinvent truth as in the eye of the beholder. Some say the movement has died out. But some say it's morphing into other more dangerous movements that are very hard to detect.

7. But some ARE waking up. Pastor David Cox left the Emergent movement and lived to tell about why.

Pastor David Cox

They believe that the old-time religion just isn't good enough. We need a new way of 'doing church'. The basic idea here is that the church should morph itself, or 'emerge' as it moves through cultures and times. It declares that times have changed, and the church that could have been fine for people in the early 1900s, is just out of sync with people of our day.

- a. Sound familiar? New paths? New carts?
- b. They sell out the faith of our fathers by arrogantly believing they've discovered what they call 'real Christianity'.

Pastor David Cox

Emergents believe that 'Real Christianity' didn't begin until 2000 A.D. What the Apostles and all the church family experienced up to then was all wrong. Only now is the real church of God appearing, and it is appearing 'in them'. They trash the real Bible, the real church, and the real salvation, fabricating something else as their 'real thing'.

8. Jesus said, 'by their fruits you shall know them'; so here are some ways you can know those who 'go the way of Cain':

Marks of Emergence

- Experience over scripture (This works for me)
- Subjectivity over objectivity (Here's how I see it)
 - Feelings over facts (It doesn't seem fair)
- Image over doctrines and commands (What will they think of us?)
 - A shift in ideas is necessary to engage the current culture
(We need a new cart!)

9. This little Book of Jude reminds all of us who call ourselves Christians that the same God who judged the angels, burnt up Sodom and Gomorrah, and allowed a generation to die in the wilderness is still the same today!

III. Close

Summary of What We Have Said

What are we to do?

We are to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints...

Why? Because false teachers have crept in among us.

How do we know them?

- **They pervert the grace of God**
 - **They despise authority**
 - **They go the ‘way of Cain’**

1. God is raising up an Army; but we need to know our enemy.

Dr. Owen Strachan, Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary

The greatest threat to biblical Christianity today is not atheism, militant Islam, the sexual revolution or hostile political powers. The greatest threat to biblical Christianity is weak, soft, man-centered, sin affirming, ear tickling, flesh pleasing, self-help theology.

2. We can't fix the country until we fix the church; contending for the faith will require a commitment to know the Word of God.

Robert M. Bowman

“Most Christians today have not faced up to the challenge of learning how to discern orthodox teaching from heretical doctrine.”

3. Let me leave you with some encouragement; dangers indeed are all around, but God's word gives great security to those who truly know Him!

Matthew 24:24

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

4. Jesus sends us out as sheep among wolves...but He keeps HIS sheep...not because we are strong, but because He is!

3. The Book of Jude closes with an amazing doxology containing a promise:

Jude 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 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.

Closing Prayer

Title