

Jude may be one of the shortest books of the Bible, but it has a very important message, one that we need to hear especially today. Because Jude calls for us to contend for the faith, to stand up for the truth, to speak up for the Word of God. Not only against the world, but also against false teachers within the Church. We must stand up for the truth, even if it's not easy or popular for us to do so.

Because I know what is easy or popular, and that's to do just the opposite. To say nothing at all, to just leave things alone, let people do what they want to do, and everything will be fine. That seems like a good thing to do. It even seems like the loving thing to do. And our world today certainly believes in what it calls tolerance. But Christians, the world's tolerance is not what we probably mean by that word. Because tolerance to the world is no longer about just letting people do what they want or just leaving things alone. Tolerance for the world has become affirming someone else. It becomes me saying that what you are doing is good, and I can't speak against it. This is often why the world talks about these things in terms of "love." We should love someone else. That's the best thing that we could do. We should not hate them or speak against them in any way. So I can't say that something is right or wrong, and I can't say that what you are doing is wrong and you need to change. That wouldn't be very loving. But in that way, Christians, they would say that we are hating someone, that we are being intolerant, and hating is the one thing that is wrong to the world. Hating is the one thing we must not do. So for the world, tolerance means accepting, affirming you in everything, and that is what the world wants us to do as well.

But Christians, we can't go along with the world's definition of tolerance. We have to speak the truth of God's Word. And sometimes speaking the truth is going to mean having to say that something is wrong and that something else is right. I may even have to say that this person is doing the wrong thing and needs to change what they are doing. Because the truth is never about what I want it to be. Truth is not a matter of my personal choices. What God says is true, is true, and what God says is wrong, is wrong. It is God who determines right and wrong. And that may even mean that I have to say that another Christian is believing the wrong thing, or that another Christian is doing the wrong thing. And maybe that makes us uncomfortable. Maybe we don't want to do that. It's not popular even among Christians to say that someone else is wrong. Wouldn't it be better, we say, if we just focused on the things that united us, the things that we have in common? That seems like the better thing to do. Let's not focus on things that divide us. Let's not talk about how someone else is wrong. Let's just focus on those good things. That seems like a thing we should do. That even seems like the Christian thing to do.

But Christians, do you not hear how much that sounds like the world and the way that it talks about tolerating and loving one another? Contending for the faith, standing up for the truth is not an unloving thing to do. Saying that someone is wrong, even pointing out error, is not an unloving thing to do, because we are called to contend for the faith. And contending means that we are striving after something, that we're trying to get it. It's like an athlete who's going after a prize. He does everything that he can to get that prize. If he gets knocked down, he gets back up. He keeps coming back until he gets what he wants. He keeps that goal in his focus. That's where he wants to go. And Christians, contending for the faith is the same way. We go after the truth. We hold up the truth because it's that important. The truth is worth it. God's Word is worth it. They are worth fighting for. Because in reality, Christians, error destroys souls. Whenever we hear a false teaching and believe it, that leads us away from God. And if it leads us away from

God, it leads us directly into death. So why wouldn't we say something when we see error in the world or in the Church? So much is on the line! Saying that someone is wrong may be the very thing that leads them to the truth, leads them back to life through God's Word. So we need to stand up for the truth and speak up for the truth, even when it is not easy or popular to do so.

But maybe we're still uncomfortable with that. Maybe we say: "Well, I don't know how. I don't know how to contend for the faith. I don't feel like I would do a good job. So maybe I'll have someone else do it for me. I'll leave it up to the pastor. He can contend for the faith. Or maybe some well-educated Christian, someone who knows what they're talking about, they can speak for me. Me? I'll just live my life, try not to cause any troubles, because I feel like if I speak up and try to say something, I'll say the wrong thing or just cause more troubles than there were before. So I'll just leave it to someone else." But Christians, Jude is not talking just to certain people. Listen to what he says in verse 1: "To those who are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Let me ask you: are you called? Are you beloved by God the Father? Are you kept for Jesus Christ? I hope that every single one of you will say without any hesitation: "Yes! That's who I am. This is what I am called to be." So Jude is not just writing for some people. He is writing to all of us. It is crucial for all of us to stand for the truth of God's Word, to stand up when we are called to do so, whatever the situation may be. We need to speak the truth whenever error threatens to take us away.

Maybe we're still hesitant. Maybe we are still uncomfortable with this and ask: "Well, is it really that important? Is it really that important for me to contend in this way? Maybe it's just a secondary thing. Maybe I have more important things that I should be talking about, more important things that I should do even as a Christian, and I should focus on those and get to contending later. I'll worry about it then." But Christians, this is not a secondary issue. It is crucial, especially in our day and age. Because listen to what Jude says in verse 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." So when Jude sat down to write this letter, he was fully prepared to talk about something else. He was going to talk about salvation, the common salvation which we have in Jesus Christ. And I think we would all agree that that is a primary issue. That is something crucial. The Church is in the business of saving souls. That's our whole message. There's nothing more important than that. But Jude says that it was so important to talk about contending for the faith that he actually stopped writing about salvation and chose to write about this instead. So it is important. It is crucial for us to talk about, just like salvation. We need to stand for the truth of God's Word because the truth is that important.

But maybe we would ask: "Why? Why should we contend for the faith?" Jude says, verse 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." We should contend for the faith, Jude says, because of those who have crept in unnoticed, false teachers of every kind. People who claim to be Christians, even claim to speak for God, and yet deny everything that the Bible says. Because if we say nothing, Christians, if we don't speak up for the truth, then they will lead others astray. Others will believe what they are saying is the truth and in the process be led away from God, to be led away from

life into death. Is that something we're willing to just let happen? For people to be led astray in that way, to be led away from God?

But also with this, Christians, we should contend for the faith, because those false teachers will represent you to the rest of the world. The rest of the world will see you and them, and they will lump you together. And whatever the false teachers are saying, they'll think that you are saying too unless you speak up. And I can think of no better example of this than when dealing with the name "Lutheran." Because it's no secret that that are all kinds of people out there who claim to be Lutherans, but who believe very different things, and many of them not biblical at all. And I'm not just talking about people who support things like abortion or transgenderism, but anyone who says something that the Bible does not say. If we don't speak up, if we don't contend for the truth, people will think that we're all in the same group, that we're all saying the same thing, whether you think it's fair for them to do that or not. After all, aren't we all called "Lutherans"? So we need to speak up for the truth. We must not let the truth be hidden under the lie. Stand for the truth in everything, because it is that important.

But this isn't just an outside issue either, as if we just have to worry about those who are around us, that they're the ones we have to watch out for. We must stand for the truth wherever and whenever it is necessary for us to do so. And if that means we have to speak against some even within our own church body, then that's what has to be done. We must contend for the faith, because this is what we are called to do. We don't do it just to be right. We don't do it to be jerks. We do it to uphold the truth of God's Word, because it is that Word, Christians, and that Word alone, which leads people to salvation. So we do this because of our love for God, but also for our love for other people, our love for one another. We want to hold up the truth, because it is the truth which leads to life.

And the only way we're going to be able to contend for the truth, Christians, is by being in the Word of God. Knowing what is true and what is false by knowing what God says. Because only in that way will we be able to compare what God says with what people say, and to see if what people say is the same thing as God. That's the only way we're going to know the truth. So we should be in this Word. We should read it. We should hear it. We should study it. We should think about it. Because in all these ways, we will know what God says, and when we know what God says, we will know the truth. And if that seems kind of daunting to us, like maybe it seems like there's just too much here, you'd be surprised at how much you will learn even in a short period of time if you are consistent with it, if you just spent a little bit of time in it each day. And God will certainly bless the time which you spend in his Word. So this is something that we should do, not just for our sake, but for the sake of other people too, so that when we are called to speak the truth, we will know the truth and be able to declare it to all around us.

So Christians, let us contend for the faith and not grow weary. Let us stand up for the truth out of our love for God and our love for other people. Let us not seek our own glory, to puff ourselves up. Let us seek after the truth, because the truth of God's Word is how Jesus Christ is shown to all the world. The truth is that important, Christians. Let us stand up and speak up for the faith, and never give it up, because it is through that Word that we are saved.

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have given us the truth through your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray that you would help us always to stand firm in that truth, that we may follow after you in everything and speak your truth to all the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.