

Jude 1-16

Contending for the Faith

If you would, please take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Jude. Jude is the second to last book of the Bible.

In his work, *A Little Book on the Christian Life*, John Calvin makes a powerful point about God's purpose as He works in our lives. He says, "The goal of God's work in us is to bring our lives into harmony and agreement with His own righteousness, and so to manifest to ourselves and others our identity as His adopted children."

That's a beautiful and accurate statement. We were made to live in harmony with the beauty and the holiness of God, but because of sin, we don't naturally love God's righteousness. We are natural born sinners, lovers of ourselves, and sin gives us foreign priorities, priorities of wicked passions and desires. Sin makes us hopelessly out of tune with God's righteousness. Like a rouge musician playing a completely different song, our lives clash with the song of God's majesty and glory. We need to be brought back into harmony with God and his perfect goodness.

The message of the gospel tells us how God is at work to bring us back in harmony with the melody of his righteousness. He is not content to wind up the world like a clock, set it into motion, and walk away to do what it will. God glories in bringing human lives into harmony and agreement with his righteousness. He glories in exalting his righteousness

and his power through his Son, Jesus Christ, who he has exalted as the Savior of the world and as King over all.

The mission of God's people, here on earth, is a reflection of God's work in them. The Church has been commissioned to bring glory to God by making Jesus famous in all the earth, even as he goes about the work of bringing our own lives into harmony with his. That's our prime directive, to go into all the world, making disciples of Christ, making him known and calling men and women everywhere to escape the judgement that God is bringing on the world for sin through repentance and faith in the work of Jesus. We've been sent as ambassadors to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom. This is not an easy task. It's not one we can do on our own. As we will see this evening in the book of Jude, our only confidence that we will succeed in holding fast to the faith that we've received is that God is holding fast to us.

We will also see that while it is God who is at work in the lives of his people to bring them into harmony with his righteousness, to manifest to us and to others the new identity of sons and daughters of God that we've received from Jesus, there's a duty we have to live out of that identity. The key phrase of the book of Jude is a call to action. It's a call to contend/to fight for the faith that lives within us. The book of Jude is a like a war-horn, meant to call the saints of God to action, because eternity is a long time, judgment is coming, and we face a real and deceptive enemy, who is bent on the destruction of God's people.

So far in our time together this weekend, we've worked our way through 2 and 3 John. In those letters, we've been encouraged to walk in the truth of Christ in love towards one another. We've been charged to imitate Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. The book of Jude fits right in with those same priorities of the Christian life. If anything, I think this letter shows us the sort of urgent energy for righteousness that we've got to have if we're going to abide in the truth and be obedient servants of Christ. It's going to take everything you've got to do this. It's going to take more than what you've got to do this. This is going to take power and speed that only God is capable of. The book of Jude is dedicated to drawing our attention to the task at hand, to calling us to action, and to anchoring us deeply into the beautiful and necessary work that God does—keeping us in the truth that we've received from him.

As we launch into the book of Jude, I want to draw your attention to two key commands, the first of which we will be dealing with tonight and the second of which we will be looking at in the morning: 1) Christian, contend for the truth that lives within you. 2) Christian, keep yourself in the love of God. Those are the two key commands of the book of Jude. They are impossible to do apart from the work of God, but because God is at work in his people, they are absolutely sure. It is more likely that the sun should stop and that the seasons of the earth should cease to be than God should fail in this endeavor, and yet there is a responsibility placed on believers to respond to that sure hope by living with great urgency. And

that's what I want to parse out for you in this letter from Jude, beginning with God's call to Christians to contend.

Let's begin by reading our passage. Jude really must be read in its entirety. I'm going to do that for us now, but we will be focusing this morning specifically on v. 1-16.

MP: Christian, contend for the faith that you have received and for the truth that lives within you.

That's the directive of the book of Jude. What I want to do this evening is to explore this command with three important questions:

A) What are we to contend for?

B) What are we contending against?

C) How do we know that we will prevail?

A) What are we to contend for?

You can have the bravest, strongest, most well-equipped army in the world, but without a clear objective, that army will never be truly effective. More likely, it will just fall apart. Armies dissolve when soldiers are no longer bound together by one vision, and when armies are dissolved, nations are left vulnerable to attack. Jude's objective here isn't just to call the church to action, but to call the church to action by calling us together with purpose. In v. 3 he says, "Beloved, though 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."

We ought to appreciate how clear Jude is about his motives here. While he had wished to convey more in this letter about the doctrine of salvation, when he became aware of the current circumstances of his audience, he found it more necessary that he make this letter an appeal to the church to contend for the faith that they had received, the message that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude's appeal to the church, to eagerly contend for the truth, is something that flows out of Jude's love for the gospel. It's not as if Jude's original desire, to write to this church about their common faith is all that different for his desire to see that faith defended, but while Jude had wanted to expand his readers' grasp on the mysteries of God's work of salvation, considering the circumstances, he says he was compelled rather to call the church to battle against those who were trying to twist salvation into an opportunity for sin.

It's a good thing for the people of God to press themselves further into the depths of the mystery of salvation, but it won't do the church any good to understand the mysteries of salvation if its members are being led astray into a different faith altogether. Jude is ringing the alarm bell here, calling the church's attention to agents, who have crept in, unnoticed, perverting the grace of God into an opportunity to satisfy their fleshly desires, who are going to lead the church into error with them if they can. So, while Jude says he eagerly wanted to write to these brothers and sisters to further their understanding of God's work of salvation, current

circumstances have necessitated that he instead blow the war horn to call them into action against a most destructive heresy.

Jude's motives fit his identity. In v. 1, Jude calls himself 'a servant/slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James.' If it were not for this letter, we wouldn't know much of Jude, except from what we learn in Matt 13:55 and Mark 6:3. Jude was actually Jesus' half-brother and the brother of James, who became an important leader and pastor in the church that was in Jerusalem. I think that he shows a remarkable amount of humility by not leveraging his connection to Jesus as a means of gaining notoriety for himself. As far as Jude is concerned, he is Christ's servant/slave, and as such he serves the priorities of his master, which is the purity and the holiness of the people of God, of the church.

Jude addresses this letter broadly, though it's clear he had a particular church in mind. He says, "to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ." So, while there was a particular situation that Jude was responding to in this letter, we should not think that this call to contend for the faith is something that was limited to this particular group of believers or merely to believers who were living in the first-Century. This call is for everyone who is called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, which means this is a call for every believer. While Jude had a particular group of people in mind, we can clearly see the relevance of this book for ourselves. It's not as if Satan's attack on the church was limited to the early church, and it's not as if he retired this strategy after Jude sounded the alarm. The

church is under pressure, even today, from people outside and inside, to shift the focus of the gospel from repentance of sin and submission to King Jesus to a focus of inclusion and acceptance of lifestyles that break God's commands.

Jude is concerned, not because he can envision a scenario where wolves might infiltrate the flock of Christ. He's concerned for the church, because it's already happened. Certain people have crept into the church, people who are trying to reroute the message of the gospel and the mission of the church from preaching a gospel of conformity to Christ, to a false-gospel that conforms the will of God to the wickedness of the world. These people are like pirates taking over a ship, trying to leverage the treasury of God's grace as a way to fund their rebellion against God. The situation just really couldn't be more severe, and Jude's message to the church in the midst of this assault is to resist and to fight for the truth, to, "contend," v. 4b, "for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

The Bible often uses the word 'faith' to refer to the way Christians believe God and his promises. Oftentimes, when we use the word faith, we use it in a personal sense, to describe the way we are linked to Christ in a saving relationship with him. We often use it that way to talk about the way belief in Christ links us to him the way a branch is linked to a vine or to the trunk of a tree. But when Jude calls the church to 'contend' for the faith, he means something a little more objective here. The reason I think that, is because of the way Jude qualifies the word 'faith,' calling it, 'the faith that was once and for all

delivered to the saints.' Jude has an objective set of doctrines in mind here. He's thinking about certain truths about Jesus, which are necessary for salvation, things that correspond to the work of God as he brings people out of sin and into life in Christ.

Now, God does not save anyone on the basis of mere knowledge. As A.W. Tozer has remarked, "The Devil is a better theologian than any of us, and is a devil still." You can have orthodox theology and still hate God. God will not admit one person into Heaven because they can rattle off a Catechism to him. Salvation does not belong to those who are knowledgeable but to those who God has made alive through a knowledge that comes by faith in the Son of Man. This is the knowledge that Paul describes in 1 Tim 2:3-4, when he says that God's desire, "is that all people might be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth," the kind of knowledge that responds to God in faith that, "there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ, Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all."

While salvation cannot be reduced to merely knowing truth things about God, Paul indicates that saving faith starts with truth. Personal faith is a response to the faith that was first delivered to all the saints. The truth of God and the life of God are bound up as one in Christ Jesus, who is the Word of God and who came so that all who believe in him would have life in the light of his revelation. There are things which are true of God, which are exposed in God's word and in the message of the gospel, without which we cannot be saved, and the call of

every believer is to contend for these truths, to earnestly fight to hold fast to them, to ensure that they are not diminished or polluted in any way with error. There are some important features about the doctrines that Jude has in mind that I want to call your attention to. These features make this faith worth contending for.

1) Jude says that this faith was delivered to the saints. It is something that we have received from God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, which is spoken about in God's Holy Word. As John says in John 1:9-12, "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

The gospel wasn't something that was conceived in the back-alleys of a human mind. It wasn't created by some people sitting in a room, who met together to conspire about how they could come up with a new religion. While the followers of Christ have a responsibility to search out the truth of the gospel and to share the truth of the gospel with others, it's not a message that is original to us. It's something that we have received. Paul told the church in Galatia, "I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

After all, at the time of Paul's conversion, he was on a zealous mission to destroy the church. He was glad to see Stephen killed for his faith. It was not until God, who had set Paul apart long before he was born and called Paul to his grace, was pleased to reveal Jesus to Paul that he took on this faith that Jude refers to here.

To the Corinthians, he writes, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain." Which is to say that the gospel that Paul received is the same gospel that has been passed down and received by all the saints. The gospel is not a human invention, but the very wisdom and power of God to save sinners. When we believe it, we receive it, and we set our seal of hope on this, that God is faithful and that the work of Christ is for us.

2) Jude says that this faith was delivered to the saints *once and for all*.

When you buy a house, you inherit all sorts of things from the previous owners, good and bad. Part of home ownership is improving the condition of the home that you received. Some people think of the gospel that way. They propose that Christianity has evolved into what it is today, suggesting that Jesus never claimed to be divine, denying his miraculous works, and questioning whether anything we have today really came from him. I do not deny that the church today looks very different than it did in its infancy. The church has changed over time. The doctrines of the church have been

expanded and refined as time has gone on, but the true church of Christ has never graduated from or abandoned the faith delivered to the saints, because this faith, this gospel, these core beliefs about God and about Jesus Christ and salvation, is what defines the church and sets it apart. The church is built, Paul writes in Ephesians 2, on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” All true doctrine is built on this faith, which stands for ever.

John Piper puts it this way, “There are truths about God and Christ and man and the church and the world which are essential to the life of Christianity. If they are lost or distorted, the result will not be merely wrong ideas but misplaced trust. The inner life of faith is not independent from the doctrinal statement of faith. When doctrine goes bad, so do hearts. There is a body of doctrine which must be preserved....It was revealed by God to his apostles and their close associates and then taught to the churches as the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) or the "standard of teaching" (Romans 6:17).”

I think that Piper’s statement there captures the idea that Jude was trying to convey to his readers. This faith is the body of doctrine that gives God’s people hearts of full assurance before him. We can only draw near to God if we draw near to him with hearts that have been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and with bodies that have been washed clean with the pure water of Christ (Heb 10:22-23).

If we do not contend for this faith, we will most certainly diverge from it. If we do not hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering and fall instead back into deliberate sin, after receiving knowledge of the truth, as the author of Hebrews says, “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume [God’s] adversaries...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Jude was eager to write about the salvation that unites all believers together, which is why he valued the defense of the integrity of this truth all the more. There is a certain amount of grace that believers must have towards each other on points of doctrine. There are levels of disagreement we may have with someone else on topics which are not fundamental to the foundation of the truth that we have received through the witness of the prophets and the apostles in God’s word. The last thing I want to do is to try to get you so stirred up for battle that you take the sword against your fellow believers or deny your fellowship to people to whom Christ has set free and united to himself as partakers of the common salvation that Jude talks about. After all, if you distance yourself from everyone who you do not agree with entirely, you will be alone. So, be careful not to allow pride in your theology prevent you from unity with those who may disagree with you on the finer points of doctrine, but who are holding fast to the same apostolic truth you received. At the same time, we need to develop the zeal that Jude had for this truth, so that we’re not

led astray to accept doctrines which fundamentally deny Jesus Christ and the salvation of God.

B) What are we contending against?

So, now that we've dug into the truth that God has called us to contend for, we need to look at what we are fighting against. The reason that Jude felt that it was so important for him to shift his letter from writing about our common salvation to writing a charge to contend for this faith is that, v. 4, "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."

At the end of June, 2010, an investigation by the FBI designated Operation Ghost Stories, culminated in the arrest of 10 Russian sleeper agents, who had been planted in the U.S. on behalf of the Russian Federation. These agents had assumed normal American identities, and they had been planted by the Russians in an attempt to gather intelligence by creating relationships with people who had access to sensitive information. Those agents had gone deep under-cover, assumed new identities, and used the freedoms and privileges of true citizens in an attempt to serve their actual nation. In a similar way these people Jude has in mind, had crept into the church. They were taking advantage of the freedom and the grace of God, they had twisted the gospel and perverted it into a means by which they could pursue sensual things, and in doing so, they had denied Jesus as Lord and Christ.

This clarifies what we already saw in our first point. Jude makes his appeal to contend for the faith received by the saints once and for all because certain people had crept into the church, who had perverted and distorted that truth by making it a means for getting sinful pleasure and in doing so, they fundamentally denied the lordship of King Jesus over their lives.

The majority of the rest of this letter is dedicated to laying out charges on these spies.

I want to point out a couple of key qualities of these perverters of truth.

1) They did not learn from the example of destruction that had fallen on those who do things like this. In v. 5-7, Jude lays out three examples from history, which these perverters of the truth had ignored. He cites the generation of Israelites who God brought out of Egypt, but who did not remain faithful to God, and so though God had saved them from slavery in Egypt, he destroyed them in the wilderness because they did not believe or submit to him. In v. 6, Jude cites the angels who fell from their positions of power, because they were not satisfied with what God had given them but instead sought to exalt their own glory. In v. 7, Jude compares these people to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities around them, who indulged in sinful, sexual immorality and who pursued unnatural desires. God made those people an example by punishing them with the eternal fire of his wrath. For all the examples we have in history of how God repays those who use his good gifts as a

means for satisfying sensual desires, these infiltrators of the church had no regard for the sanctity of the holiness of God.

2) It seems that these people claimed to have new revelation that led them away from the truth that had been received by the saints, once and for all. In v. 8, Jude says, “in like manner, these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.” I take this to mean that they claimed to have access to revelation that fundamentally denied the truth that has been received from God, which Jude referred to in v. 3. So, when Jude says we’re to contend for this faith, he has in mind among other things that the church is to resist those who go after and lead others into new revelation that undermines what God has revealed in the coming of Jesus and in his holy word.

3) These people blasphemed God, claiming to have knowledge and authority which they did not. In v. 9-10, Jude goes on to say how these people boldly act in ways that not even the archangel Michael dared to do. Angels are great and powerful beings, who dwell in the presence of God, who have been appointed by God as messengers and workers of his will. Angels know better than to speak a word on God’s behalf, which they have not received from him, but not these enemies of the church. Jude points out that whereas Michael would not dare to presume to speak for God when he contended with Satan over the body of Moses, lest he blaspheme his master, “these people blaspheme all that they do not understand.”

4) God’s condemnation is coming on people who abandon the truth, faith, and lordship of Christ. In v. 10b, Jude says that

these people blaspheme what they do not know and that they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. In v. 4, he says that these people were long ago destined for this condemnation, which he describes at length in v. 14-16, “It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”

It is the duty of every believer to wage war against such a departure from the truth of Christ, and it is the duty of every believer to contend against anyone who would seek to lead others down this path. Jude says that he was compelled to charge the church to earnestly fight, to leverage every bead of sweat, every ounce of energy, every drop of blood to contend for the truth of Christ that we have received from God, because these people had come into the church. Sometimes Satan’s strategically tries to suppress the truth through open opposition and persecution, but he also often tries to defame Christ by dividing the church from the truth in an attempt to see the church rot from the inside-out, even under the very feet of watchful Christians. Like sleeper agents work to sow confusion and discord by taking advantage of the freedoms of another nation, so these people had come in, doing what was in their

nature, trying to lure others away from the truth to join them in the condemnation of God's judgment.

The church is regularly faced with threats from within. Sometimes it's in the form of destructive heresies. Sometimes it's in the form of grumblers, malcontents, and loud-mouthed boasters who show favoritism so they can get what they want. But in every case, these enemies of the faith expose themselves because they love the things that Jesus came to destroy, and they twist the grace of God into a way they can satisfy those sinful passions.

We cannot afford to shrink back from those who distort the truth in this way. Their rebellion doesn't just affect them, it poisons the church. Look at v. 12. Jude says, "These [people] are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you, without fear." They are a danger to themselves and to all who are around them, the way a hidden reef is a danger to a ship. He goes on to say that these people are like shepherds feeding themselves, the care only for their passions and not for the needs of the flock of Christ. They are deceptive, waterless clouds, who promise much but deliver nothing. They are swept along by the wind, fruitless trees in a time when there should be much to harvest. They are twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, who cast up the foam of their shame for all to see. They lack integrity and are false guides like wandering stars, and God has reserved the gloom of utter darkness in hell for them, to be endured forever.

Do you see why Jude felt so compelled to address this situation? The church cannot afford to be passive towards

deceivers such as these, those who deny the truth of God and deny the lordship of Christ. There's just too much at stake, and unless we actively contend against those who try to lead the church of Christ against the truth of Christ and the lordship of Christ, the risk is that we may find ourselves joining them in their error and their condemnation.

C) How do we know that we will prevail?

So, Jude calls the church to contend against errors that lead away from the faith we've received from God in Christ through his Word by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a call and a command for every believer. Every soldier who joins the military swears an oath to uphold and defend his nation and his people, and every person who is joined to Christ as his disciple has been called to wage war against the lies and deceptions of the devil. But how do we know that we're going to win? Jude does not mean in any way to imply that this great duty is something that we can accomplish in our own power. That's why he leads off this letter, "To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."

Jude's very clear here. God's destruction comes against those who do not abide in the truth of the gospel. At the same time, the key feature that ensures the victory of God's people over error and unrighteousness is the power and the glory of God. Jude addresses believers in a most encouraging way here. He uses three titles, titles that remind us that the success of the church against the aggressive currents of deception holds fast

in God as he works to accomplish his purpose of bringing us into harmony with his righteousness: 3 titles

1) Jude refers to the church as those who are ‘called.’ The people of God are the people of God, not because of our merit or because in some way we’re able to earn that title, but because God has called us to that. Jesus says in John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” This is also what Paul speaks of in Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

God is in the business of calling sinners out of death into life. When he calls a sinner, he makes them his child. As sure as God calls a person to Christ, he unites them to himself with the unbreakable, golden chain of his saving grace: those whom he predestined, he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified has also glorified, and so Paul writes to Timothy, “do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light

through the gospel.” God’s calling ensures the salvation of his people, and so we know that we will prevail because Christ has prevailed for us.

2) Jude also describes the church as beloved in God the Father. How do we know that we will prevail, even when we face heresy and division and strife? Because God loves his people, and he does not abandon his beloved children. We know what love is because God first loved us. This is a love that he has set on us, not a love that we have earned, and because God is the one who loves and because he never changes, we know that his love will hold us fast, through the shifting sands of time. Remember friends, that God sent Jesus even to die, even while we were ungodly. “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’” God told the prophet Hosea, “and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” (Romans 9:25-26).

How do we know that we will endure? Because God is not idle or promiscuous with his love. Because he is holy, his love is enduring and steadfast. There is no shadow in him due to variation or to change, and when he sets his love on a person, he will uphold that love to the end.

3) Jude finally describes the church as, “those who are kept for Jesus Christ.” The word, ‘kept,’ is similar to the idea of guarding something. Jude wrote this letter, appealing to the church to contend for the faith that they had received, but he anchored their efforts to keep the faith they had received within the way God was at work in keeping them in that truth.

This is a great encouragement. When we read all the way through, did you catch how Jude bookends this letter with astonishing encouragement, that even as we apply ourselves through the grace of Christ to remaining in the truth of Christ, it is the work of God to keep us in that truth which ensures that his church will not fail?

There are many scriptures that function well as benedictions, but v. 24-25 are probably my favorite. I regularly dismiss our church with these words: “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory 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.” Do you see how Jude anchors the hope of the church in that doxology, proclaiming even at the beginning that God’s people will be kept by him for the glory of King Jesus through every twist and every turn, every assault from within and from without? God is the one who is doing this, and because he is able to keep until the day of Christ’s return the faith to which he has called you if you are a Christian, then brother, sister, you may have confidence that his hand will never fail.

We will see tomorrow morning as we look at v. 17-25 exactly how we are to go about living in the truth that God has made to live in us, but for now, this evening, I want to encourage you to action by commending to you the steadfast grace of God, which is able to keep you and to present you blameless before the glory of his presence. We are all called to fight for the faith, for the gospel, contending against those who

would try twist it into something that serves the passions of their flesh, but this is not a fight that we’re expected to win in our own strength. Our only confidence is in the power of God, who has called you, who has set his love on you, and who keeps you now in and for Christ Jesus.