

## Making the Most of Every Opportunity to Contend for the Faith (Part 3)

Message 6 of 6 in the series: "Kairos"

**kairos** = a God-given moment, season, or window of opportunity to do something.

### A. God is giving us opportunities in these evil days to contend for the faith against false teachers who worm their way into Christian circles.

"Make good use of every **opportunity** you have, because these are evil days." Ephesians 5:16 (GNT)

"Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, **urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people**. 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. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Jude 1:3-4 (NLT)

1. We shouldn't be surprised that false teachers have come. "But you, my dear friends, must **remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted**. They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires." Jude 1:17-18 (NLT)

*Peter*: "Most importantly, I want to remind you that **in the last days scoffers will come**, mocking the truth and following their own desires." 2 Peter 3:3 (NLT)

*Paul*: "...**in the last days** there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. **They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly**. Stay away from people like that! ...For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. **They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear**. They will reject the truth and chase after myths." 2 Timothy 3:1-5 & 4:3 (NLT)

2. We must contend with false teachers because they pose a serious threat and seek to destroy our faith, our church, and our mission. "...these people—who claim authority from their dreams—**live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings**... But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of **Cain**, who killed his brother. Like **Balaam**, they deceive people for money. And like **Korah**, they perish in their rebellion. When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, **they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you**. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness... These people are **grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want**... These people are the ones who are **creating divisions** among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them." Jude 1:8-13, 16, & 19 (NLT)
3. We must never forget that God's wrath will be poured out on those who teach that His grace means we can live immoral lives. "Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later **destroyed those who did not believe**. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for **judgment on the great Day**. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. **They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire**." Jude 1:5-7 (NIV)

### B. Three things we can do to help each other contend for the faith in these evil days:

"But you, dear friends, must **build each other up** in your most holy faith, **pray in the power of the Holy Spirit**, and **await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love." Jude 1:20-21 (NLT)

1. We can build each other up. "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)
2. We can pray for each other in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)
3. We can endure. "But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, **he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.** But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief... **what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along.**" 2 Peter 3:8-12a (NLT)

**C. Two important reminders to help us make the most of every opportunity to contend for the faith:**

1. We need to love sinners while hating sin. "And you must **show mercy** to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. **Show mercy** to still others, but do so with great caution, **hating the sins that contaminate their lives.**" Jude 1:22-23 (NLT)  
 "If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, **Christ's love controls us.**" 2 Corinthians 5:13-14a (NLT)
2. We don't need to be afraid. "Now all glory to God, **who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault.** All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen." Jude 1:24-25 (NLT)  
 "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20b (NLT)

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**Connect Group Questions:**

Read Ephesians 5:16 & Jude 1. Then discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you think God chose us to be His witnesses in Alabama in 2023? (Acts 1:8)
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5 & 4:3. A headline on news.gallup.com two months ago read, "Belief in God in U.S. Dips to 81%, a New Low." Does this surprise you? How might a rise in the number of false teachers be contributing to this?
3. Jude said that false teachers fall in the footsteps of Cain, Balaam, & Korah (Jude 1:11). He also said that they would suffer the same fate as Sodom & Gomorrah (Jude 1:7) and the Israelites who refused to believe (Jude 1:5). Do a little detective work and find out why Jude used these OT references.
  - Cain (Genesis 4:1-8, 1John 3:12)
  - Balaam (Numbers 22:21-31, 2 Peter 2:15-16)
  - Korah (Numbers 16:1-35)
  - Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-29)
  - Israelites who refused to believe (Numbers 14:1-25, Psalm 95:10-11, & Hebrews 3:16-19)
4. Discuss the following three ways we can help each other contend for the faith:
  - We can build each other up. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
  - We can pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
  - We can endure. (2 Peter 3:8-12)
 How do we flesh these out at Centerpoint?
5. Would it surprise you to learn that Jude 1:24-25 (The Jude Doxology) is often used as a benediction to dismiss congregations at wedding ceremonies, funerals, and worship services? Why do you think many pastors site it as one of their favorite passages of Scripture?

6. Discuss the following quotations:

“Remember that if you are a child of God, you will never be happy in sin. You are spoiled for the world, the flesh, and the devil. When you were regenerated there was put into you a vital principle, which can never be content to dwell in the dead world. You will have to come back, if indeed you belong to the family.”

Charles Spurgeon

“No one sets out to become an apostate – it’s never the result of one abrupt, drastic turn away from the Lord. Instead, apostasy is most often the product of a pattern of sinful compromises that harden and gradually steer a professing believer away from the truth.” John MacArthur