

# Making the Most of Every Opportunity to Contend for the Faith (Part 1)

Message 4 of 6 in the series: "Kairos"

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

## A. We need to make the most of every opportunity we have to contend for the faith in evil days.

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

1. We live in evil days where we will need to contend for our faith inside and outside the Church.

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, **I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are **ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.**" Jude 1:3-4 (NIV)

Contend = earnestly striving like an athlete seeking victory in competition.

2. Jesus knows we are living in evil days and has left us here to be witnesses to a lost and dying world.

"Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.** They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. **Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.** And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth." John 17:13-19 (NLT)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere**—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NLT)

3. We must never forget that a vital part of following Jesus is embracing His mission to seek and save lost people.

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:10 (NLT)

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."  
John 3:17 (NIV)

"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)

## B. We need to make the most of every opportunity we have to contend for the faith among unbelievers without being contentious so we can win them to Christ.

"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of **every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive** so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Colossians 4:5-6 (NLT)

1. In order to make the most of our opportunities to contend for the faith with unbelievers, we need to build each other up in the faith.

"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)

*Note:* The Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who **correctly handles the word of truth.**” 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

2. In order to make the most of our opportunities to contend for the faith with unbelievers, we need to be prepared to give reasons for the hope we have with gentleness and respect.

“...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. **But do this in a gentle and respectful way.** Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.” 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)

*Note:* It’s easier to treat lost sinners with gentleness and respect when we remember that we all came to Christ as filthy, rotten sinners in desperate need of God’s grace.

“This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’—and **I am the worst of them all.**” 1 Timothy 1:15 (NLT)

“You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. **All of us used to live that way,** following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. **(It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)**” Ephesians 2:2-5 (NLT)

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’ The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’ His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. **We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!**’” Luke 15:25-32 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions:

Read Ephesians 5:16-17. Then discuss the following questions:

1. When might it be necessary for Christians to contend for the faith both inside and outside the Church? (Jude 1:3-4) How could we view these occasions as opportunities?
2. Do you think there’s a difference between contending for the faith and being contentious about our faith? (Colossians 4:5-6)
3. At Centerpoint we often say, “The Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice.” Why is the Bible so important to our faith? (John 17:13-19, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
4. Read the Apostles’ Creed together, and then discuss what it means. Why is it important that Christians agree on what we believe?

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.” (*Note:* catholic = universal)

5. Spend some time as a group praying for God to raise up Connect Group leaders so we can build up more believers in their faith. (Luke 10:2, Jude 1:20)

6. Read the story of the Prodigal Son. (Luke 15:11-32) Why do you think many Christians identify with the younger brother in the story when they first come to Christ, but identify with the older brother in the story after they have been doing their best to live the Christian life for 5-10 years? (See Ephesians 2:2-5)
7. Read Luke 19:10, John 3:16-17, & Jude 1:22-23. Then discuss the following quote from Charles Spurgeon:

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to **Hell** over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If **Hell** must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our best exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.”