

Title: **Contenders versus Pretenders (Part 2)**

Passage: **Jude 20-23**

Theme: **How to contend for the faith all the way to the presence of His glory**

Number: **0214Ju20-23(12)**

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{Read Passage}

[i] This is the point in the book of Jude that we say “goodbye” to the false teachers ==>

<=those whom Jude refers to time/time again as “certain men” - those who by God's design, moved Jude to change intentions as to what he was going to write about in the first place:

3 . . . although I was making every effort to write to you concerning our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

4 For certain men have slipped in, those whose judgment was written about long ago, ungodly [men] who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

[ii] Theme: Contending for the Faith

Not just any faith – the once for all delivered to the saints faith.

Mandate.

[iii] What does that mean? What does that mean for you? Me? Church?

Contending for the faith is something that we do at different levels.

Church - We at CCC have a mandate to contend for the faith. We hold

truth very dear. Gospel of grace. No compromise there. Zero.

Relevant to the leadership here. Elders.

Titus 1:9 **holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.**

Titus 2:7 **in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine . . .**

Deacons are commanded to hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, 1 Tim. 3.

Every member responsibility.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 **But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;** (cf. Acts 17:11)

2 Thess. 2:10 – to be saved is likened to receiving the love of the truth. As lovers of X we are to be lovers of truth.

[iv] We also have a mandate to contend for the faith within our own hearts

Two levels:

Maintaining sound doctrine (not wavering when it comes to t/essential foundations of t/faith).

Maintaining Spiritual Devotion (can't well defend something outwardly that you have grown cold toward inwardly).

Many of you have been watching the winter Olympics. This Olympics featured t/longest torch relay in history – covering over 40k mi in its trek to t/Olympic Cauldron where it arrived on Feb. 7th. From start to finish, t/torch went out 44 times. 44 times over 40k mi. it had to be reignited.

Metaphor of t/race which is t/Xn life. It's hard to run w/a torch that isn't lit. We find over t/course of our lives that we need to have our passions reignited.

“how to fight for joy”

Running well; finishing the race set before us which requires endurance (Heb. 12:1).

[By perseverance the snail reached the ark.](#)

C.H. Spurgeon

That sort of perseverance marks where Jude begins and end.

[v] We can draw a line from v. 3 to v. 17

In 1 sense, those vv in between (part. 5-16) are an extended parenthesis which describe t/challenge that stands in the way of t/race which begins in v. 3 (contend for the faith) and ends in v. 24 (standing blameless in His presence with great joy).

Contending for the faith all the way to the presence of His glory

That's t/trajectory that goes from v. 3 (**contending earnestly for the faith one for all delivered to the saints**) to v. 24 (**standing in the presence of His glory with great joy**)

As I mentioned earlier – the concern isn't solely about “contending for the faith” or “defending the truth” as an obj. reality o/s of ourselves - it's about fanning t/flame of truth w/i our own hearts, t/flame of joy in t/goodness of God that fuels our race.

[vi] Preview

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21) - Key Word: "Transformation"

A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)

B. Remain in God's Love (20-21)

1. Building

2. Praying

3. Waiting

II. Sorting Through Spiritual Sickness (vv. 22-23) - Key Word "Triage"

A. The Sick:

B. The Dying:

C. The Dead:

How to contend for the faith all the way to the presence of His glory
(v. 3b, cf. v. 24)

Last week ==>

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21)

Those who oppose & deny t/faith commit spiritual suicide.

This applies to all false teachers. Those whom Jude describes in v. 4 (verse 4 is a preview of what follows in verses 5-16) ==>

For certain men have slipped in, those whose judgment was written about long ago, ungodly [men] who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

False religionists ==>

1. Have infiltrated the church

2. Cannot escape judgment

3. Are rebels against grace

4. Deny the Lord with their lives

Those who oppose & deny t/faith commit spiritual suicide.

We need ==>

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21)

- Key Word: "Transformation"

This is summed up in discipleship. What it means 2B a follower of JC.

A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)

But you, beloved, must remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. What were the words they were to remember?

That's in v. 18 ==>

that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers pursuing their own ungodly passions."

a. This is what Peter wrote about

2 Peter 3:3 **Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,**

3. Threefold Description of them in verse 19 ==>

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly, without the Spirit.

a. Worldly ($\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ = natural, unspiritual, physical) – a word that's notoriously difficult to render into English

To be $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ is the opposite of what it means to be $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ "spiritual" or of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 **But a $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

HCSB ==> “These people create divisions and are unbelievers, not having the Spirit.”

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21) - Transformation

A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)

Sound words which are the same as sound doctrine which comes from knowing the truth of God's Word. Internalizing it. Reading it.

But also broadening your understanding of rich theological truths. Learning about history, theology, how to dig deep into biblical study for yourself. Learning what it means to defend the faith & see all of life through the lens of Christ. Reading good books & listening to good sermons & sharpening one another through spiritually intimate friendships. Serving and worshiping and growing.

All that's wrapped up in discipleship / all that's involved in being part of a vibrant, grounded, NT church.

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21)

A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)

Brings us to vv. 20-21

B. Remain in God's Love (20-21)

These 2 vv. center on that theme. [^]

But you, beloved . . .

keep yourselves in God's love . . .

That's the command [^]. Everything else tells us how to do it.

3 ptcps. ==> Building / Praying / Waiting.

B. Remain in God's Love (20-21)

This is the central command of these two verses.

“Remain under the protective umbrella of God's love.”

Keep yourself in God’s love so as to avoid spiritual suicide.

Balance / biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Ultimately, believers are kept by JC (v. 1). As v. 24 says, God is the one “able to keep you from falling.” You will continue in t/faith once for all delivered to the saints by virtue of God's sovereign work of keeping you until that day.

But, t/promise that God will keep his own does not nullify our responsibility to persevere in the faith. God keeps his own - yet we are responsible to keep ourselves in God’s love.

This isn't making God's love conditional. This isn't saying that God's love for us changes, only that our relationship to His love may change. The sun's rays don't change when we retreat into the shade or when t/sky is overcast. God's love for His own doesn't change, but our experience of t/warmth & benefit of His love cools when we retreat into the shadows of our own self-will. It's not just His love for us, but our love for Him.

But you, beloved . . .

keep yourselves in God's love . . .

1. Build yourself up on your most holy faith

The “most holy faith” goes back to the “faith once for all delivered to the saints.” in v. 3.

This isn't just individual; it's individual/corporate. You are never to exist outside of the body of X. You can't build yourself up apart from t/other members.

It's like weightlifting. The other day I had an intense workout that centered on deadlifting. Deadlifts, which is a lift whereby you take a weight that's sitting on the floor, you bend over it, using correct form you lift it off the ground to a standing position. It's just a matter of lifting the weight off the ground to just above your knees. Sounds simple. But when you're talking hundreds of pounds, it's not. You'd think that this is a lift that just works your back. The next day, my back was sore – as was just about every other muscle in my body from my neck down. You can't work a single muscle in total isolation from the rest of the body.

Very idea of “building yourselves up” pictures a building. For us it's not just any building, we're a spiritual temple.

1 Peter 1:22–2:3 22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.²⁴ For, “ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,²⁵ BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER.” And this is the word which was preached to you. 1 THEREFORE, putting aside all malice and all

guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,² like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

4 And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God,⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This is a spiritual life, an edifice that will withstand the floods of heresy. This is how to avoid spiritual suicide.

Here is the 1st way we are to remain in God's love: by being built up in the faith. Growing in our understanding of all that is t/Gospel of JC.

Affection for God increases not through bypassing the mind but by means of it. [Schreiner, 483]

As we've noted so many times before, spiritual breathing involves taking in truth through t/mind and heart (inhaling) and communing with God through prayer (exhaling).

2. Praying in the Holy Spirit

building yourselves up on your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

a. What this is and what this isn't

Praying in the HS isn't praying in tongues or some kind of ecstatic speech. In fact, I don't see any biblical warrant for praying in any language other than a real, known language (I'm well aware of 1 Cor. 14 where I think Paul actually corrects a misuse by t/Corinthian CH).

Parallel passage: Eph. 6:18 clarifies that we're talking about prayer that's guided by and in keeping with the Holy Spirit. Xns armor. Prayer.

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

Petitions. Specific, directed, focused prayer using the mind in tune with the heart.

The Spirit assists us in prayer

Gal. 4:6 **And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"**

Romans 8 . . . you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

26 And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words . . . He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

The preposition "in" probably means "in the control of," "guided by," or "by means of the power of." Jude uses this phrase to highlight t/fact that t/false teachers didn't have the Spirit (v. 19).

To pray in the Spirit is to pray in the name of Christ—that is, to pray consistent with His nature and will. To pray in the Spirit is to pray in complete agreement with the Spirit, who “helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words [real words unuttered, not nonwords uttered]; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26–27).

Zechariah 12:10 calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of grace and of supplication.” Just as we are to pray continually, know that the Holy Spirit continually prays for us. When we pray in the Spirit, we align our minds and desires with His mind and desires, which are consistent with the will of the Father and the Son. [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *Alone with God* (pp. 25–26). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

“This is "prayer which is not mere utterance of my own petulant desires which a great deal of our 'prayer' is, but which is breathed into us by that Divine Spirit that will brood over our chaos, and bring order out of confusion, and light and beauty out of darkness . . . “
[Alexander Maclaren]

John Piper, in his wonderful book, “When I Don’t Desire God: How to Fight for Joy” tells the story of the great 19th c. Englishman, George Mueller, best-known for his work with orphans and his great faith.

Mueller tells of how he learned to lean on the Word in order to keep his focus while praying. It took him ten years of faltering prayer before he learned this lesson.

At age of 35, he wrote this in his dairy: May 1841:

The difference then between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible. ... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, &c.; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began to really pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way.

My practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed myself in the morning. Now . . . the first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious word, was, to begin to meditate on the word of God, searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it. . . . The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it.

Piper ==>

This is the central method of prayer that I believe most earnest Christians have discovered: "to meditate on the word of God . . . turning all, as I go, into prayer." Someone may ask, "How can I spend an hour in prayer? I'm done asking for what I need in five or ten minutes." I answer: Take a passage of Scripture, and start reading it

slowly. After each sentence, pause and go back and turn what you read into prayer. In this way you can pray as long as you can read. You may pray all day.

There are more benefits to praying over the Word in this way than the fact that it helps us stay focused. It also has the effect of shaping our minds and hearts, so that we desire what the Word encourages us to desire, and not just what we desire by nature. That is why the prayers of Bible-saturated people sound so different. Most people, before their prayers are soaked in Scripture, simply bring their natural desires to God. In other words, they pray the way an unbeliever would pray who is convinced that God might give him what he wants: health, a better job, safe journeys, a prosperous portfolio, successful children, plenty of food, a happy marriage, a car that works, a comfortable retirement, etc. None of these is evil. They're just natural. You don't have to be born again to want any of these. Desiring them—even from God—is no evidence of saving faith. So if these are all you pray for, there is a deep problem. Your desires have not yet been changed to put the glory of Christ at the center.

But when you saturate your mind with the Christ-exalting Word of God and turn it into prayer, your desires and your prayers become spiritual. That is, they are shaped by the Holy Spirit into God-centered, Christ-exalting prayers. The glory of Christ, and the name of God, and the spiritual well-being of people, and the delight you have in knowing Jesus—these become your dominant concerns and your constant requests. You still pray for health and marriage and job and journeys, but now what you want to happen is that, in all these, Christ will be exalted. This changes the pattern and passion of your prayers. Your prayer for a journey is not merely that it be safe, but that all along the way your joy would be in God and that he would shine

through you. Your prayer for your job is not merely that it be stable and peaceful and prosperous, but that it truly serves the needs of society and that in all your labor and all your relationships your joy in Christ and your love for people would make a name for Jesus."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Another advantage of praying the Word of God is that this is part of what it means to "pray in the Holy Spirit," and praying in the Spirit is how we "keep ourselves in the love of God." I get these two phrases from the book of Jude. There the brother of the Lord Jesus commands us, "Beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God" (vv. 20-21). Literally, the first two commands are participles and tell us how to keep ourselves in the love of God: "Beloved, [by] building yourselves up in your most holy faith, [and by] praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God."

Don't think that keeping yourself in the love of God hangs decisively on us. The book of Jude begins and ends with the opposite truth. It begins with the words, "To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (v. 1). Here Christians are identified with three words: called, loved, and kept. And the keeping is done by God, not us.

Then the book of Jude ends with the 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" (v. 24). Again it is God who is keeping. Therefore when Jude says that by "praying in the Holy Spirit" we are to keep ourselves in the love of God, we know he means that prayer is one of God's instruments for keeping us in his love. Beware of the cynical mind-set that says, "If God is the decisive

keeper of my soul (vv. 1, 24), then I don't need to 'keep myself in the love of God" (v. 20). That would be like saying, since God is the decisive giver of life, then I don't need to breathe.

Now how does praying the Word of God the way Mueller suggests relate to praying in the Holy Spirit? The best brief statement I have found of what it means to pray in the Holy Spirit goes like this: It means "so to pray that the Holy Spirit is the moving and guiding power." In other words, when you pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God is "moving" you to pray. That is, his power motivates, enables, and energizes your prayer. And when you pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God is "guiding" how you pray and what you pray for. So to pray in the Holy Spirit is to be moved and guided by the Holy Spirit. We pray by his power and according to his direction.

These two—the Spirit's power and direction—correspond to two ways that the Word of God functions in our prayer. The power of the Spirit is offered in the promises of God's Word, and we experience it by faith in the promise. The direction of the Spirit is embodied in the wisdom of God's Word, and we experience it by being saturated with that wisdom. So if we would "pray in the Holy Spirit" we should, like Mueller, pray the Word of God, trusting the promises and absorbing the wisdom.

So when we follow Mueller's advice and turn the Scriptures into prayer as we read, we will be helped to "pray in the Holy Spirit." The Scriptures will awaken faith in the Spirit's power to help us pray (Rom. 8:26), and the Scriptures will shape our minds to pray in the direction of the Spirit's will. When Christ's words dwell in us richly, he abides in us powerfully (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18). And when we thus "pray in the Holy Spirit," we will, as Jude says, "keep yourselves in

the love of God" (v. 21). And as our precious position in the love of God becomes more and more real to us, we will rejoice with joy unspeakable. Therefore, praying the Word of God is a crucial strategy in the fight for joy. [pages 164 ff.]

1. Build yourself up on your most holy faith

2. Praying in the Holy Spirit

3. Waiting for the Mercy of Christ

while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

a. Future Hope

2 Peter 3:13–14 **13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,**

As believers we live in the shadow of two worlds: the present creation that will pass away with the coming of Christ and the future recreation that we will inherit based upon God's promise.

Taking one's eyes off future hope evidences that one's real love is for the present (world).

How to "contend for the faith" (v 3) all the way to "the presence of His glory" (v 24).

I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21) - Key Word: "Transformation"

A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)

B. Remain in God's Love (20-21)

**II. Sorting Through Spiritual Sickness (vv. 22-23) - Key Word
"Triage"**

Note again Jude's preference of groups of three . . .

3 OT examples in vv. 5-7 (Israel; Fallen Angels; S&G)

3 more in v. 11 (Cain; Balaam; Korah)

3-fold description of t/FTers in v. 19 (divisive; wordly; devoid of Sp).

There's even a Trinitarian pattern in vv. 20-21 {cite}

There's one more triad in vv. 22-23 ==>

22 And have mercy on those who are doubting; 23 but save others by snatching them out of the fire. And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment which is polluted by the flesh.

**II. Sorting Through Spiritual Sickness (vv. 22-23) - Key Word
"Triage"**

Our ministry of Mercy

A. The Progression from Bad to Worse

1. The Sick:

And have mercy on those who are doubting;

Doubting – from the words of false teachers.

Our doubts – danger of the internet.

Don't deny your doubts.

Ministry of t/CH – to answer those questions. Part of mercy.

2. The Dying:

but save others by snatching them out of the fire.

Probably those who are on their way to following the false teachers. Those who are on the edge of denying the faith, or those who are clearly unconverted. They need the Gospel.

The expression snatching them out of the fire is an allusion to Zech 3:1–5

Zechariah 3:1–5 1 THEN he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.2 And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel.4 And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.”5 Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

3. The Dead:

And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment which is polluted by the flesh.

a. These are the apostate false teachers themselves and those who have made a final, willful decision to follow them

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.

Hebrews 6 – fallen away & beyond hope of repentance.

Apostates and 1 John 5:16 - **If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.**

And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment which is polluted by the flesh.

b. Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh seems to explain further what fear means

“garment” here refers to clothing worn next to the skin (the “inner garment” in contrast to robe known as “t/outer garment.”).

Here we have this inner garment described as spotted by the flesh (flesh = sin).

Hyperbole. These people are so lost in their sinful estate that even the very clothes they wear are ceremonially defiled. Don't touch!

Smokers clothes.

The stench of death has polluted them and even their clothing, as it were, reeks with the odor of corrupted flesh

One day - Everything that men have done, said, thought, failed to do while on this earth will be exposed to God's judgment.

For the believer, that is a comfort. How can that be?

The 16th c. Heidelberg Catechism (University of Heidelberg, Germany) is an evangelical doctrinal standard that takes t/form of 129 questions and answers.

Q 52. How does Christ's return "to judge the living and the dead" comfort you?

A. In all my distress and persecution I turn my eyes to the heavens and confidently await as judge the very One who has already stood trial in my place before God and so has removed the whole curse from me. All his enemies and mine he will condemn to everlasting punishment: but me and all his chosen ones he will take along with him into the joy and glory of heaven.