

A FAITH WORTH FIGHTING FOR

What Is It?

TEXT: Jude 1

INTRODUCTION:

The Scripture tells us in

Romans 12:18 “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Yet Jesus said,

Matthew 10:34–36 ³⁴ “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; ³⁶ and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’

I remind you of these contrasting verses simply to say that although we as Christians are peace loving, peace seeking people, there are some things worth fighting for!

Many of you sitting here have counted your country to be one of those things worth fighting for, and you did. And we are grateful to you for it. Most of us would count our families as worth fighting for, and we would fight to preserve their safety and their well being.

I took a little survey among people this morning as they were arriving for Lifechange Groups. I asked each of them to name one thing worth fighting for. Here are some of the responses: Justice, the oppressed, life, peace, love, friendship. Here are the top three: freedom, family, and faith.

There is a man who wrote a book of the New Testament whose name today is about as popular as was the name of Benedict Arnold following the Revolutionary War. His friends would have called him Yudas, which we would carry into English as Judas. However, he is not the disciple who betrayed the Lord, he is another Judas. In fact, most often in English we call him Jude, to distinguish him from the treasonous apostle. And now you recognize that I am talking about the author of The Epistle of Jude.

However, I suspect that you do not know much about this man called Jude. He introduces himself sufficiently in verse one of his letter for us to identify him, and that

identification is really important for understanding some things about his message. But the first thing I want you to know about Jude is he was a man who followed Christ in the first century who said, “There are some things worth fighting for.” He is a man who was a leader in the first church in Jerusalem who said, “There is something worth fighting for.” Here is an author of a New Testament book, inspired by the Holy Spirit, who says, **Jude 3 ... I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

“Contend” means to fight. Jude begins by saying, Brothers and sisters, that faith that was once for all given to us believers is worth fighting for. And then he basically writes his entire letter about that.

We are going to examine that letter this summer, starting today with the first verse. In seven sermons, we are going to consider a faith worth fighting for.

One of the most important questions we can ask about this letter and these instructions is “What is that faith that is worth fighting for?” If we are being called to fight, we need to be sure we are fighting for the right thing. We better make certain we are fighting for what God identifies is worth fighting for and not just what the world says is important.

We will not completely answer that question today of “What is that faith worth fighting for?” but we will get a start. Because in the very first words of the first verse, we see two things about this faith worth fighting for in the way that Jude describes himself. Look with me.

Jude 1a Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, ...

What does Jude tell us about himself?

- 1. He is a bondservant of Jesus Christ.**
- 2. He is the brother of James.**

Consider those with me in reverse order.

What does the fact that Jude is the brother of James tell us about the faith that is worth fighting for? Well, it tells us that it is a ...

I. FAITH IN A RESURRECTED SAVIOR

And more than one of you is saying right now under your breath, “How in the world do you get that, Bro. Mike, out of the fact that Jude was the brother of James? I’m glad you asked.

1. Well, first, we have to know, which James was the brother of Jude.

- a. It could not be James the Apostle, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee, because Acts 12 tells us that Herod killed him in A.D. 44. The Book of Jude was not written until after Peter's second letter and probably after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- b. The James who was the brother of Jude was the same James who wrote the Epistle of James and is identified by Paul as the brother of the Lord Jesus.

2. Jude and James were each half brothers of Jesus. In fact, he is named when the people of Nazareth, astounded at what Jesus was doing and saying, responded as recorded in

Mark 6:3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

Now, here is the significance of that and what leads us to our first clue about what kind of faith it is that is worth fighting for.

A. Neither James nor Jude believed in Jesus during His earthly ministry.

John 7:1–5 ¹ After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

B. James was the first to believe when Christ appeared personally to him after the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3–7 ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

C. James tells all his brothers that Jesus, whom they knew was dead and buried, had appeared to him alive! The result was that they all believed, because they all went to the upper room with the apostles, other believers, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:12–14 ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son of Alphaeus* and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son of James*. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

D. Here's the point. **Jude, James, and the other half brothers of Jesus did not believe Jesus was the Messiah.** In spite of all the healings, the miracles, His perfect life; they just did not believe. ... **Until the resurrection.** Don't you imagine they were at the head of the skeptic's line? They not only did not believe, they did not want to believe. This was their brother. He could not be Messiah!

E. But when it was all said and done, they could not deny it. They knew Jesus was dead. They knew the Romans guarded the body day and night. Then there were the stories of angels and an empty tomb, but still doubt prevailed. Until they saw Him.

They saw Him. And He was very much alive. Scars in his wrists and feet, a scar on his side, but alive!

And they believed. James, Jude, Simon, Joses. They all believed and became followers.

F. **For each of them, as well as for many others, the resurrection of Jesus was the absolute proof that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior of the world.**

This was the foundation for their faith. This was the foundation for Jude's faith. **So when Jude talks about the faith worth fighting for, the faith he is talking about is faith in a resurrected Savior.**

G. And dear skeptical friend, the fact that Jesus rose from the dead can be the foundation of your faith as well. You do not have to have been present and see Him walking the earth after He arose. History and reason confirm the truthfulness of the claim of the resurrection.

Think, Jesus' enemies were everywhere, and they were in charge of the system: political, religious, social, cultural. All they had to do to kill a hoax around a resurrected Jesus was produce a body. But they could not, because the body was up and walking around and had been transformed into a resurrection body they could no longer control or kill. They could not prove it was a hoax because it wasn't.

Listen, dear friend, if Jesus of Nazareth died on a cross and rose from the dead, as all the testimony and evidence says He did, no other argument matters. This

is the trump card. It beats everything. If Jesus rose from the dead as He said He would, He really is the Son of God, and you better get things right with Him by being saved.

What kind of faith is worth fighting for? Faith in a resurrected Savior, but also ...

II. FAITH IN A SOVEREIGN LORD

Jude said he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

A. The word bondservant literally means slave. To soften the meaning is to distort the original.

- 1. The slave has no part of life that belongs exclusively to him.**
- 2. The slave owns no moment in time.**
- 3. The slave has no activity that is not subject to the master's control.**

**Jude says, I am a slave to Jesus Christ!
He is my Master. He is my Lord.**

**Some may say, "I am not going to be anyone's slave!"
You already are.**

B. Everyone is either a slave to sin or a slave to Christ.

- 1. Slave to sin**

Romans 3:9 ... For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. – under the authority, as a soldier is under authority of the commander

Romans 5:21 so that as sin reigned in death ... - root word for "king"

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. – made a prisoner of war

- a. We do not have to choose to become slaves to sin.**
- b. We inherit our sin nature.**
- c. We choose to sin.**
- d. We are enslaved.** Don't take my word for it. Take Jesus' word for it!

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

2. **The only way to be freed from being a slave to sin is to become a slave to Christ.**

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” – “ransom” is the price paid to grant freedom. **Jesus sets us free from slavery to sin.**

Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. – Lord is “kurios” and means “master” as in the “master” of a slave.

Paul also called himself a bondservant, a slave, to Christ.

Galatians 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

3. **The question really is, “Whose slave do you want to be?”**
Sin and Satan’s
Christ’s

4. **Those who are Christ’s slaves**
 - a. **Are also loved by Him**
 - b. **Are cared for by Him**
 - c. **Are helped by Him**
 - d. **Are served by Him**
 - e. **Are adopted into His family**
 - f. **Are given an eternal home by Him**

I want that kind of master.

I will gladly be His slave.

I count it a privilege, an honor, a blessing.

And so did Jude! Jude began as the half brother of Jesus, but when he met the resurrected Savior, Jude believed in Him and trusted Jesus as the sovereign Lord of his life.

That’s the faith Jude entered into. That’s the faith Jude says is worth fighting for. I want to add, that is the faith worth living for and worth living with.

Do you have that faith? You can, today.