

Highlighting Our Heritage

Week 1: Our Motto

Verse:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. – Jude 3

Life Application:

Recognizing the vital necessity of perseverance and endurance in the Gospel

Text:

Jude 1-25; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 1:21-23

Supplemental Scriptures: Mark 13:13; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; Galatians 6:9; 1 Timothy 6:11-14; Hebrews 3:5-6

Historical context: This verse has appeared on every paper since our beginnings at Azusa; appears on the cornerstone of the HQ church.

Challenge: Using a Bible dictionary, look up definitions and the original meanings of the following words: *earnestly*, *contend*, *faith*, *once*, and *delivered*. Using these explanations, write a sentence summarizing what Jude was saying in Jude 3.

Possible Opener: Take a jar of dirt, flag, dollar bill, paper crown, and a heart. Explain that these represent the major issues men have fought (or contended) for over the centuries of time—land, freedom, money, power, and love. Then show a cross. We are contending for something even more precious than any of these! We are contending for the “faith that was once delivered to the saints.”

Alternative opener: Ahead of class time, tie a baby rattle to a toy snake and put it in a paper bag. Start class by holding up the bag and saying, “This bag contains a small rattlesnake.” When your students look disbelieving, say, “Raise your hand if you don’t believe me.” When your students raise their hands, say, “I am not lying. This really is a rattlesnake in here. But keep your hands up if you still don’t believe me.” Then pick a disbelieving student and challenge him to come forward and place a hand in the bag. Have him reach in and hold up the snake. Offer congratulations for that person’s courage of convictions. Say, “_____ did not believe I had a rattlesnake in here and he was willing to place his hand in the bag to back up his conviction.” If no student will reach into the sack, hold up the snake and say, “Some of you said you didn’t believe, yet you didn’t have the courage to stand up for your convictions.” Use this example to point out that if we cannot back up our beliefs by action, our belief isn’t real. We want to have the strength and courage to uphold—to earnestly contend for—the Gospel.

Questions:

- What does it mean to “contend”?
- How does the word “perseverance” relate to contending for the faith? What other words can you think of that would also relate?
- What did Jude mean by the word “faith” in this verse?
- Why do you think Jude said these believers were to earnestly contend?
- What are some ways we might be called upon to contend for the faith in our day?
- Why do you suppose Jude specified that these early believers were to contend for faith “which was once delivered unto the saints”?
- What specific ways of contending for the faith did Jude outline to his readers? (*Rejecting all falsehood*

and immorality (vs. 4-19), remembering God's mighty acts of rescue and punishment (vs. 5-11, 14-16), remembering the warnings of the Apostles (vs. 17-19), building up their faith through prayer (v. 20), keeping close to Christ (v. 21), and hating sin (v. 23)

- What circumstances did Paul mention in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 text that could have threatened his spiritual endurance?
- What circumstances might threaten or hinder our perseverance in the Gospel? Do you think they will be harder or easier to withstand than Paul's? Explain your answer.
- In 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. What are some spiritual weapons at our disposal in the fight of faith?
- Our minds are the primary battlefields for spiritual warfare. We are called to take control of our thoughts and make them all obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). What are the basic steps to making this happen? (*Recognize Satan's lies, stop the thought, destroy the lie with the truth, and reset the mind on Christ.*)
- It has been said that great disciples, like diamonds, are products of great pressure. What types of pressures come to us in our lives? How can we equip ourselves to endure these pressures and actually gain through them?

Extra helps for teachers:

“Withstand the Current” from HW 96-3

“Entrusted With the Faith” from HW 94-3

The Greek word translated “earnestly contend” means to “fight for.” Jude was encouraging whatever struggle might be necessary to defend the faith—the Gospel message preached by the apostles. The word “once” does not mean an event that happened some time back, but rather a message preached “once for all” – a final and authoritative communication which cannot be changed by false teachers. – From a sermon by Darrel Lee