

# Hey Jude

Jude 1:1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

## Jude 1-3

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Many of you know that I have climbed all of the 14,000 ft. peaks in Colorado. What many of you do not know is that I read at least one chapter of Scripture on the top of every summit. When I came down from a mountain, I took a note of the passage. Later on, when I had completed the Colorado's Grand Slam, I put together my rock collection, and labeled each mountain along with the verse under each rock, and now it hangs on my wall in my office.

I remember reading Jude on the top of Ellingwood Peak. I had read the letter several times, but when you read [on top of a mountain](#), it becomes a bit more memorable. Since then, I've been fascinated by this tiny little letter. What does Jude mean when he talks about Michael contending with the devil over Moses' body? Why does Jude quote Enoch? What is his interest in Cain, and Balaam, and Korah? What are "love-feasts?" I ask all these questions, yet, I've never really bothered to study the book. [Personal interest](#) is therefore one of the reasons I have chosen to preach through Jude.

[Yet, it is far from the only reason.](#) Let me give you [three more](#). This is a very [short](#) book. By my reckoning, it is the fifth shortest book in the Bible (at 461 Greek

words). In a world where everything thinks that “bigger is better,” Jude is often overlooked and underappreciated.

This book is also contains several verses that have almost exact [parallels in 2 Peter](#). These two books were written by two different men, yet they share common themes and ideas. They are so similar that [Martin Luther](#) wrote in his commentary on it, “[It does not contain anything special beyond pointing to the Second Epistle of Saint Peter, from which it has borrowed nearly all the words.](#)”<sup>1</sup> Brother Martin is exaggerating just a little. Nevertheless, after concluding with Jude, I want to preach through 2 Peter so as to better help us understand that Jude is talking about.

Finally, this book carries some [very serious warnings](#) that the church in every age needs to pay careful attention to. 2 Peter carries these same warnings. 2 Timothy carries these warnings. Hebrews carries these warnings. Indeed, the whole NT is full of warnings to [the church in the last days](#).

Jude is particularly pointed in this regard. He says many hard things to hear, but he says them in order to help you learn what it means to contend for the faith and to live godly lives. His message reads more like Amos than Philippians. And [prophets](#) are rarely welcome in any generation to proclaim [their message of repentance](#). Maybe that’s why it is rare to hear anyone preach from this book.

One of the things that Jude does, at least twice, is quote books in what is today called the OT [Pseudepigrapha](#). *Pseudepigrapha* is a combination of two Greek words, “*pseudes*” (meaning false) and “*epigraphē*” (meaning inscription). So, a pseudepigrapha is a false inscription, or a falsely attributed book, penned by one person in the name of another.

Pseudepigrapha are written all the time. Today we call them [pen-names](#). [Mark Twain](#), [Voltaire](#), and [Lewis Carroll](#) are three of the most famous. But the Pseudepigrapha Jude has in mind are ancient books. Their title is usually has the name of a famous person in it. There are pre-Christian and early Christian era documents that we have put into collections called OT or NT Pseudepigrapha.

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<sup>1</sup>Luther, M. (1999, c1967). *Vol. 30: Luther's works, vol. 30 : The Catholic Epistles* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (30:203). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

Most of these books claim to be written by famous *biblical heroes*, people like Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Solomon, Peter, and Paul. Later, the Church Father's had pseudepigrapha written in their names, so that you can go read "pseudo-Barnabas," "pseudo-Ignatius," or "pseudo-Clement." Pen names have been used in modern times to keep politically controversial authors safe, or to give credibility to women authors in a man's world, or simply to appease publishers who don't like the person's real name. But in ancient times, **people used well known names in order to give more credibility to their documents.** I want you to become familiar with the term, because it will come up again and again as we look at Jude and 2 Peter.

I bring the pseudepigrapha up here, because there is an interesting book written around the time of Christ which purports to tell of the lives and deaths of the prophets (It is called "The Lives of the Prophets"). For example, it says that **Jeremiah was stoned, Amos was killed with a club to the head, Ezekiel was killed by a Jewish ruler during the captivity, Micah by king Joram, Isaiah was sawed in half by Manasseh, and Zechariah was killed by king Joash near the alter of the temple.**<sup>2</sup>

My point is, the prophets were not exactly running around proclaiming Oprah's new age, "worship the god within yourselves" kind of tripe. That kind of message is always popular because it appeals to our flesh. **Who wouldn't like to think that they are a god?**

But the **message of the prophets was of sin and repentance, of covenant breaking before a holy God that we owe allegiance and obedience to. The prophets of that day were not welcome.** Prophets like **Jude's** were not welcome (tradition tells us for example that Andrew and Peter were crucified, James was killed with a sword, John was banished to a remote island, and Thomas was speared to death in India). **And prophets in our own day** are not welcome either. The prophets I have in mind here, are not fortune-tellers, but truth tellers, people who call the church to repentance. So for instance, if you preach about any of a number of "hate-crimes," you can be fined or imprisoned from Australia to Brazil, Sweden to Canada and even the United States of America, which once-upon-a-time protected freedom of speech as the most fundamental right in our constitution.

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<sup>2</sup> Heb 11:37 reports several of these, though without naming names.

But Jude's focus, like the prophets before him, is to reform *the church*, not necessarily the culture. It always strikes me as strange that some people want to return to this **supposed utopia** of the early church. It's like they have never read about Ananias and Sapphira, Hymenaeus and Alexander, 1 Corinthians, Timothy, Peter or Jude.

There is no such thing as a utopia this side of heaven, because all people, Christians and non-Christians are **totally depraved**. The difference between the two groups is simply that God justifies Christians through faith in his Son as an act of his wonderful free grace. He then begins the life-long process of sanctifying them. Yet, only when we die is sin removed. And only when the present evil age is burned with fire does the flesh cease to have its corrupting power upon an individual, a family, a state, or a church. And so we always need to heed these difficult words of the Bible.

In this way, **Jude and 2 Peter are among the most practical and important books** that we have. For, they straight-forwardly, without apology, or wasted breath teach the church about the absolute importance of **reforming our beliefs and our deeds**, to match that of God's revealed will in the Scripture. We go astray often in our beliefs and actions, and we must constantly guard ourselves and straighten ourselves to the plumb-line of Scripture.

## Author

With that said, let us move together into the text of Jude's powerful little epistle. It begins, simply enough, with the word "Jude" or *VIou,daj* in the Greek. **Who is this Jude?** The Greek name is most often identified with **Judas Iscariot**. But he was evil, and he is dead. So it obviously isn't him. There are four other men named Judas in the NT. One is a brother of Jesus (**Mark 6:3**).<sup>3</sup>

Jude identifies *himself* as "a **servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James**" (**Jude 1**). Since almost any Christian could identify himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ," I'll take the second identification first. It is obvious that this "**James**" was **incredibly well known** to the people Jude is writing to. This means that the James in mind was

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<sup>3</sup> The other three are "**Judas the Galilean**" (**Acts 5:37**); a revolutionary who probably lived when Jesus was a little boy. "**Judas also called Barsabbas**" (**Acts 15:22, 27, 32**), and "**Judas son of James**," one of the twelve (**Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13**).

almost surely the James who rose to prominence in the early church ([Acts 15:13-21](#); [21:18](#); [Gal 2:9](#)).

This same James almost certainly wrote the earliest book of the NT: the Book of James<sup>4</sup>. This James was a “brother of the Lord” ([Gal 1:19](#), [Mark 6:3](#), [Matt 13:55](#); [John 7:5](#)). If this is the correct James,<sup>5</sup> then this makes Jude also the brother of the Lord identified in Mark 6:3.

Yet, Jude calls himself only “a servant (*doulos*, “slave”) of Jesus Christ. **Why wouldn't he, or James for that matter, call themselves brothers of Jesus?** The best explanation is that their biological relationship brought nothing significant to the table. Jesus himself asked, “Who are my brothers and sisters?” “My brothers and sisters and mother do the will of my Father in heaven” ([Matt 12:50](#)). **Biological relationship is utterly irrelevant in the kingdom of God.** And this brings a major shift in thinking between the Jews (especially the Pharisees) and early Christians.

Jude identifies himself only as **Jesus' servant**. I actually like the word “slave” better. The word is *doulos* rather than *deaconos*. **Christians are slaves of Christ**, here to do their master's bidding, not their own. This includes what we believe and how we behave. You do not belong to yourselves, beloved, but to your master who bought you on the cross, so that the freedom you now have is to serve the Lord.

One of the unfortunate **trends in our secular culture** has been multiculturalisms effort to create great division within society by making it politically correct to identify ourselves by our race, our ancestral homeland, our physical disabilities, and our political affiliations. And the church has bought into this pagan way of talking. So that even Reformed Christians often label themselves first as Reformed and only later as Christians. **I understand why we do these things.** Sometimes words lose their meaning as they become watered down, so changing our identification can sometimes become helpful. **But Jesus wants his people to identify themselves as his**

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<sup>4</sup> Many scholars date James as early as 40AD.

<sup>5</sup> The other three NT “James” are much less plausible. James, the son of Zebedee, the brother of John is the most plausible, but James the son of Alphaeus or James the father of Judas are improbable. See Moo, *The Letter of James*, TNTC, 11-22. Much less improbable is that James (or Jude) are pseudepigraphal. “No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know of a single example” (L. R. Donelson, Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles, quoted by Moo, p. 20).

servants, *his slaves*. We are *Christians* (Acts 11:26). We follow *the Way* (Acts 9:2), the religion of Christ. We are to find our identity, like Jude, in our *spiritual* relationship to the Father and his blessed Son. All of these other things are ultimately irrelevant to eternal life.

This phrase, “*the servant of Jesus Christ*,” is very exciting when compared to its OT equivalent. Jude identifies himself with Christ the same way that God identified Moses as, “*The servant of the LORD*” (cf. Ex 14:31). So, *Jesus Christ replaces “LORD.”* This is of great importance, as Jude and other Apostles who use the phrase now equate Jesus with Jehovah God!

It is astonishing to think that Jude—the earthly *brother* of Jesus—was able to make this incredible break from the Unitarian monotheism of his Jewish heritage, to the Trinitarian worship of Christ. Jesus was the boy he grew up with, wrestled with, played with. When Jesus was on earth, performing miracles and displaying the kingdom, we read that none of his brothers believed in him. That would have to include Jude. But most assume that Jesus *appeared to his brothers after the resurrection*, and God opened their eyes to the truth which their mother and Joseph knew all along. Their brother was no ordinary man. He was God in the flesh. And now Jude tells the whole world that he is Jesus’ servant! So much to think about in just the first few words of this letter!<sup>6</sup>

## Recipients

Now I want to move to the recipients. This is an *Epistle* or a letter. It has an historical circumstance, just like a letter that you would write to a friend. It is often assumed under the name “catholic epistles,” or “general epistles,” because they are *not addressed to a specific person* or church.<sup>7</sup> The last nine books of your NT compose the Catholic Epistles, and that is why they are placed here at the end of the NT canon.

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<sup>6</sup> One final point about Jude’s authority might be made. He does not identify himself as an “Apostle,” and so some think that Jude’s letter should not be considered authoritative or Scripture. The theory has several problems. First, Jude does not simply call himself a “fellow Christian.” He uses the same term that other Apostles use, “slave of Christ.” Second, the same criticisms of Jude have been given for 2 Peter, yet Peter was an Apostle. Third, some think that both letters are pseudepigrapha. But how could we trust the authority of a letter where the very first word is a forgery?

<sup>7</sup> The exception is 2 and 3 John.

Jude simply writes, “To those who are *called, beloved* in God the Father and *kept* for Jesus Christ.” There are three identifications here, and you will see throughout this study that Jude *loves to group things in threes*. The first classification is “those who are called.” “Called” (*klytos*) is an (*substantival*) adjective, acting like a noun. If you want to know who the recipients of the letter are, this is your answer. *They are the called ones*.

This is an important word. “Called” means *chosen by God and brought to himself*. As Douglas Moo says, “This word reflects the New Testament conviction that being a Christian is a product of God’s gracious reaching out to bring helpless sinners into a relationship with himself. ‘Call; does not mean, then, ‘invite’—as if God were asking people to a party and they can either accept or decline. It means “choose” or “select,” and God’s ‘choosing’—because it is he, the sovereign Lord, who is doing it—is effective.”<sup>8</sup>

There is a *general calling* in the Scripture. It is indiscriminate. It *goes out to all sinners* through the proclamation of the gospel. It says, “*Come to the wedding feast, and wear the proper garments* (i.e. Christ).” Jesus says in this way that “*Many are called*” (*Matt 22:14*).

Yet he says, “*Few are chosen*.” Jude’s audience has already converted to Christ. The general call has already gone out. Now, those who have believed are to understand, they did not choose God, but *God chose them!* They are specially called. What a *wonderful word of grace* this is!

## Saul

Just think about Saul who was suddenly knocked off his feet by a blinding light. The Lord called out to Saul much like he did to Samuel centuries earlier. “*Saul, Saul,*” he called. “*Why are you persecuting me?*” Saul replied, “*Who are you, Lord?*” And he said, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*” Just the bare voice of Jesus was so powerful that it turned a murderer into an Apostle. This man wasn’t looking for Jesus. He was on his way to round up and murder all of his disciples. Yet, the power of *the call effectually turned Saul into Paul*. As it says, “*He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles*” (*Acts 9:1-15*). So,

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<sup>8</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “2 Peter and Jude,” *NIVAC*, 222.

in his letters, Paul now identifies himself as “Paul, a *servant* of Christ Jesus, *called* to be an Apostle” (Rom 1:1).

In my opinion, recovery of this one-sided, miracle working grace is perhaps the greatest need of the hour in today’s church. What is at stake here is the glory of God himself. Until we come to grasp that *grace*, by definition, is one-sided rather than a cooperative effort, we will always be thinking more highly about ourselves than we ought. When we do this, grace is not really so amazing after all. But it is simply God holding out his hand to dying people, so that *we* can grab onto it, rather than him calling a dead person to life by the power of his word. God’s people are called from death to newness of life, not sickness to health. Our condition is much worse than what most people want to admit.

Now, the other two words help you see even more clearly what I mean by a calling that is effectual, following the special choosing of God to bring you to himself. Jude says that we are “*beloved* of God the Father,” and “*kept* for Jesus Christ.” “Beloved” and “kept” are participles. Last week I explained how the three participles (going, baptizing, teaching) modified the verb (“make disciples”). The same is true here, except this time they modify the subject.

“Beloved” and “kept” modify “called.” What it means to be called, therefore, is that God the Father loves you, and Jesus Christ keeps you. I can say that you are loved *in* God. I can say that you are loved *by* God. God hides you in his love. God’s love brings you to himself. However we translate it, we know that the very special love of the Father is in mind.

Then, I can say that you are kept *in* Christ (locative dative). Or, I can say that you are kept *by* Christ (instrumental dative). Or, I could say that you are kept *to* Christ (dative of possession). Maybe the best parallel that we have is John 17:11 where Jesus prays, “I am not longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” However it is translated, it shows how I know we are talking about God’s special love for his bride, rather than his general love for all mankind. God’s love for his bride is much deeper than his love for everyone else, just like yours is, if you are married. This love *keeps* you in, by, with, or to Christ! Your calling is for Christ’s sake! It is for your continuing

perseverance with Him. It is a very special calling that you have been given, brothers and sisters. [Grace abounds in the first verse of Jude.](#)

Jude expands upon this even more in [vs. 2](#). Again he provides [a set of three](#) things for you to think about. “[May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.](#)” Those whom the Father loves and the Son keeps are given mercy. If you wish to know about the Christian religion you must understand why you need continuing mercy.

[Mercy presupposes that something in a superior-inferior relationship has gone terribly wrong.](#) In this case, God has been deeply offended by your sin. Sin has caused a separation between you and him. This separation is not absolute. For, all people are still in a relationship with God. It is that now, God’s *goodwill* towards you has been eradicated.

In Adam, the first man, all mankind originally stood in a right relationship with God. But when he sinned, he passed a sinful condition on to all of his posterity. Now the Scripture says, we are all born under God’s wrath. We are all born spiritually dead. We are born at enmity with God. He is our enemy when we are born.

Now, mercy (like love) is granted to all of the children of Adam *in a general way*, by the very fact that God doesn’t blow up the entire earth right this instant. That is, he does not give us what we deserve. But [in Christ, the enmity](#) between God and mankind has been [torn down](#). He now reconciles sinners with a holy God. This is not by works, but by faith in the Son to plead his righteousness as your own before the Father in heaven who sits on the throne. You must believe that the Son will reconcile you to God, if you wish to be saved.

But Christians, those who are given the gifts of belief and repentance, receive a [very special kind of mercy](#). It is “*multiplied* mercy,” mercy upon mercy. And it is very important that you as a Christian see this, for you are still a sinner. And when you sin, it does not seem as if God should continue to give you this mercy. But it does not seem this way, because you are not thinking about things properly. Love, grace, mercy... they are all done at the initiate of God, not as a response to anything in you. They go before you were ever converted. They are yours because you have

been called! They are gifts of God! This is the heart and soul of the good news, isn't it?

This mercy is accompanied by **peace**. Peace between you and God. “**When you were his enemy, Christ died for you.**” This peace is not merely the absence of God's wrath, but the presence of his divine blessing, favor, and love. And this peace is never removed from those who are in Christ Jesus!

This is seen most evidently in God's love, his *agape*—unconditional, unmerited love that is also multiplied to you, because God has called you, the Father has loved you, and the Son is keeping you. All of this and more is multiplied to you time and again. And **this has its greatest expression, believe it or not, every time you sin!** It is not that God *wants* you to so, so that these things might be displayed. But each time you do sin, God continues to shower his mercy upon you, so that you need not fear his wrath ever again. This is the only power on earth to actually make you love God back! And when you love God back, you begin to sin less and less, though you also begin to see more and more of the remaining sin that lies within. Yet, God's love is always upon you, beloved. Peace is ever between you and God, because this is what the Son guarantees to you as he gives himself up for you in his death.

Now, I want to say again, that **God's grace is never to be an excuse for you to think it is alright to sin.** But every time the pure grace of God is preached, someone always thinks that it means we have license to sin. These people have not yet understood what grace is, nor the power of righteousness that accompanies it through the Holy Spirit. I dare say, they still need to be converted! For, while it is true that because of grace we may do whatever we want, it is not true that we *want* any longer to sin!

Someone once asked **Martin Luther** about this. They said, “**Brother Martin, if you are right, then we can do whatever we want.**” Luther said, “**Yes! But what do you want?**” You see, the believer is given a new heart, a new disposition towards sin, so that even when (s)he sins, (s)he does not relish that sin. In fact, (s)he hates it!

**Freewill**, properly speaking, **is not the power to act contrary to one's nature**, to choose contrary to one's desires. I do not believe that any human being has such power. I don't even believe that God has such power! God *can't* sin, he does not

have that kind of freewill, because sin is against his nature and his desire! **Biblical freedom** or “freewill” is the power to act *according* to one’s desires. Prior to salvation, we delight in wickedness and so we freely choose to sin and rebel against God. There is no gun held to our head to do this. But after salvation, when the heart is changed and the mind no longer resides in spiritual darkness, Christians want to please God. So, after new life enters into them by the power of the gospel, they freely choose to believe, to repent, to trust.

I say all of this, because Jude and 2 Peter are taken up almost entirely with this problem of **evil people** sneaking in unnoticed into the congregations to preach a “gospel” of antinomianism; that is, a gospel against the law (anti-nomos), a gospel of “do whatever you want.” After the introductory blessing, Jude moves straight to his main point. “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4).

**Do you see the antinomian message here?** They *pervert* the grace of God into license to sin (sensuality). But this **immoral** gospel is also accompanied by **heresy**: They deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jude predicates this introduction to false teachers with **vs. 3**. Apparently, Jude had it in his mind to write a letter to encourage the saints in “**our common salvation.**” Jude was even eager to do this. **Encouragement is always easier to give and to receive than messages of warning and judgment.** But something stopped him from writing that letter.

He “**found it necessary**” to write to the Called Ones an appeal. And there may be no more urgent appeal that could be made today, at least to the church in the western world. “**Contend for the Faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.**” There is much to be discussed here.

First of all, you need to understand that “faith” is not being used in the subjective sense, but the objective sense. That is, **Jude is not talking about personal faith in**

**Jesus Christ.** He is talking about a body of doctrines and rules that were “delivered” by Christ, to his Apostles, to the churches that they planted. So he calls it “**the**” faith.

By God’s own word, **Christian teaching and Godly living are not open for debate.** Our nation just had an election. We voted as a nation on people and amendments that we wanted to put in place. Ours is (or was) “**government of the people, by the people, and for the people.**”

But **Christianity is not a democracy.** It is a benevolent dictatorship. It is a theocracy with a king and a spiritual kingdom. As such, there are things we must believe and do in this kingdom. There are **facts about creation**: it is not eternally existing, but was created out of nothing. There are **facts about God**: He exists as one Being in three eternally distinct Persons. He created the universe by his word. He tells us about his invisible qualities through nature, and about the law and the gospel in Holy Scripture. There are **facts about humanity**: We were created good. But we fell into sin and brought ruin and destruction upon ourselves. There are **facts about Jesus Christ**: He is the eternal Son of God, come down in the flesh, bearing our burdens, healing our diseases, displaying his deity, obeying his Father’s Laws. He died, was crucified, and buried. He rose again on the third day. And he ever lives to make intercession for the saints. There are **facts about the Holy Spirit**: He proceeds from the Father and the Son and has been sent to indwell the people, and to teach them all things concerning Jesus Christ. There are **facts about the church**: It is God’s body on earth. It has divinely established organization, God-given authority, and the keys of the kingdom.

All of these things, and more, belong to this category of “The Faith.” Sadly, we are surrounded by cults that have systematically cannibalized these doctrines. All around us are movements, even within Evangelicalism, that seek to destroy even the idea of objective truth. We are surrounded by many more churches that don’t deny these things, they simply *don’t care about them!* Doctrine is irrelevant to most people in our day, and Jude’s warning is utterly contemporary for today’s church. **How do you fight apathy?**

**What is that warning?** The verb is, “**I beseech you.**” After explaining the necessity to write this particular kind of a letter, Jude says, “I beseech you,” “**I urge you,**” or

as I have said, “I appeal to you.” To do what? To “contend.” Or better, “to exert intense effort on behalf of,” or “to struggle for,” the Faith!

In other words, the task before Jude’s recipients and the church today, is not easy. But we live in a culture that is addicted to comfort and ease. If we make stupid business decisions, we’ll just beg the government for a bailout, and we will not have learned our lesson. If we refuse to work, we demand a handout, and we continue not to work. If we disobey our parents, we expect not to be disciplined, because that is unloving. Everything must be easy. That’s the new American way.

But contending for the Faith, this is not easy (that’s why most people simply won’t do it), because deceivers come into our midst, and in many different ways convince God’s people not to contend for truth or righteousness. Believe whatever you want. Live however you want. Worship however you want, even *whoever* you want. Minor on majors, create divisions, live licentiously, create your own means of grace. Everything is up for grabs today. Everything is relative. And we must not let ourselves slip further into this abyss.

In today’s church there exists what one scholar calls a **Heretical Imperative**. That is, our culture picks and chooses everything. And the word heresy means simple “choice.” People choose hamburgers over tacos, Walmart over Target, blue shoes over red shoes. **This religion over that religion.**

Even within the religion that they supposedly choose, they choose what to believe and not to believe, what laws to follow and what rules to make up, what parts of the Scripture they will believe are true and what parts are not important enough to worry about. **It’s all about choice. It’s all about heresy. Same word.** We *must* be heretics in a world filled with choice. That is the heretical imperative. And it is utterly condemned in Scripture.

We are to earnestly contend for the Faith once for all *delivered* to the Saints. This is something that originated in God’s mind, not the mind of man. My friends, the Faith is worth sacrificing everything we have. Only through it, may people rightly come to know themselves. Only through it, is there any real hope. Only through it, is there mercy, peace, and love.

“All we need is love,” chant the Beatles. But without Christ, they cannot know love. For true love demonstrates itself like this, “laying down its life for the sheep.” Is this not a Faith worth contending for? Is this not worth hardship, persecution? Is this not worth the ultimate sacrifice that we could give, the same that Jesus gave for us? To give hope to the hopeless, good news to the poor, release to the captive... is this not what our world is longing to hear?

But how can they hear, if the church refuses to talk about such things or to contend for such things, because they are totally consumed in self? There is a light for the darkness that we must not snuff out. There is a city on a hill that beckons aliens come to her, and as much as I loved Ronald Reagan and some of our early fathers, it isn't the United States of America. It is Christ's church.

Can we do recover such a faith? Yes, by God's grace. When the gospel shines forth, God calls his people to himself so that they know of his love and are preserved in his keeping. This has not changed from then 'till now. If God's people, who are called by his name, will once more trust in the power of God and of his Son to bring salvation through the means of grace, then there is no reason why God will not once more make the nations flock to Zion, to teach them his law, so that they may walk in his paths, to beat their swords into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks, so that they may not be at war anymore. It begins right now, in this room, with us.

May many more come to know reconciliation with God, and peace for their souls. Let this be our prayer as we come to the Lord's Table.