

Warnings from the Past

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[0 : 00] When our diocesan bishop, Bishop Dan Gifford, was consecrated as bishop about two years ago now, don't hold me to that, two years, one and a half years, two and a half years, around two years ago, he made vows. And among those vows, the archbishop who was consecrating our bishop asked a number of questions. But this question he asked Bishop Dan, be you ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same. And Bishop Dan answered, I am ready, the Lord being my helper. And how would Bishop Dan do that? The answer is found actually in a question that was asked to him two questions before. And the question the archbishop asked Bishop Dan was this, are you persuaded that the holy scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same holy scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?

Bishop Dan answers, I am so persuaded and determined by God's grace. We continue in Jude, the second week. And if you remember two weeks ago, we looked at verses one to four, where Jude, he wrote a letter to a church imploring the church to contend for the faith because of false teachers that had crept into the church with all sorts of erroneous and strange doctrine.

False teachers. And how this contending of the faith was for a faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. And how would we contend for the faith as Jude asked us to? It was to stick to God's word.

God's unchanging Bible that begins in Genesis, and I mean the entirety of the New Testament wouldn't be written by this time, but it had in view the entirety of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, to cling to the truth that is given within these pages.

The church, Jude said, is always going to need to contend for the gospel because the church will always find itself full of false teachers.

[3 : 21] We saw that in verse four of Jude, where Jude said, for long ago, or sorry, back to the beginning of verse four, for certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation.

That is to say, there's always been a mixed bag in the church amongst God's people, and they need to be opposed. Jude tells us that that we need to contend for the faith.

And how do we contend for the faith? How do we push back against the faith? Well, we look back to the Scriptures, and he tells us to remember, and he reminds us of three specific examples in our text today, but there will be nine total that he reminds the listeners of in this short letter.

Instances in the Old Testament where false teachers, erroneous and strange doctrine, have made their way into the church. We're going to be looking at verses five to seven, and I'll confess to you that verses five and six seem to be pretty straightforward.

I mean, verse seven seems to be very straightforward as well, but verse seven, it'll touch on something that is a highly sensitive issue within our culture here in Canada, in Ottawa, amongst us, friends, family, and it is the topic of same-sex relations.

[4 : 56] So, as we go through this, pray that the Lord would guide me, but also give yourselves ears to hear what the Lord would have to speak to you on this about this morning.

But the three examples, going back to these three examples that Jude wants to draw our attention to, examples of false teachers within the church, verse five, he gives the example of the Israelites that died in the wilderness after the Exodus because of unbelief.

The second is the example of the fallen angels of Genesis six, but also in Isaiah and Ezekiel, who rejected God's authority.

And then finally, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the three other cities, the people of the plain from the early chapters of Genesis who deny God's good design for creation.

So, Jude here is saying, listen, there's false teachers in your midst and this is nothing new.

Remember how God has dealt with this in the past, how these false teachers of the past or these false teachers of the present are bringing nothing new because we've seen it all in the past.

[6 : 15] Unbelief, rejection of God's authority and a denial of God's good design for creation. And like I mentioned, these warnings tell us that God is a God of judgment and that this doesn't, in a sense, vibe well with our live and let live culture, this YOLO, you do you, even going back a few decades, you know, you know, stay out of the business of the bedroom.

They are very controversial things to talk about, God's judgment. But what they do do is communicate to us the goodness of God's will for our people, for the entire world and how God is the source of all life and light and how he is completely against evil.

And he is completely for us. And friends, this is good news. So, remember that the point of Jude's letter is for us to contend for the faith, but to also to be so, in a sense, taken by the goodness and love and grace of Jesus that we would have no other desire but to contend for the faith because it is such a beautiful and precious thing.

So let's jump right into it, verse 5, and we'll see how this example from where the Israelites died in the wilderness helps us to understand a bit of the nature of these false teachers.

Look at verse 5 with me. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus who saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

[8 : 01] So the first of these warnings is about the Israelites, God's chosen people, those Israelites who God rescued from Egyptian slavery, an Egyptian slavery that was centuries long, that was incredibly oppressive.

The Exodus, as it is called, is really the prototype of salvation. It's all throughout the Bible, and it is a picture of God unilaterally taking a people out of slavery, defeating their enemies, making them into a nation called after God's own name, and settled in a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of bounty, of eternal joy.

He sends his messenger Moses, and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, he destroys Egypt. It's a wonderful story, an incredible story, of God saving his people.

But, and this is a very big but, not all the people of Israel who were brought out of Egypt saw the fullness of God's salvation.

Look at the second part of verse 5. It says this, afterward, the people of Israel were destroyed by Jesus because they did not believe.

[9 : 33] These people who were brought out of Egypt, who saw miracles upon miracles, saved by God in no uncertain terms, would spend time in the desert, and their faith began to wane.

They were impatient with Moses at Sinai. They rejected God's good law because they were tired of, oh, sorry, they rejected God's good law for they did not want to submit, so instead they create a golden calf to worship.

They grumbled against God because they were tired of heavenly food in the desert. And then finally, they feared the inhabitants of the promised land even though God promised to give them victory.

Interestingly, in morning prayer, we pray Psalm 95 often. Actually, every time we pray morning prayer, and it's this prayer that helps us to not be stiff-necked like the Israelites who tested God and didn't believe in God and put God to the test when God is not to be tested.

God calls this generation stiff-necked. He calls them hard-hearted. He calls them those that have gone astray, people marked with unbelief. The entire generation was left to die in the desert.

[11 : 03] This multitude of people rescued out of Egypt and only a remnant gets to go into the promised land. Not even Moses himself, God's messenger, enjoyed the land of milk and honey.

Unbelief described here, it has to be said, is different than struggling with a doctrine or having a season of doubt. The unbelief that we see in the story of the Israelites is rooted in a refusal to make God Lord and Master.

It is a refusal to believe in and act upon the promises of God given for the benefit and flourishing of his people. It's to say, in a sense, to hell with you God.

God, we have the corner on what is good and true and beautiful. Our vision of the good life is better. A golden calf is better than a God who gives a law.

It is a rejection of God, ultimately calling God a liar. Now, if you know the story, you'll remember that this doesn't just happen in one instance, but it's a slow progression of unbelief, of rejection of God, of calling him a liar.

[12:22] In the same way that we see that the false teachers have slowly crept into the church, verse 3, it says, unnoticed. Friends, this is a stark, stark warning for the church.

It's a stark warning because unbelief is hard to spot. We want to say, and this is very true. This is a rock-solid faith that can handle your toughest questions and struggles.

Ask hard questions. It's a very good thing. But unbelief can creep in to the church in ways that seem, in a sense, very authentic.

I am just, I struggle with this aspect of this doctrine of God. I don't like it. But there's no real wrestling. There's no real desire to submit a knee, bend a knee to submit to God and this unbelief grows and it grows and it grows and it grows until it is a glaring, glaring issue.

And you ask, how did this happen? But it's also a stark warning to the church because for us, it tells us that it's not enough to play the part of the Christian.

[13:38] It is not enough to pretend but we need to be people that believe in and act upon the promises of God. The call is for God's people always to act in an authentic way towards Him.

To be real about our faith. To try to confess that we struggle and we fail a hundred times. Lord, please give me forgiveness.

Give me the grace. to try the one hundred and one a hundred and one a hundred and first a hundred and tenth time. I messed that up. But you see the point that we need to be authentic with God.

Notice that I didn't say perfect. Notice that perfection is not anywhere at all within this call to authenticity in faith. faith. No, but authenticity is what he desires.

To be who we are called to be by God's strength. To look to Him when we fail. To continue to try. To continue to bend a knee to Christ. In a sense, this faith is the anti-virtue signaling faith.

[14:56] It is not the faith that it is the type of faith that pretends to be virtuous and to put on a face and to be well put together but an empty vacuous faith is a faith that God rejects completely.

It is a stark warning that we will not be a people of unbelief. We have to remember that the faith that embraces God's grace and salvation is the same faith that seeks to obey Christ in this Christian life. They are inseparable. And that does not mean that somehow we need to do good works to be saved. No, if we are saved, it stands in a sense that we will then seek to obey.

The sign of true faith is an obedient one. The letter of James in a sense touches on that a number of times. Where there is saving faith, there is obedient faith.

So Jude is warning the church that God's covenant community, just like the Israelites who are God's very precious people, their fate would be the same if unbelief takes root in their church, in their lives.

[16:26] And the people of Israel were destroyed in the desert. It is a very sobering call and it speaks to the reality that apostasy is real within the church, amongst God's people.

Jude is calling us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling and holding up in a sense a mirror to us that we may see the ways in which unbelief are destroying, is destroying our faith.

Not to shame us so that we can wallow in our, in a sense, shame and despondency, but rather that we would turn from our wickedness and live to cast our entire life upon the mercy of Christ, that we may repent and believe afresh in God's most holy gospel, that good news that God's salvation is the only salvation, and that his promises are the only true promises, and that his blessing is the only true blessing that our hearts ache for.

Jude is warning the church because the church is always a mixed bag. It is always tares and wheat together. It is always sheep and goats together.

other. It is always people, in a sense, that will worship on a Sunday, but some will see glory and others' damnation.

[18:01] It is very sobering. By the way, only God knows who are truly his. And that's not to say that we can't have assurance of salvation.

I think assurance of salvation is a very important, critical, real promise that we can embrace. And I think if that bothers you as a Christian, that am I truly saved, and it is annoying at your heart, that

might be because the Lord is actually in your heart, at work, in you, drawing you continually to himself.

But it is a problem when there's an apathy that lives deep within you. You know, it is a lot easier to preach a sermon that is like a feel-good sermon, or like God is going to heal you, or God is going to help you, in a sense, with an emotional breakthrough, or he can, in a sense, be a comfort to you in a weak time.

You can nail a sermon that preaches real well. Talking about judgment is harder, but let me just say this, there is fantastic joy in godly sorrow.

Godly sorrow is a gift from God that will lead you to green pastures, into beautiful, eternal relationship with God forever, to deep assurance of salvation, because you realize that you have nothing in yourself to save you from the reality of your darkness, and your brokenness, and your bentness, and the evil that resides within you, but only God extends his hand to you, and only by his grace can lift you up.

[19 : 59] And that begins, in a sense, with knowing our sins. That's why we go through the Ten Commandments during the Lenten season. That's why we don't skip over parts of the Bible that speak of judgment.

Godly sorrow is a beautiful and joyful thing, because it leads us to Christ. Unbelief is a problem in the church, and it will result in a rejection of the authority and lordship of Christ.

In this next example, in verse 6, we'll see just that. Jude is going to turn our attention now to the fallen angels.

Let's read verse 6. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

What we see in this verse, in a sense, is how angels became demons and would ultimately include Satan himself. But before we get into it, just a brief note.

[21 : 12] On Sunday, it's easy to talk about supernatural things. Monday through Saturday, if I'm connecting with an unbeliever or say a friend that doesn't believe in anything, and they were to press me, do you believe in angels and demons and supernatural things?

I would say yes, but I would be a bit embarrassed, because I live, in a sense, in the material world. What I see, what I hear, what I smell, what I touch, what I can taste, what can be proved, in a sense, by science, and what seems rational, that is what I like to believe in.

And if you're anything like me, you can relate, that the idea of talking about angels and demons seems in the realm of fantasy and myth, potentially.

But I want to just, if you bear with me, to just talk about this for a minute. Our faith is a faith that hinges on an unseen God, who created everything that has been created.

Our faith is one that hinges on God taking on human flesh, yet remaining fully God and living with us, amongst us, dying for us, and rising from an actual grave because he was actually dead.

[22 : 47] In short, our faith hinges on the supernatural, things that we can't, in a sense, prove empirically. The Bible is not meant to be proved empirically.

We don't apply the scientific method to the Bible. And in a sense, in a time and culture where materialism and a hyper-rationalism and a modernity that kind of, that leads the charge and that is, in a sense, the zeitgeist, it is hard to then say that there is a spiritual, a supernatural world, but our faith hinges on it.

There is no going about it another way. But consider that we as a culture, a very modern, rational culture, we love a good story.

We love a good story. And often the stories that we love are fantasy. They are science fiction. They talk about magic. They talk about dragons and other worlds and supernatural powers.

And it's as if we, who spend billions of dollars consuming this kind of media, it's as if we want to believe it, but we just can't.

[24 : 14] love. So instead, we fill our minds so full of fantasy and science fiction and space and in all sorts of superheroes and all of that because in a sense, we are a people who live in a disenchanting age that cannot somehow shake a longing for enchantment.

I would put forward to you that speaks to our collective knowledge that there must be something more than we can encounter with just our senses.

There has to be something more than just the here and the now. There has to be something supernatural. Something to ponder. Why don't we continue in our text back to verse 6.

So Jude shares with the church this other example of how God is rejected, how false teaching ultimately is this rejection of the authority of God.

But in this case, it's with angels who possessed God given positions of authority but were not satisfied and rebelled. We're unsure in a sense. The commentators are unsure of what specifically Jude is getting at.

[25 : 28] Is it this bizarre story from Genesis 6 of these creatures not sure what they are that come and have relations with human women?

The Bible is kind of crazy in a sense. Crazy not like crazy just maybe intense sometimes. Or is it this story of these fallen angels that we see in Isaiah and Ezekiel?

Or is it from these extra biblical books non-canonical books? They're called Sirach and Jubilees that speak to this heavenly fall.

Jude doesn't specify. But whatever specifically he had in mind, all such examples seem to point to the same reality. And that reality is that there are angelic beings that they are put in authority by God, whatever that authority may be, and they rejected God's authority and the authority that God had given them, rebelling against God and now await final judgment.

There's an interesting wordplay that Jude uses, and we don't see it in our translation in the English Standard Version, but in verse 6 it says, and the angels who do not stay within their own positions, in other translations it's this word kept, they did not keep within their own positions of authority, and here's the wordplay, but left their proper dwelling, God has kept them in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

[27 : 13] This idea that they would not stay where God put them, so God is going to make them stay until they await a final judgment.

And it is as if God is saying to us that those that teach false doctrine, those that reject God's authority, they will suffer judgment, that they will not escape the wrath of God, that although in a sense it is delayed, it is not absent.

God's judgment is real, and it is hard to, in a sense, talk about the God of love and then talk about the God of judgment and talk about his wrath, but God's love is meaningless if God is not a God of justice and judgment and wrath, that God's love is all the more beautiful and grand and greater than we could ever understand if we only know that God hates evil and hates injustice and will not stand by when people are abused and neglected and sold into slavery and destroyed and killed and lied to and the list goes on and on, that God's mercy is, sorry, God's love is deeply connected to his judgment.

So in the case of the angels, in the case of the false teachers, God hates what they are doing and he will judge them because ultimately God has put in place all of what we see, he has called it good and even though it is bent and broken in a sense now, God's creation is good and anything that destroys that or sullies that or pollutes that, God does not care for.

His judgment in a sense is a sign that he is a loving God. It is, in a sense, for us a comfort that people that try to take advantage of their congregations, these false teachers, that what is whispered in the darkness, will be shouted from the rooftops.

[29 : 47] They will not get away with it. There are false teachers in the church today. Oftentimes, oftentimes they are prosperity preachers, those that promise breakthrough, divine healing.

Only if you sow a seed right now are our telephones are being answered and you can give us your credit cards.

and then the blessing will come. These are false teachers. They are rejecting the authority of God to build up, in a sense, their own kingdom.

Woe to those people. I mean, we'll see it later on in verses 8-12. Woe to those people. It's a very scary thing.

But also, it can happen in Bible-believing churches as well. the rejection of God's authority for their own.

[30 : 51] Yet, we are confronted again with an uncomfortable warning. We, likewise, need to be aware that we may very well reject the authority of God.

Have we looked at God's gospel like a straitjacket restricting our very agency, our ability to spread our wings, rather than seeing it as a wondrous wedding gown that he wishes to adorn us with?

Have we been embarrassed in such a way as to deny aspects of God's character, of God's word, or the things that God has called us to stand for, because they are prickly?

But, to be perfectly honest, authority is a bit of a prickly word, because oftentimes, when authority is abused or ill-gotten, authority is a disgusting, horrible thing.

But godly authority, God's authority is not prickly, but it is life-giving. It is life rightly ordered. It is perfection.

[32 : 02] And to live by God's authority is not to be straitjacketed, but is to be adorned as you are made to be adorned as the bride of Christ. It is to live, in a sense, in the fullness of what it means to be a human being.

Unbelief, rejection of God's authority. Finally, in verse seven, we see a denial of God's good design for creation. Let's read verse seven.

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

So we finally get to the third and final warning of this triplet, this example of Sodom and Gomorrah and the three other surrounding cities, the cities of the plain.

I'll just say Sodom and Gomorrah or just Sodom, but it's a catch-all for all five cities from Genesis 18 and 19. Jude's warning is that they likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire.

[33 : 17] It would seem, if we go back to verse four, that these false teachers also pervert the grace of our God into sensuality. The same idea of illicit sexual knowing and desires.

Jude's warning is that they likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire. They engaged in homosexual sex and were unrepentant and ignored warnings and therefore suffered.

This is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. There's no way in a sense to take the edge off this verse, to take the edge off of Genesis 18 and 19 unless we are willing to bend and break God's word and therefore fall into some kind of rejection of God's authority and unbelief.

Interesting how these things are connected. Unbelief, rejection of God's authority, the denial of God's good design for creation, a bending and breaking of God's word.

But if we were to find an out for the harshness and edge of this verse, it would go something like this, and this is something that's alive and well in the church today.

[34 : 36] It would say something like this, both Genesis and Ezekiel, that's the other place where it kind of goes into a bit of the sin list of what Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities did.

So both Genesis and Ezekiel speak of the fertile land which produced incredible blessing for Sodom and the surrounding cities. These people that lived in the plain enjoyed fertile land and excess food and prosperous ease, but did not see this as a blessing from God and a blessing to extend to others, but were prideful and arrogant and committed, as Ezekiel says, abominations and disgraceful acts.

So what were those abominations and disgraceful acts? Not being hospitable to the needy and neglecting social justice. That is, in a sense, the apologetic against seeing Sodom and Gomorrah as evil because of sexual, homosexual sin.

Although the neglect of hospitality and social justice certainly was alive and well in Sodom and Gomorrah in the narrative in Genesis 18 and 19, words like abominations and disgraceful acts and vile wickedness are not words used in Scripture to describe a breach in hospitality.

They are used to describe sex acts that are contrary to God's good and beautiful design for sexuality, which is a monogamous, lifelong union before God and man between one man and one woman that has in mind the procreation of children.

[36 : 25] The sin of Sodom was a denial of God's good and perfect design for life because it did not look to achieve that design for marriage but looked to do something contrary to that.

But even more, it's a denial that God himself is a good creator, that his will is always and forever towards goodness and towards truth and towards beauty and towards life and a love that is forever expanding and looking to bless and to show kindness and mercy.

For that is God's good design for the marital union. And the marital union between one man and one woman as a lifelong union, that's what it points to ultimately.

It reflects God's character. It reflects God's very heart to expand and to bless and to extend love and to see growth and fruitfulness.

Anything that does not lead to goodness, truth, and beauty on God's terms is destructive and harmful. So friends, we need to be careful, careful not to see things as morally neutral that God calls sinful.

[37 : 51] Remember that this is a warning for the church and it is good news for us. It is a warning for the church to notice, in a sense, telltale signs of evil from the past that have crept into the church.

So like the people of Sodom, the teachers would not keep or hold fast to the gospel truth but instead pervert the grace of God to give license to their own sensuality, their illicit forms of pursuing relations that do not honor God, that do not reflect God's character.

That is to say that they use the grace of God, that beautiful promise that those who are in Christ have their sins forever taken away, removed, to give license to their embrace of illicit sexual acts, contrary to God's beautiful design for life.

They reject the grace of God and his goodness as creator and sustainer of all things. Not a popular thing to say but friends, this is the truth of God's word.

Three things before we move on and these are very important things and they're all found in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 9 to 11. I'll read these three verses from 1 Corinthians 6.

[39 : 10] Verse 11.

Verse 11. And such were some of you, but you were washed and you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

First thing of the three. All sins are acts of unrighteousness and disqualify us from eternal life.

Drunkards, swindlers, revilers, the greedy.

I might have hit on 90% of us in some kind of way. Idolaters, there's 100%. All acts of sin are unrighteous and disqualify us from eternal life.

And that's not to say that all sins, in a sense, they are as destructive, but that all sins are an affront to God's perfection and holiness and goodness and righteousness.

[40 : 31] righteousness. The second thing, we ought not to deceive ourselves if our besetting sin and struggles are with a respectable sin. We too will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Respectable sins are not respectable, even though they seem very respectable. Easily brushed away, not as bad. Yeah, it doesn't really bother God, maybe it irritates him a little bit as a whining child irritates a parent, but ultimately he loves me, he's going to give me what I want.

Let us not deceive ourselves, friends. Respectable sins are still sins. And the third and final thing, there is both forgiveness and freedom for our friends and family, even ourselves, if we have embraced or struggle with homosexual behavior, or any sin for that matter, for the spilt blood of Christ on the cross of Calvary will wash clean anyone who by faith turns to him for cleansing.

There is always hope in the gospel. There is always time to repent. Today, if you will hear his voice, turn to him.

God bless you to God bless you and God bless you and let us dunk on people that are pro-LGBTQ plus because we are the righteous people.

[42 : 06] We are all on level zero, level minus ten, and God by his goodness makes us righteous, not our own righteousness, so therefore we do not look at other people in a judgmental way and spit at them in a sense because they are dirty or unclean, because we are dirty and unclean if not for the grace of God.

But when teachers and ministers of the gospel who have in charge of them by God people that they are to proclaim the gospel message and if they are taking that gospel and perverting it so that they may engage in that kind of sensuality, that illicit behavior that may or may not include homosexuality, and giving license to it, woe to them.

Maybe they have time to repent, pray that they will. In summary, Jude sums up verses five to seven and verse eight and this is what he says.

Yet in like manner these people also relying on their dreams defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.

Now this is an interesting verse because it sums up what has gone before it, verses five to seven, but will also point us to what Jude will speak to in the following verses.

[43 : 38] So it kind of looks back and looks forward. And it sums up verses five to seven by saying that the false teachers who claim to be ministers of God's message, they're in a sense dreamer of dreams.

That's a bit of a technical term in the Bible that speaks to prophets, but people that are ministers of God. These false teachers who claim to be ministers of God, but instead are led by their selfish imaginations.

In a sense, they're just dreamers. They're not dreamers of dreams. They're not prophets. They're just dreamers. They make up stuff. They twist the gospel. They look at something and say, ah, culturally sensitive text right here.

It doesn't apply to us today. They reject God as the good creator by using God's grace as a license to engage in all sorts of immorality.

And they reject Christ as master and Lord, and they reject God's law. That's the last little bit when it says, and they blaspheme the glorious ones. A lot of commentators seem to see that as at Sinai, when God gives the law to the people of Israel, it is mediated by angels.

[44 : 50] So in a sense, they're saying this is a rejection of God's law as they are blaspheming the glorious ones. These false teachers, remember, have crept in unnoticed.

We'll see more about what they have done in the general worship of the church in the weeks to come. But what is the big takeaway, in a sense, of this section?

It's to remember the past, it's to know God's word, it's to feed on the truth that is in this book, to not shy away from God's word, to submit ourselves underneath it, even if it feels uncomfortable and prickly, and even if it, in a sense, threatens our current lifestyle and the things we hold dear.

We are called to not deny the promises of God because we see what happens when we will because of unbelief. We will be left in the desert. We ought not to call God a liar.

We ought not to be ashamed of any of what God says, no matter how uncomfortable it may be to adhere to this and to look to it in 2024 in Ottawa.

[46 : 11] We need to remember also that God's ways lead to beauty and goodness and truth and life, that they always look to be fruitful. We need to remember also that God is a just judge and he will judge and punish those who continue unrepentantly to call evil good and good evil.

people. If you remember, Jude is calling us to contend for this faith, but first, has this faith gripped us? Has this gospel gripped us?

Because why on earth would I contend for it if it is something that I don't even believe in? Friends, by God's Holy Spirit, ask him to help the gospel grip your heart so that you cherish Christ more, ultimately more, than you cherish your own life, that you will feed on and safeguard this gospel, trusting in this good news that Christ died, not so that you can live, but so that you can die with him and then be raised with him again to newness of life.

No longer mastered by sin and evil, death and temptation, knowing that slavery to Christ is perfect freedom.

Don't lose heart, feast on the gospel, help one another to feast, encourage one another, pray for one another, and then, friends, let us contend for this gospel.

[47 : 47] It is worth our lives. Let us pray. Father in heaven, thank you that your word is alive and it is active and that it is sharp and that it is surely cut many, if not all of us this morning, but in a very good way.

Lord, may we have joyful sorrow at our sins. Help us to be humbled under your word, humbled with the reality of these warnings.

Help us to be people that know your word and are reminded of your word and think about your word and meditate upon it as both a warning and an encouragement.

And Lord, we pray that you would help us to contend for this faith, that we would embrace the gospel. And Lord, we pray that you would help us by your Holy Spirit, Lord, to push out any strange and erroneous doctrine that might creep into this church that we call home.

Lord, we love you. We thank you that ultimately your love for us is greater than our love for you, that your love for this church is greater than this church's love for you, that your grip on us is greater than our grip on you.

[49 : 11] And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.