

Truths in Tension — Delivery Transcript

Jude 1:3–4 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, July 6, 2025 • The Contender

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That so special thanks to them if you've got a bible we're going to be in the book of Jude if you don't have a Bible there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you I can't remember the page number I think it was like 1088. If I remember from last week, I'm preaching out of a different Bible this week. But go all the way to the book of Revelation and go back one, and that's Jude. It's one chapter long. If you don't know anything about the book of Jude, you're not alone.

It's one of the shortest books and yet most neglected because of all the things that are in the book of Jude create some kind of confusion and bewilderment. So a lot of people I just think skip over it or when they read it they go, that's so crazy, I'm not going to remember that. So they are it's I think it's a good book for us to study for a lot of different reasons and I'm going to share one of those this morning. But before I do that, there are a lot of encounters that Jesus had throughout the Gospels that are that are famous today.

Even people who don't read the Bible kind of know about these encounters. Thing about the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman, that's a big one that people remember, or Nicodemus, Nick at Nite, Jesus and Nic at Nite. That's how I remember it. You know John 3. 16 that whole bit. There's a lot we could list off. One of the ones that I think gets forgotten but is extremely important is a conversation between Jesus and Pilate. You guys remember this conversation? Jesus is, of course, right about to be crucified. It was during his mock trial by the religious establishment.

They bring him before Pilate, who was the governor. A Roman governor of Judea, which was that region Jesus was going to be crucified in, and they have a really interesting conversation. Pilate's trying to figure out why why am I going to crucify this guy? What did he do wrong? And he asked Jesus these questions. They accused him of being king and supplanting God, and so he asked Jesus the question, are you a king? And Jesus says, You have spoke truthfully. And he says, not only am I a king, but my I have come, my purpose is to testify to the truth.

In other words, I'm not a king like you're a king, Pilate. I'm a king over a different kind of kingdom, a kingdom of truth, and those who are of the truth hear my voice. And Pilate responds with a question that I would call a cynical question, cynical because he didn't necessarily want the answer. Rather, I think he was trying to make a statement with his question, and the question is, what is truth? What is truth? And the book of John leaves us hanging with that question. What is truth? For Rome, for a Roman governor like Pilate, truth was something subjective, malleable.

Dependent upon the person in charge. In other words, truth is power in Rome. If you have the power, you get to make the truth. History is written by the victors, as Josephus said. But for Jesus, truth was something other than that. Truth was something fixed, something eternal, something objective, meaning it came from outside, not from within. He would ultimately say, I am the way, the truth, and the life. But biblically speaking, from the Old Testament and New, truth is something eternal, not something temporal that you can bend. It's something you discover.

It's not something you define. It's something you bow before, not something you bend. To your will. And those two visions of truth have been intention all the way from the very beginning. See it in Jesus, but you can go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Where God speaks truth to Adam and Eve, and then the serpent comes and says, did God really say? Can we not bend the rules just a little bit in light of the moment? And I would say from the Garden of Eden onward, every culture that loses the truth.

Loses themselves. In your notes, I think I say, when truth gets corrupted, it begins the end. Of a culture. And you can go throughout history and look at cultures who have risen and fallen, and the thing that precipitates every fall of every great empire, from Rome So every other one across the board is this vision of truth becomes more like Pilate's vision than it does the vision of Jesus And when truth is corrupted, it begins the end of that culture. And I think we are in one such culture. Our culture has a vision of truth that is much more malleable than it is fixed.

It's temporal, culturally defined, not eternal and objective. And because our culture has bought into that vision of truth, we make statements that on the surface sound absolutely outlandish, like You can be a biological male and yet still be a woman, or a biological female and yet still be a man, or that science may say X, Y, or Z But science is not the only truth about biology and so on and so forth. And my purpose isn't to give all those examples other than to say I think we can all agree truth in our culture has become malleable instead of fixed.

It's become subjective, which means it comes from within. You define it. It's not something you have defined outside of you. It's not it's something you bend to your will. It's not something you bow before as fixed and I think our culture has begun to end. We are at the

beginning of the end because we've abandoned that vision of truth. And when that happens, there are appeals made. You'll see this in the book of Jude. There are appeals made from men of God, women of God, who say, now is the time to contend for the truth, because if we don't contend for the truth now the culture will be destroyed.

And that's really the purpose for why Jude wrote his letter, and that's the purpose of our text this morning. That's the thrust of the verses that we're going to read. So let's pick it up together. Jude chapter one, starting in verses three and four. Judah, of course, introduces himself in verse 1 and reminds them of who they are in Jesus Christ, that they are servants and called by God and kept for Jesus Christ. Prays for mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied to them. And then he says in verse 3, here's why I'm writing.

Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation that we share, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all. For some people who were designated for this judgment long ago have come in by stealth. They are ungodly. Turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ, our only master and Lord. We said a little bit about these people last week. You get a basic idea just in those three verses that these were people who were professing some kind of faith in Jesus.

So they were rubbing shoulders with the Christians. They were attending church, you might say. And yet they were perverting the grace of God and they were denying the authority of Jesus Christ. And as a result of that, Jude is saying, these guys are going to corrupt the faith. So you've got to contend. It's interesting, he says, you got to contend for the faith. We think about the word truth being used differently. The word faith gets used differently. By Christians as well. Some people, when they think about faith, they think about faith in Jesus, aka I have a personal relationship with Jesus.

And that's good. Christian faith, if it's anything, it is not just doctrinal. You can know all the doctrine. Satan knows all the doctrine, and yet he's not a Christian. It's about a personal relationship with Jesus in which you show faith, which is a relational allegiance or a giving over of yourself, a trusting in Jesus for salvation. So faith is relational, but faith is not just relational, right? We also use faith to talk about something else. In fact, if you talk about faith only in terms of a personal relationship, you lose the other important part of faith, which is faith is set of truths.

It's a it's a book of content. It's a set of propositions about Jesus. So it's a relationship with Jesus, but it's also confidence in a catalog of truths about Jesus. And you must have both of those things for Christian faith to remain Christian. And if you divorce Christian faith from that catalog of truths, you no longer have a Christian faith. You just have personal sentiments about Jesus, however you may define him. And Jude talks about both types of

faith, but in these two verses, these two verses, he's emphasizing the need to contend for that catalog of truth.

There are truths about God, there are truths about Jesus, there are truths about sin and man and the future and all of these things that you must contend for, lest these people who have crept in by stealth compromise and corrode what we say we believe and you lose the gospel in this generation. And what was true then is true today. We've got to contend for the faith. And what we mean by faith is not just a relationship with Jesus, loosely defined, but a specific vision of who Jesus is in light of what Christians have always believed in all generations.

From the very beginning up until now. And that's what we want to do this morning. Because when we have something like that, when there is that kind of a jewel at our disposal, two things come about one, there will be attempts to counterfeit that truth. And because there's always attempts to counterfeit that truth, there will always be a need to contend for the truth. And it's not always convenient it's not ever fun, but sometimes it's what's necessary where you find yourself. So let's look at that first one. Truth is something in which there's an appeal to contend.

There are always appeals to contend for the truth. He says in verse 1, I was going to write something else, a happy go-lucky letter, a feel-good sermon, but I couldn't. I had to write to you to appeal to you to contend for the faith. This word translated contend, I don't know what you think of when you hear the word contend. It's not just fighting someone. It's fighting for something. It's not just used in a negative sense, it's used in a positive sense. I think it's the difference between if you've ever been married or dating.

It's the difference between fighting with your spouse versus fighting for your marriage. You know what I'm talking about? The difference between those two things. You may still have to have an unpleasant conversation with the person. You're in relationship with, but it's you'll approach it differently if you're fighting for something instead of against someone. And that's how this word contend is used. You're fighting for something good, and that something good is the faith the content about the true content about Jesus who is the Christ. And it's not always convenient. You said I was going to do it something else, but because of the nature of things that have developed I feel compelled to contend for the faith.

And the same is true for us today. We won't get to decide when it's necessary. We don't get to decide how people may respond to that whether favorably or unfavorably. And the other thing that happens then as happens today is the need to contend for the faith is usually against people who are within the church, not from without which feels a little bit counterintuitive. You would think if we're going to contend for the faith, we got to contend for the faith against those scary atheists, you know, those those pagans, those unbelievers, but that's not what he says.

Pagans, atheists who are you know outside the church. These are people within the church. And I got to thinking, why is that? Why is it that in every generation there's a need to contend for the faith within the church not from without. And the answer I came up with is every time people try to destroy the church from without, it doesn't weaken it strengthens it. Tertullian said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And you see this today. Any culture that tries to persecute Christianity does not weaken it strengthens it.

You see this in the Middle East right now. You certainly see this in China. Any a totalitarian communist government tries to choke Christianity out and choking it out it actually spreads it like gangrene. It just goes everywhere. And that was true in the Roman Empire as well. So how do you how do you kill something that's really, really strong? You don't do it from pressure without, you do it from poison within. And that's what they were doing. These counterfeit truth would had slept in and they were trying to corrode the foundations, and that's why Judas saying, you need to contend.

You've got to do it. If you don't do it no one else will, and if you don't do it now, it'll never get done. Now why? That's what I want to ask is why do we need to contend for the faith? It's pretty obvious he says contend for the faith. Okay, amen. Let's go home, short sermon. But why should we contend for the faith? There's actually, if you think about the nature of truth itself, I think there's three things in your notes, three G's. Truth is a gift, truth is a guide, truth is a gate.

We got to contend for the faith because I'm sorry, we got to contend for the truth number one because truth is a gift. You notice it says faith was delivered, which means it came from someone who was before us and they put it into our hands. And then our job is to take what was put in our hands and put it in the hands of someone else. Truth is delivered. Now what does that tell you about truth? It tells you that truth is eternal. Truth is fixed. It's objective. It's forever and ever and ever.

And the way that truth goes from one generation to the next. Is someone hands it over. In other words, you're not born out of the womb with the knowledge of the truth. Wouldn't that be nice? No, children are born out of the womb with a knowledge of the lies, of deception, of nonsense, of folly. No, truth has to be learned. That's why we have a school of hard knocks and we have moms and dads and uncles and aunts and people who pass on the truth. That's why the Bible has wisdom literature and all kinds of stories about passing on the faith.

That's why in the first century they had a document called the Didache. Which was a disciple-making manual for young Christians. At the very beginning of the church, they had this little disciple-making manual that said, this is who Jesus is. This is what the Old Testament means. This is what God is. This is what sin is. This is what repentance looks like. All of those things had to be passed down because if you don't pass it down, the next generation loses it. One generation assumes the gospel, the next generation loses the gospel.

You don't want that to happen. Truth is a gift from the past. That's why we have a doctrinal statement in our church. I don't think anybody ever reads it, but it's on our website. You can read it. Why do we have a doctrinal statement? Because some smart Baptist guy before us wrote a doctrinal statement, and then some grumpy Baptists who disagreed with it tweaked it a little bit, and then they tweaked it again, and then they tweaked it again. But it's basically the same thing. Because it gets passed down from generation to generation.

That's why we do these things. That's why creeds are important. Although Baptists are not real big on creeds, I'm not sure why. No creed but Christ, baby. But creeds are good. Creeds are really good because creeds systematize and catalog what all Christians have believed at all times and in all places. And we may disagree on lots of other things like tongues and charismatic gifts or eschatology, the end times, the rapture, yes or no. We may disagree on all those things, but one of the things we won't disagree on is the Apostles' Creed.

Because that's the core of what all Christians have always believed at all times. And we need that stuff. We need that to be passed down to us. When it's passed down to us, we want to pass it down to others. Faithfully received, faithfully dispensed. Truth is a gift from the past. It's also a guide for God's people. And that truth is always usually s generally speaking given to God's people at first. God called Abraham. God spoke to Moses face to face. That's how we got the Old Testament, first five books of the Old Testament, because God revealed it to Moses.

Jesus spoke to his disciples in parables. You guys remember why he said, I speak in parables? He said, I speak in parables so that the people who have ears to hear can hear, and the people who don't have ears to hear won't. Which is Jesus' way of saying truth is a guide for God's people, not for everyone. There are people who don't want to hear the truth. Paul says the natural man doesn't receive the things of God, indeed he cannot. We live in a culture of lies because our culture is broken because of sin and sinful people are inclined to resist God's truth and create their own truth and go their own way.

And so truth when it's revealed is truth for God's people. They're the only ones who have ears to hear it. They're the only ones who will receive it as something good, which means truth is useful. It's eternal and it's a beneficial gift. For God's people. And lastly, truth is a gate in that it excludes certain things and includes other things. That's what a gate does, right? When you have a gate, the purpose of a gate is to keep certain things from getting in or other things from getting out. And that's what truth is.

In that truth is fixed, it's unchanging. It's because it's unchanging, it's a wonderful tool for evaluation, for exclusion. It's like a ruler. A ruler never changes, it's always twelve inches. And so as a as something that never changes, it's really useful for determining whether something is 12 inches or four inches, six inches or two inches, or more than twelve inches.

So I need a yardstick, you know. It's unchanging. That's how truth works. Truth is this and not that. And we need that kind of a gate in order for us to flourish as human beings.

I think we know this intuitively. What makes a good meal different from a bad meal? You did those ingredients and not others, right? You use these spices and not those spices. What makes an airplane go from the ground up into the sky? What's a certain set of the laws of physics? These laws and not those laws. These kind of materials and not those kind of materials. This ascent trajectory, this speed and not that speed. Truth is necessary. If you're going to flourish in the world that God has made because it's a world that operates according to truth, it's for God's people, but as God's people discover it they oughta protect it because when you water it down or compromise it or corrode it you lose the thing that truth was meant to accomplish and so truth has to be a gate.

There has to be a guard at the gate. That's what Judah's saying. You got to put someone at the gate because if you don't guard the gate you have an enemy who is dead set on deception and lies, and he is so gifted at wiggling in those lies past the gate. He worms them in under the surface, and we're going to look at how he does that in just a second. But once the lies have gotten in, they spread like wildfire. You've heard the phrase the a lie can spread halfway around the world but before the truth can get its pants on.

Does the truth wear pants? I hope so. It can go halfway around the world before the truth gets its pants on. That's why guarding the gate is so necessary because the most insidious lies and deception are not easily seen. Come in under the radar, which is where he goes next. Truth is worth contending, it's worth fighting for. There will always be appeals to contend for the truth, but there will also always be attempts to counterfeit the truth. And by counterfeit, I just mean something that looks like a duck, walks like a duck, talks like a duck, but is not actually a duck.

Have you ever seen counterfeit money? Some of you nodding yes. That's actually pretty cool. You like a drug dealer or like how to you a banker or a drug dealer? Which one? Yeah. My Aunt Kim is a banker and I was talking about counterfeit money and I assumed it was easy to be beguiled or deceived by counterfeit money. She goes, nah, it's not I was like, well aren't you special? I mean I would think counterfeit money looks pretty much like counterfeit money. I've never, to be honest, seen counterfeit money, but let's not talk about money, let's talk about sunshades counterfeit sunshades.

Has anyone ever seen the oakleys at the Rattlesnake Roundup? Those are not real oakleys, my friend. They look like oakleys, smell like oak leys. On the shelf they shimmer and shine just like an oakly or a Rolex. You know, it's not a real Rolex. But what's the difference? Well the difference is one, the price is way cheaper. But a real Rolex or a real Oakley pair of sunshades has better materials. They last a lot longer. It's brand name for a reason in a lot of cases. But if you buy the cheap imitation, it may look the same way at the very beginning, but

as soon as you take it home, I mean maybe it lasts one summer long or you get some weird fungus under your wrist from the from the Rolex.

And when you need it the most, when you need it to really matter, it doesn't deliver. And that's what counterfeit truth is like. It looks good on the surface. Sounds good, feels good, man, what a deal. I think this is way better than the other stuff. But then when it really matters, it begins to fail you. And I think that's exactly what Jude is describing. In verse 4, when he says these people are counterfeiting the truth. We go back to just one slide. I want to read verse 4 again. Some people who were designated for this judgment long ago have come in by stealth.

Underline that. They are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ our only Lord and master. So four attributes. For false teachers right here in verse 4. But those four attributes of these counterfeiters I think are wonderful examples of what counterfeit truth looks like and how it operates. And that's how I want us to look at it today because our job is to contend for the truth. So if we're going to contend for the real thing, we need to know what the counterfeit looks like. And the first thing that counterfeit truth does is it looks good on the surface.

You notice that phrase. It says they came in by stealth. It's actually one Greek word translated as that whole phrase. It's a word that means to present yourself one way. Deceptively while concealing your sinister motivations. Think of a spy. If a spy, a Russian spy, come to America. He's not going to talk in a Russian accent, right? He's going to talk in a different accent. He's going to present himself a certain kind of way. Why? To disarm the people that he's spying on. And that's how counterfeit truth works. It comes talking with the accent of the truth, wearing the clothes of the truth, talking the talking points of the truth, while all the while Deceivingly hiding the sinister purpose for which it was created.

In their case, these people who came in by stealth, we don't know exactly who they were. A lot of people believe they were Jewish zealots who were advocating to these Christians, let's overthrow the Roman Empire. Rome is keeping us from worshiping. Rome is keeping us from bringing about the Messiah. The Old Testament Messiah will come when God's people overthrow their oppressors. So they were using Christian sounding language and they were using causes that Christians would have been sympathetic toward to advance an agenda that was actually unchristian and not Christ-like in its intent.

Jesus never said go and overthrow Rome until I come again. He said, go and be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. He never said, take up your sword. He said to preach the gospel. He said to reconcile people to God. And so these zealots were using Christian-sounding language, appealing to Christian ends or ends that would have had sympathy for Christian ears, but they were actually advocating

something very sinister. And that's how counterfeit truth works. It always looks good on the surface. But it's actually sinister in its intentions.

This is why Paul told the Ephesians elders in Acts 20, be careful. The wolves are not going to come from outside. They're going to come from within. From within your own midst, wolves are going to rise up and they're going to notice this phrase. Lull the Christians astray. They're going to lull the disciples away. Now, I don't know if you've ever been confronted with a wolf. Last time I saw a wolf, actually I've never seen a wolf. Last time I saw a coyote, last time I saw a coyote, I wasn't thinking, wow, I feel so lulled, you know.

I feel so lulled away into your deception. No, I didn't feel that way. I felt like that's bad news bears, and I'm going to get rid of this thing. But that's that metaphor, those two things are put together for a reason. They are wolves, but they look like sheep. They look good, they sound good, but they're actually nefarious in their purposes. You've got to watch out, because this is how the enemy operates in the church. It always looks good on the surface, but it has a godless root underneath. You notice that phrase, it says they came in by stealth and they are ungodly.

They are ungodly. This it's easy to read that and go, well, they must have been immoral. Ungodly means immoral, and I guess ungodly people can be immoral, but that's not what the word means. The word means godless. It means irreverent. It means they don't believe in God. It means they have no fear of God. What does this look like today? I don't know that they were actually atheistic in their intent, but they were functional atheists. They were living as if God did not exist or God did not care, and so therefore it was up to them to solve the problems, and that's what counterfeit truth looks like today.

It has a godless assumption undergirding its philosophical framework. And this is everywhere in our culture. I mean it's easy to see atheism in atheism. Like if someone says I'm an atheist, you can say, well you're a very godless person. Or they say, I'm a naturalist, okay, well, you don't believe in God. But there's a lot of other isms in our culture that are godless in their orientation, but they don't broadcast it. So things like socialism is a economic theory that really builds its solutions based on an assumption that there is no God.

Now you can be a Christian person and believe in socialism, but at the root of socialism is a conviction there is no God. Same thing with communism, a political theory advocating the same thing. Or a lot of secular psychology today that comes from probably not a lot of it comes from Freud anymore, but his peers who carried on his basic assumptions, there is no God. It's in our educational systems. You might not call yourself a Darwinian evolutionist, but a lot of your biology training and a lot of your physics training was built on a framework that denied God at the root.

And this seeps into our arts, it seeps into our entertainment, it seeps into our politics and our educational system. It is seeping in everywhere, even in the church. Even in our seminaries and our theological institutions, there is a godless root at a lot of the teaching that goes on. Thank God it's not true of all seminaries, but they're certainly during the liberal Christianity heyday. It was really interesting, liberal Christianity, who Richard Niebuhr said, is a God without wrath, bringing men without sin into a kingdom without judgment, through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.

That's liberal Christianity. You say, well that sounds like or who would believe that? But so many people did believe that, and the people who pushed it did so in the name of evangelism. Did you know that? It was a response to modernism. Modernism basically explained the world without God. Thank you, Darwin. Thank you. Nietzsche, thank you, Freud. When I say thank you, I mean how dare you, but you know what I'm saying. Because of the work of those thinkers, we could go on and on with the big thinkers, they created a the way for modernism, and modernism brought a lot of great things.

But in denying the existence of God, there were a lot of Christians who were saying, we've got to make God palatable for these modern people. There were another group of Christians called the fundamentalists who said, well, you know, to H E double hockey sticks with all of them. Let's just close it up. Let's rally the horses. Let's close in and we'll hold on what we believe. Bible says that that's I believe it. That settles it kind of thing. So one response was the fundamentalists and one response was the liberal Christians, but the liberal Christians were trying to be evangelistic, right?

Counterfeit truth always looks good on the surface. But it denied God at the root. They were saying, we can't believe in miracles anymore. Jesus didn't really turn water into wine. Moses didn't really split the Red Sea. Maybe Jesus didn't even really rise from the dead. He's alive in our hearts, you know. And you use Christian language, you appeal to Christian motivations to rob and deny Christianity of its very substance. And that's how counterfeit truth works. And it's still at work today. Maybe even you have some assumptions that are godless in their root You would never say that.

I would probably never say that. But we live and move and breathe in a culture that is atheistic functionally. And that's how counterfeit truth works. That's why you got to contend for the faith. It looks good on the surface. It denies God at the root. Now what's the telltale sign of a counterfeit truth? It never broadcasts itself as being atheistic, but one of the things it does broadcast is this next thing. They turn the grace of God into a license for sensuality. So counterfeits will always twist God's grace into a license.

For sin. This word translated turning, sometimes it's translated twisting, sometimes it's translated perverting. It's the idea of replacing one thing with another. And so you've got two things. One, you've got the grace of God, which is his unmerited favor, his willingness to

forgive you though you're unworthy, his willingness to credit you with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so that if you don't earn your salvation, you receive it as a gift of God's grace. He's saying, well, they take that doctrinal truth and then they twist it into a license for sensuality.

Now we read sensuality and a lot of you think sexual. And sometimes sensuality can be sexual, but the word is not sexual. It's a big broad umbrella term for indulgence or excess or going beyond what is what is necessary. And so the basic idea is that counterfeit truth uses the grace of God and his goodness as a justification for sinful behavior that indulges in things God says you shouldn't do. And you say, well, who in the world would do that? What kind of Christian would appeal to the grace of God as a license for sin?

And I would say almost 80% of the Christians I talked to. I hear if I have a nickel for every time I heard someone say, well I know the Bible says but or I know God says this is wrong or this is one I know technically speaking this is wrong. But I'm special. God understands my situation. My situation is unique. And it usually is. It is usually unique, but not so unique it justifies perverting the grace of God. Now I don't want to go from preaching to meddling. So if what I'm about to say makes you angry, it's not targeted to you, because for every one of these examples I mentioned it's not one.

But fifty. It's not one, but twenty-five. Of very popular examples of counterfeit truth corrupting the grace of God in churches today. I hear it from single Christians who justify, they appeal to the grace of God to justify sexual sin. This can be from premarital sex to cohabitation. Sometimes we even do premarital counseling with these couples. And I'm again it's not one. I'd say it's the majority today. Godly Christians. And I know technically speaking, you know, God says, but we're married in our hearts. That's a popular one. God is cool with it.

We'll be married in a couple months. And it's a counterfeit. It's a counterfeit that looks good on the surface, but at its root is denying the authority of Christ and the design, the good design of God, and it's leading a lot of people astray. I also hear it from married Christians. Who appeal to the grace of God as justification for getting out of a marriage they're unhappy with for unbiblical reasons I know it's I know he it's not adultery, but I know it's not this, that, or the other thing, but if God knew who he was, as if he doesn't know, but if God really understood then he would give me permission.

Or I know he's not going to give me permission, but I'm going to do it anyway and thank God for his forgiveness and grace and we'll get through it. And it's not as though I don't sympathize with people in that predicament because it is nuanced and it is messy and complicated and hard. But it's a counterfeit that will not take you where you think it is going to lead you. God isn't mocked. Whatever a person sows, that's what he reaps I hear from teenagers to justify rebellion against their parents. Doing all sorts of illegal activity.

I did this as a teenager, certainly. Well I know my salvation is secure. Hey, once saved, always saved. So I can live like a heathen for four or five years, be really popular in school, and then get my life cleaned up when I get to college. And it's a miracle I'm not in jail. Or dead. Or that I still have my faith. Because a lot of people who did the same thing don't. And are, or are and don't. I hear it from seniors, even old Christians, even old people justify sin in the name of God's grace saying, well the government's liars and thieves, I can lie and steal from them.

Yeah, we're married in our hearts. And on and on we could go. And again, it's not to single any one person out. I know I probably even in this room, though I'm not looking at anybody's faces, I know there are people in those situations, and it's not because of you, it's because our culture has deceived our churches into purchasing counterfeit truths that looked good on the surface, sound good in the meantime, but are ultimately corroding the very foundations of our faith. And that's how they work. Satan is so gifted, he is so deceptive, he is so good, and there are so many ways he can cause you to justify your sin in appealing to God's grace.

But it's a counterfeit. It's a God without wrath bringing men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross. Honestly, if I had a nickel for every time I heard it, I would have more farmland than Bill Gates. That's how much that's how often that's how often it is. And I say it laughing to keep from crying. Oh, that we would stop buying the counterfeit and contend for the faith that was delivered once and for all. Last thing that they do, Paul says in Romans six, should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?

By no means. We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? When you live in sin by appealing to God's grace, you are robbing Jesus Christ of his glory. It was for our sin that he died. And so the last thing counterfeit truth does is it denies the glory of Jesus Christ, who is, notice, our master and Lord. Now I said last week the word Christ is not Jesus' last name. Right? It's a divine title from the Old Testament. So Jesus who is the Christ. What is Christ?

The king, God's anointed, the Lord of Lords, the head honcho, hefe. Scholars have been calling me here lately. He's the hefe, he's the real jefe. And then he modifies it with master despotis, it's the Greek word, and lord curios. Not to emphasize Jesus' divinity, but to emphasize his royalty, his kingship, his authority. And these were, I think, zealots who were using political language to justify rebellion against God. We've got to overthrow Rome so that Messiah can come. And so in advocating for the Messiah, they were denying the Messiah, the true Messiah, of his true glory.

And people do the same thing today. We've got to take it into our own hands. We've got to take care of this ourselves. We got to take the bull by the horn and we got to we got to we got to fix this thing, all the while robbing Jesus, the true king and heir. Of the glory that he is

due. And that's how counterfeit truths work. They look good on the surface, they deny God at the root, they twist grace into license, and deny the glory of Jesus. And we are appealed to contend for the faith.

So the question I'm going to leave you with this morning as we bring this to a close is, are you a contender? Are you a contender? And if you choose to be a contender, here's what's going to happen to you. You will be mocked, you will be maligned, you will be slandered. People will accuse you of being a partisan, people will accuse you of being a fundamentalist, people will accuse you of being a legalist. People will accuse you of being a culture warrior and you know what you might as well just embrace it culture warrior.

You know what politics is always downstream of culture? Someone said that. And the culture is always downstream from the cult. You know what the cult is? The cult is what a culture worships. I think the reason our culture is so sick is because we bought the lie of secularism that you can remove God from a culture and it's all going to be great. But you don't get to remove God from a culture. You just worship something other than God. It's not a matter of do you worship this or not worship.

It's always a question of what God do you worship and is it a God of truth or is it a God of counterfeit? And our culture is steeped in the worship of a counterfeit, and as a result, it's getting sicker and sicker and sicker. And so embrace being a culture warrior who contends for the truth once and all deliver to the saints. And that may offend right-leaning people or that may offend left-leaning people, but it gives honor and glory to Jesus Christ, and he's the one who matters. I'd rather God be found true and every man a liar.

And how we contend for the truth delivered to the saints. And so as we respond, I want to invite you to really honestly ask the question. Am I choosing to be a contender or am I choosing the counterfeit? Because that is always a choice between salvation and judgment. It's not a choice between being a culture warrior, it's a choice between heaven or hell. Those who walk by the truth find their way to Jesus, and it is through Jesus Christ that we enter into heaven. Those who deny the truth are denying Jesus, and in denying Jesus, they're on a road paved to hell.

Maybe with the best of intentions, at best of intentions, and the most persuadable of lies, but a road that leads to destruction contending is always a choice between salvation and judgment. And so this morning, if you would want salvation in your life, for your family, for your children, the question is, are you willing to contend? Are you willing to call the lies for what they are, leave the counterfeits on the table, and draw near to the throne of God's grace and say, help me to be a contender? Help me to contend for the faith that was once in all delivered to the saints.

I'm going to leave the altar open if you want to pray, I'd be happy to pray with you or for you about anything. If you have a spiritual decision that you want to make of trusting in Jesus for salvation, you can indicate the that and the connection cards on the chair in the seat in front of you. Jace also mentioned the Biblical Counseling Ministry, a wonderful opportunity this week to connect with one of our counselors. Because getting untangled from a lot of these lies can take a long time. It's messy, it's complicated, it's not going to, a sermon is not going to do it.

And so maybe you'd reach out and say, I want to get some counseling and set myself free of these of this bondage and slavery to sin. But however you need to respond, you do that now as we respond, Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time. And man, sometimes a word is uncomfortable, it can sting, it can be unsettling and sometimes even make us angry. But would you help us even in our anger to ask the question, why? What are we defending? And are we defending something that you would say is only going to hurt, not help?

Would we in this moment be able to receive this word as a God from a God who is love? Not condemnation, a God who wants our freedom, not our slavery, a God who is for us, not against us. And a God who has sufficient grace for the most challenging of circumstances, the most difficult of issues, for the most stubborn of people. The most impossible of situations. God, help us to see your glory. Help us to see the glory of our Lord, our Savior, our king, and our Lord. Jesus Christ and in bowing to him, surrendering to him, that his truth would set us free.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. I'll take a few moments to respond. Right there where you're seated. Altar's open if you would like to pray. Father, I'm certainly thankful that in your declaring of truth that you do so with the Spirit of Jesus. He never had a voice of condemnation, never had a voice of shame. He spoke with gentleness to people. In the bondage of sin. He saw their dignity. He did not treat them as lesser or alienated or anything like that. And that's the spirit with which we want to contend for the faith.

The spirit that is full of grace and truth. A spirit that walks slowly through the crowds, a spirit that cares more about people than being right, cares more about salvation than winning an argument. And so as we contend, would you help us to do so in a way that honors our Lord, a way that invites strugglers and sojourners to find answers, but also sanctuary and support and community. So that as they recover the truth and begin to put it into practice, they do so surrounded by people who are just like them Sinners all, ground level at the foot of the cross, as we find our safety and security not in our righteousness, but in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name and God's