Intruder Alert: Jude 1:1-4

Wes Hebert • Nov 1, 2026

Father, as we begin our time this morning in the preaching of your word, I pray that you would be honored to work through your spirit and through your word in the hearts of your people. Lord, help us to hear the words this morning of a humble author with an urgent purpose. Help us to, as we have sang this morning, to be saints who keep watch, waiting, prepared and ready for the return of your son.

That in the meantime, we would be on alert, aware of distresses from within and without the church. We pray all these things in Christ's powerful name, amen. What is the greatest threat facing the church today? If you listen to some podcasters or pastors or you scroll your phone for too long, you'll find answers aplenty, I'm sure.

Some will point to a culture that has rewritten what it means to be male and female, or those who will say it's the rise of ideologies that reduce our identities to mere sexual preference or race, or even those that would look at the many violent acts committed against Christians and the church, both in the West and in the majority culture in the world around us, as the church and culture increasingly divide to the point of violence being commonplace. However, when you read the New Testament letters, something becomes really clear. The apostles were seldom afraid of any dangers outside the church.

Listen to Paul as he says goodbye to the elders in Ephesus in the book of Acts. He says, I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert.

Or the words of Jesus in Matthew, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. The greatest threat to the church is the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. It's not the wolf in the forest that poses the threat, it's the wolf in Grandma's bed, wearing Grandma's nightgown, talking like Grandma, my, what big teeth you have.

In real life, and not in fairy tales, that story ends very differently. Paul and Jesus saw the greatest threat for the church would not be the opposition from without, but the infiltration of wolves from within. That's why Paul tells the Ephesians to be on alert.

The wolves will dress like us and talk like us and sing like us and know our Bible verses, but to them we are sheep, we are a meal. And just like Paul and just like Jesus, a man named Jude, the brother of Jesus, is writing this letter to warn of wolves that have made it into the church. There are intruders in the church and therefore we must be on high alert.

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That's why I've decided to entitle our series, Enemies at the Gate. And his first few verses of Jude is essentially Jude sounding the alarm. Intruder alert, intruder alert.

And notice how he starts, though, these first two verses. They seem kind of odd. They're a standard greeting, but given the direction the letter goes, it feels odd, but I think that Jude has a purpose in starting the way he starts.

And notice he identifies himself, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James. Notice he identifies himself in two ways. First, as a servant.

Now, the word translated servant, a more honest translation would be a slave. This is Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ. It describes someone who belongs completely to another, lives under somebody else's full authority.

This is Jude humbling himself, looking to his master, Jesus Christ, and bending his knee to him. It was a title that was used in the Hebrew in the Old Testament to men like Moses and Joshua and David. Jude is placing himself in good company.

He's humbling himself and putting himself in a long line of godly men who proclaimed God's word faithfully, submitting themselves to their master. So Jude starts, he says, I am but a mere slave. But second, he says, he is the brother of James.

Now, there are lots of Jameses in the New Testament, but only one would need no further introduction other than this, and that is James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, whom Paul calls the Lord's brother. So Jude is saying, I am the brother of James, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, and Simon. Judas, which was in Mark 6, is how he was identified, that is this Jude.

Now, think about what that means. Jude grew up in the same house as Jesus. He shared the same mother, ate at the same table, they may have been bunk brothers.

But notice, in light of that, how he doesn't introduce himself. He doesn't say, Jude, half-brother of the Messiah, born into the first family of the faith. Instead, he says, I'm a slave of Jesus Christ.

And it's amazing, too, because if you're familiar with Jesus's family in the New Testament, you have to wonder how long it took him to get there, because the Gospels tell us Jesus's brothers did not believe him at all during his ministry. They called him crazy. But sometime between the Gospels and here, something happens.

The risen Christ appeared to James, and the brother who once doubted, now calls Jesus his Messiah and his God, and Jude, likewise, calls himself a slave. Now, it's quite

something for your brother to call you God and to call himself a slave. Now, Jude had every credential a man could want in the faith, and he left it all at the door and instead took the lowest place at the table.

Now, contrast that with how he addresses his reader. We go from a humbled author to his beloved readers. He's taken the low place for himself, and he reserves the high place for his audience.

He says, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. Those three words there, called, beloved, and kept. In the Greek, they're all the kind of same construct.

They're all a perfect participle. Oh, God, we're getting into grammar. Everybody can go to sleep now.

No, this just means, that's just a way of saying it's a settled state. Something happened, it's done, and its effect stands. In other words, being called, beloved, and kept is not something that you just hope to feel on a good day.

It's what you are. What's interesting is these three words, many commentators have noticed that they are words that are echoed in Isaiah's servant songs. In Isaiah 42, Isaiah writes, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

And I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness, and I will take you by the hand and keep you. Called, loved, kept.

Jude is taking the language that the Lord used in the prophet Isaiah for God's promised servant and the people that he was promised in the last days, and he says, that's you. In other words, Jude is saying his readers are not nobodies. They are the promised people of God, the people that the prophets longed to see, a gift for the Messiah.

Let's look at each of those and what those mean, why it's so important that he's using these words in particular. First, Jude says they are called. You might say, but Wes, that's not the first word there.

First they are called. Jude doesn't mean an invitation that was left on a voicemail. He means that the God of the universe has personally summoned you by his gospel.

He has effectually called you out of darkness and into his kingdom. Think back of that to yourself, that moment when your eyes were opened, when you heard the gospel proclaimed. Maybe it was in a youth group years ago.

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Maybe it was at a dinner table with a family member who was praying for you. Maybe it was in your youth, a mother who faithfully prayed for you for years and you finally opened your eyes to the gospel. Well, Jude says, you didn't find God, although that's the common parlance you'd hear today.

He says, God found you. He saw you and called you. Charles Spurgeon puts it plainly, he says, I believe the doctrine of Electron because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen him.

And he adds too that he could never find any reason in himself why God would have chosen to look upon him with such special love and to call him. Brothers and sisters, if Charles Spurgeon couldn't find any means in himself to be loved, I'm certain that I can't find one in me. The reality is we were dead in our sins.

Dead people don't answer the phone. God called and in his calling gave us life and we woke up and came. And second, he calls us beloved in God the Father.

Again, not this picture of a vague, warm feeling, but it's the word agape. It's this covenant, unconditional love that God has set on those who did nothing to deserve it. How do we know this love? How do we know what this love is, this belovedness? Well, it's Romans 5. God shows his love for us.

How? While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The cross is God the Father's I love you to his people. He said it once, there's no taking it back.

He has called us and in calling us, we are beloved to him. And third, and this is I think one of the more beautiful ones, kept. Kept for Jesus Christ.

Notice that. Kept for Jesus Christ. The conjunctions are important here.

Let me tell you how I keep things. Generally, a drawer full of random knickknacks that I just refuse to throw away. We have a little closet downstairs where if you open it, you need to take about three steps back and pray that nothing falls on you.

Old cords, old phone cases for phones that we no longer have anymore, random bags of things that we purchased in the past that we're just like, well, you never know when you might need it again. That's just keeping for the sake of keeping. But that's not this kind of keeping.

This is the keeping of Christmas is coming. I have a very special gift that I got for Christina, for Ezra, for Amelia, Elijah. I get it and I want to keep it tucked away somewhere special, guarded, wrapped, safe.

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So that way, when Christmas morning comes, I get to give it to the one who it was for. That's the keeping that Jude has in mind. We are a gift purchased by Christ's blood for Christ in the last days.

Consider what Jesus says and prays in the Gospel of John. It says, Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory. Brothers and sisters, have you ever considered that, that you are a gift from the Father to the Son? And the Father does not lose his gifts.

I remember one year we had that happen where my sister had got a gift for Ezra and we completely misplaced it. I thought we threw it away. And then we found it like six months later.

God does not misplace his gifts. It was the wild robot Legos. I know, he looked at me, he's like, oh, did I have some gift that I haven't gotten? No, Jesus says of his sheep, no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. Brothers and sisters, the same hands that fashioned the entire universe, that upholds everything around us, are the hands that are holding us and keeping us for the day of Jesus Christ. And then he ends with this.

He says, may mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Notice that word there, multiplied. Jude doesn't pray, may you receive just a little.

No, no, no. He wants mercy, peace, love to be multiplied. He wants them in spades, like compound interest, that you get some and you get some more and that you'll have some more.

He says, you've already received these things. Let it just grow exponentially. Now I want us to see what Jude is doing here, because he's really just showing us a shepherd's heart.

He humbles himself and exalts his readers, and in a moment, he's going to give them a hard word, a very urgent message. But first, he reminds them of who they are in Christ, because he knows they're going to need that footing for the fight to come. And he starts, too, by humbling himself, not lording his authority over them.

It's just so the opposite of what we often see in leaders, leaders who will lean on their education and their titles and their connections to keep the sheep at a distance, do not touch the Lord's anointed or question him. No, Jude does the reverse. He gets down on one knee and says, you are called, you are beloved, and you are kept.

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I am a slave. That's the shepherd's heart. I have to confess, after considering that this week, I have been struggling with that in my own life to see if I carry myself with that same sort of position, that I'd rather be right than gentle or been seen with the ones, one who has answers and educated than as a slave serving the people that Christ has died for.

I've been thinking about that for us as elders and praying for that this week, that we would follow his example, that we would see ourselves as slaves and shepherds and see the sheep as not ours, they are our masters, his gift, and we are called to keep them. Having seen the author in Jude and his audience, a called, beloved, and kept people, now Jude turns to his urgent purpose. He says, beloved, although I was eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith.

In other words, Jude had a different letter in mind. He didn't want to write this letter. He sat down to write about the salvation that we share.

He wanted to write a meditation about the goodness of God and Christ and a letter about the cross and the empty tomb and the glory that will come. In other words, he just wanted to nerd out on theology with his friends. And as a pastor, I understand that.

There are some days I would love nothing more than to just sit down with lunch with some of you and just bask in the kindness of God. Consider the glory of salvation. To look at all the little ins and outs of the beauty of theology, but oftentimes what happens is word arrives that there's something wrong.

Somebody's struggling with something, sin, trials, sickness, what have you, and a pastor can't just keep that to himself and push it to the side. He's responsible for souls. And Jude, being a good pastor, puts down the letter he wanted to write and picks up the one that he had to write.

What he writes is difficult. The word he starts with for appealing is a strong one. Another way to say it would be kind of begging, urging.

In other words, he's writing this letter frantically. He sends it with the ink hardly dry. And what is it that he's telling his readers to do? He gives them a command, contend.

Now, the Greek word that we get contend from here is the word that we get, the word agonize. It's this intensified version of the verb in Greek, to agonize. It comes from the sphere of athletics.

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It speaks of striving and straining and struggling with everything you have for a purpose, for a goal. It's the same family of words that Paul uses when he says, for this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works in me. Let me give an illustration of what this means.

For those of you who know anything about me, I like to go to the gym. If you know me, you know that. If you know anything about working out, you guys are going to get some sports science this morning.

You know that building muscle and doing strength training is grueling. In order to be effective, you have to do what's called progressive overload, which just means that every week you do something, you need to either do another rep or do it with more weight. You have to train to failure, which means you just can't lift the weight one more time.

In other words, it's not Zumba. It's not something you do to relax, although I find it relaxing because I'm messed up. But any gym bro will tell you the hardest day of the week is leg day.

It's because the bigger the muscle, the more painful it is to train. You've got your legs, your glutes, and your quads, and your back, and all this stuff. It's all the big muscles in your body.

So much so that the joke is that most guys who go to the gym just skip leg day. And sometimes it's not necessarily because they're lazy, it's just because it's brutal. Some evenings when I'm planning on going to the gym, I'll sit there on the couch and be like, do I really want to do this right now? I'm a little scared of what I'm about to ask my legs to do.

But if you want to get stronger, that's what you have to do. That's the picture of what Jude is saying. He's saying contending for the faith is not a casual stroll or a Sunday afternoon walk.

It is ardent, agonizing effort. It takes effort. You can't do it passively.

In other words, the Christian faith is leg day. If it doesn't cost us something, if it doesn't take struggle, then we have to ask ourselves, are we contending? But notice, as we'll see throughout the letter of Jude, this isn't something we do in our own strength, just like we were saying earlier. If in our own strength we confide, our striving would be losing.

No, Paul said it's his energy that he's working powerfully and is struggling with. As Jude, we're going to see that we are being kept, we're called to keep ourselves, but the one who keeps us is God. In other words, God is the best spotter ever.

He is going to ensure that we finish every rep that we need to, to contend for the faith. But I want to add a word of caution here with this word, contending, because I've known some who kind of read this and see contending as a competition thing, like I have to contend. I've fought those in the church that are doing things wrong, and I need to contend with them.

But the way I like to say it is contending for the faith is not the same as being contentious for the faith. Jude isn't telling his readers, as we will see throughout the letter, to pick a fight. People who pick fights for sport are just as much as a pain as the people who are denying the gospel here.

Consider what Paul wrote to Timothy, the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. In other words, we contend with great effort, great struggle, but we do so graciously. But in the end, we do contend.

We stay faithful. We are on high alert, aware of what's going on around us. But what are we contending for? It's the next important question.

Well, Jude writes, the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Now, notice Jude's words, the faith. He doesn't say your faith or my faith.

There's an objective body of truth that he's basing this off of, the faith. This is the gospel, what was taught and received by the apostles and passed down from generations to generations of faithful, a long line of godly preachers. You can only have my faith, Wesley's faith, insofar that I have the faith, the gospel.

But notice too, it was also delivered once for all. What Jude means there is once for all time. This is a one-time completed delivery, like an Amazon when you say, I want all my packages to arrive at the same time.

Everything's done. There's nothing left that needs to be delivered. It's just this official authoritative message that's been handed over, nothing to follow.

And God delivered it through his son and through the apostles that Jesus chose and now delivers it through the preaching and proclamation of his word. And this message came with tamper-proof packaging. You cannot add to it.

You cannot subtract from it. You cannot update it for the new season. The gospel doesn't change.

In other words, we preach the same gospel that Paul preached and that Jude preached, the same gospel passed down throughout history, the same gospel that caused Luther to stand at the Diet of Worms and refused to recant that we are saved by faith alone and not by works, the same gospel that caused William Tyndale to smuggle Bibles into English so that people would know and understand what the true gospel is and led to him being strangled and burned for it, the same gospel that Calvin taught, that Knox preached, a long line of men and women poured their lives into and gave their lives for, the same gospel, the same faith, the same gospel that Paul preached, that Jude defended, and the same gospel that, by God's grace, we preached this morning. They didn't invent it. We simply received it, received it, guarded it, and handed it down unaltered.

That's the gospel that we preach. It's the gospel we believe. That's the faith that we contend for.

Now, maybe you're here this morning and you don't believe this gospel. You think it's a ruse, a fabrication, that there's no way we can really know what Jesus said, taught, that this was just something that was cooked up and can be changed over time with all the different denominations and whatnot in the church. A lot of people will say that you just have your truth and I have my truth.

It doesn't matter. But think about that, that claim in and of itself is a truth claim. Everybody has to accept it in order for it to be true.

Well, that was not Jesus. Jesus stood before Pilate and said, for this purpose, I was born, and for this purpose, I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Second, it's not a myth. It's one of the main things I always see with folks who sort of contend that Christianity is not true, that this is just some myth passed down, spiritualized.

But the fact of the matter is it's rooted in history. The whole reason I believe it to be truth is because the life, death, and resurrection of a real man in a real place at a real time happened. That is the faith that we claim and contend.

We've got four Gospels that can be checked against one another, that all corroborate one another's claims written within decades of the event. We have an entire Old Testament that anticipated every moment of it for centuries beforehand. We have the

testimony of eyewitnesses who staked their lives on the claims they made, all of it corroborated by all the archeological evidence that we can find in and around that time.

Christianity is not a vague spirituality. It rests on specific events and a specific person and invites you to investigate them. If you don't believe me, I'd welcome that conversation anytime.

But now comes the big moment. He's told us to contend for the faith. Now he tells us why we get the intruder alert.

The alarms are going off now. In verse 4, for certain people have crept in unnoticed. That word there for crept in kind of means they settled in, they slipped in from the side and have sort of settled among you, like secret agents, like insurgents inserting themselves amongst God's people, settling in, and then doing their damage over time.

Nobody in the church threw open the door and said, welcome false teachers, come into our midst. No, it says they came in quietly. And notice how Jude describes them, crept in unnoticed.

Got five D's here. They are devious. They crept in unnoticed.

That's the wolf in grandma's nightgown. They didn't announce themselves. They don't wear name tags, hi, I'm Wes, false teacher.

Jude later will say that they're hidden reefs, hiding underneath the surface so you can't see them where they will do the most damage. They may even be well-liked and well-established in their churches. They could even be in leadership.

They're devious. They are unnoticed. But notice too, he says, they're designated for condemnation.

Damned, I wrote, because I wanted it to catch our ears, because Jude wants it to catch ours as well. Hear what he's saying. He doesn't mean that God chose them for condemnation on a whim.

He says that their judgment was written about long ago. The Old Testament had already spoken of people like this. This is not new.

And Jude will show us in the next section how Scripture has shown us how God will deal with these people. There's no surprise to God when wolves infiltrate his people. It's always happened.

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From the inception of his people in the Old Testament to their full consummation in the New, it always happens. But God has already said where it ends. Their condemnation has been designated long ago.

The judgment is sure. And why? Well, look at the rest of the description James gives them. He says they're depraved.

He calls them ungodly people. That's a word for a life that's oriented away from God and towards self. In other words, their basic question isn't what God wants, but what do I want? They are ungodly.

They are without God. And fourth, it says that they distort grace. Jude writes they pervert the grace of our God into sensuality.

Pervert there means to change or to alter something into something else. And one illustration I thought of that kind of gets it across, it's like as if you went to a doctor because notice they're perverting the grace of God. It's as if you went to the doctor and were sick, dying of an infection.

And he says, this is the antibiotic that you need to take. It will save your life. But just note that it tastes very bitter, but it will save your life.

And so you go home, oh, this, good to know that it'll save my life, but I don't like bitter stuff. So let's go ahead and add some, maybe some garlic and rosemary, maybe a little olive oil, some thyme. I'll simmer it down, make it taste good, make it delicious.

And you go back to the doctor the next day and said, I took the medication. Thank you. And I just, I did a little thing to fix the bitterness problem.

I cooked it up a bit. And the doctor looks at you and he, you fool, you ruined the medication. It doesn't work like that.

You've killed yourself. That's what the intruders are doing with God's grace. They take the grace of God, sufficient in itself, the good news of Jesus, what he's done, and they make it taste better by removing things, adding things to it.

Doesn't say exactly how they do, but we can make inferences from the rest of the letter that maybe they remove the need for repentance. Maybe they add that you can do whatever you want. It doesn't really matter.

Just, you say you believe in Jesus, doesn't matter who you sleep with. Doesn't matter if you're not married yet. It doesn't matter what you do on your computer.

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Doesn't matter how you treat your children. Just let it go. It's fine.

But the message is never so blatant to be like things nowadays as sin as much as you like. It's God is love. So there's no need to change.

It's like a counselor telling you to continue in sin that you know God calls sin, but to just follow your heart. Or like a preacher telling you that God wants you to be healthy and wealthy and that your faith is a lever for getting what you want. Luther heard this in his own day from his friend, Johannes Agricola, who said, in effect, are you steeped in sin, an adulterer or a thief? If you only believe, you are saved.

But Luther called it to his face and said, that's antinomianism. In other words, it's grace that cancels the law and he rejects it. No, that's not how this works.

We're saved by grace alone and faith alone, but we're not saved without anything that comes from our own life. Calvin put it this way. It's bad to live under a prince who permits nothing, but it's much worse to live under one who permits everything.

That's what the false teachers were doing. That's what these unnoticed, devious, condemned people were doing. They were distorting the grace of God, making it into something far worse than it actually was supposed to be.

But this is older than the Reformation itself, right? Bible has already answered it. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? Paul writes, by no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? Grace doesn't merely pardon us.

It trains us. Listen to what Paul writes in Titus. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.

There's grace for salvation. But what else does the grace of God do? It trains us to renounce ungodliness and to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in the present age. Grace doesn't just pardon.

It trains us. God takes us as we are, but he never leaves us that way. And that's what these people were denying and distorting, that the grace was just all you needed to be saved and that's all that was required of you.

And all of this boils down to the final and most central one. They distort grace and they deny Christ. They deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now, notice the strong titles that Jude uses here. Master. Considering his claim to being a slave of Jesus, he says he's his master.

And Lord. Titles of complete authority. And notice again, the particular words he uses.

He says, only, our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus is in one voice among many. A wise teacher who said some nice things that we can consider.

He is the only master. And if there's only one Lord, Yahweh himself, then this is again a claim of Christ's divinity by his own brother. The only master.

You can deny him with your words. You can deny him with a life that says, you're not the boss of me. But Jesus is the only master, the only Lord.

And these people have denied him and in doing so have decided what is good for their own life. And notice that these all kind of go together. Distorting the grace of God and denying Christ.

Doctrine and lifestyle tend to feed into one another. Wrong thinking generally produces wrong living. And then wrong living produces wrong thinking.

You can see that all throughout scripture. The times where theology went awry and led to unrighteousness. And that unrighteousness leads to further and further bad theology.

All boys down, they don't just hold a mistaken idea about Jesus, Jude says. They refuse his rule completely. They deny that he has any role in their life.

And it's to those people that Jude is writing to his people to say, contend for the faith. Be on alert. There are intruders among you.

And you need to be aware of them. You need to stand firm. And that remains true today.

Just as it was true in the Old Testament, as we'll see true in Jude's day. It continues to today. The greatest threat to the church are those within who seek to tear it down.

Now, I'm sure his readers were probably very concerned at this point. Which one of us is a wolf? Think of, I don't know if any of you guys are old horror movie buffs. But I used to love when I was a kid, John Carpenter's The Thing.

If you know, some of you may know it, some of you may not. But it's one where it's like this alien thing that would take the form of people. And there was no way to know who was the thing.

So a whole movie is just this tense moment of who, is it you, is it you, is it you? So I'm sure hearing this, there's that tension that probably fell on all of them. Who is it? Is it Darren? It's Paul. Who is it? And so there's this concern, how do we contend? How do

we know what to do? How do we keep ourselves? And some of you may be feeling that weight this morning.

Wolves, intruders, false teachers in the church feel as though this whole thing is about to collapse. And that's why we go back to verse 1. And 2. You are kept, not by our own strength, not by our own cleverness, not by our own grip on God, but God's grip on us. The church has been through fiercer opposition from within and from without for 2,000 plus years.

And she is still here because the Lord keeps his people. I mean, we sang it earlier. My favorite hymns of all time.

The church is one foundation, though with scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed. Yet saints, their watch are keeping, their cries go up how long? And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song. Schisms rent asunder, heresies distressed.

The hymn writer here knew that the church is threatened from within, while those from without simply watch on in scornful wonder. But there's that turn. The saints, their watch are keeping, and soon the night of weeping will be the morn of song.

Even when there's enemies at the gates, when they've intruded and we have wolves in the pews, God will keep his people. But that's not a call to passivity. Notice again, the saints, their watch are keeping.

Kept does not mean passivity. God keeps us, and he does it in part by making us watchful, by making us keep ourselves, by training us to contend, struggling and striving in the faith. How do we do that? Well, here's four ways that I think we as a church can be contending for the faith in light of these things.

First, we can know the word. The best way to spot a counterfeit is to know the original. And you can't spot a counterfeit if you haven't handled the real thing.

Just think of the Bereans in Acts, right? They received the word with all eagerness and examined the scriptures to see if the things that they were taught were true. If someone says, God told me, or the Bible says, then check it. Open the book.

If I say it, check it and open the book. I give you the page number because I want you guys to follow along so that you can know that what I'm saying is actually there, that this is not Wesley's opinions. Second, in addition to knowing the word, we can be resolute in prayer.

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We want to be watchful, praying together. Praying for the pastors and elders who are meant to keep guard of the sheep. Praying for the sheep that they wouldn't be wandering at any voice, but it would only hear the voice of the true shepherd.

We need to be resolute in that prayer, giving ourselves to it as a church and individually. And likewise, third, we don't contend alone. Remember, we are called to contend for the faith once delivered for all the saints.

We're all contending for the same thing, and we will do so best together. We want to exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that no one would be hardened against the deceitfulness of sin. Lone wolves are the most vulnerable.

A sheep that wanders from the flock is in greatest danger. So brothers and sisters, if you feel yourself drifting, if you feel yourself struggling to contend, tell someone. If you're overburdened because of the health of family members or your own health, you feel tempted to just give in some days, tell someone.

Pray with someone. If you're an overburdened parent who is just overwhelmed at things that you feel like you can't get any moments to yourself, to pray or to contend for the faith, tell someone. Pray.

Don't do it alone. Finally, we need to not grow content and complacent. Think of like the illustration of a frog in a bowl of water.

You put them in boiling water and it'll jump right out. You put them in lukewarm water and you just slowly heat it up one degree at a time. He stays, grows comfortable, doesn't realize what's happening around him.

I've been told frogs aren't actually that foolish, but the illustration stands. Intruders aren't going to announce themselves. It starts with small compromises.

One thing that we let slide. One truth that we stop mentioning or believing. Before we know it, the heat's too hot and we can't get out.

Jude says, wake up, be alert. Brothers and sisters, let's take Jude's words this morning and contend for the faith. Struggling and striving together as people standing against those who would try to lead us astray, reminding ourselves that though we strive, it's in his energy.

He is the one who's keeping us as a gift for the Son. We are being kept. We are keeping watch.

Intruder Alert: Jude 1:1-4

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And as we're doing that, we look forward to the day when we're kept for Jesus Christ and we see him again. That brings us to the Lord's Supper this morning. We are kept for Jesus Christ.

We are the Father's gift to the Son. Paul tells us that Christ gave himself up for the Church so that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle, that she might be holy and without blemish. One day that gift will be placed in the Son's hands.

In that day, we are given a picture of what it looks like in the wedding feasts. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. That's what we're being kept for.

The wolves and the heresies, the long night of weeping are not the end of the story. The end of the story is a table, a table that we gather around every month to remind ourselves. That's why the Lord's Supper is so important.

It's a down payment on the feast that we'll get to enjoy one day. And it's one of the ways that we contend, reminding ourselves week in and week out, as we say every time we do communion, for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. When we eat and when we drink, we're saying to the world and to the intruders and to ourselves, we have not changed the faith.

We have not outgrown it. We hold the gospel once for all delivered. The Lord who died for sinners, the Lord who is coming back until he comes.

We gather around this table to remind ourselves that we will be kept for that day. So, brothers and sisters, if you are called, beloved and kept for Jesus Christ, then come to this table and as you eat and drink, remember what it is and who it is you're waiting for. But if you're not, if you've not been called, you've not repented of the sins in your lives and turned to Christ and trusted in him for his grace and salvation, then let this pass by you.

Consider these things that we've talked about this morning and if you're interested in learning a little bit more, I would love to sit and chat with you. But now I invite the elders and deacons forward so we can distribute the bread. I invite you to join me in prayer.

Father, how good it is to be reminded that we have been called in God the Father, called to salvation, called out of a kingdom of darkness and in to a kingdom of light. How good it is to be reminded that we are beloved or that you have shown us our love through the death of Christ on the cross to remind ourselves this morning in the Lord's supper, his body broken, his blood shed for us, the Lord, and good to remind ourselves

of the glorious hope we have for the future, that we are kept as a gift for your son. We look forward to the day when we will eat this bread and drink this cup anew.

In the new heavens and the new earth with our savior, our master, our only master in Lord Jesus Christ. So in the meantime, Lord, help us to contend, to strive and struggle and strain for the faith so that we may be kept faithful for that day. We pray these things in Christ's name, amen.