

# A Call to Defend

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman's sermon calls believers to actively defend their faith with love and boldness, drawing from the teachings of Jude.*

**Duration:** 57:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:14-16, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Galatians 1:6-9, Ephesians 6:11-13, Philippians 1:27, 2 Timothy 1:7, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 3:15, Jude 1:3

**Topics:** "Defending the Faith", "Boldness in Christ"

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## Description

Shane Idleman delivers a powerful sermon titled 'A Call to Defend,' urging the congregation to stand firm in their faith and defend the truth as outlined in the book of Jude. He emphasizes that defending the faith is not just the responsibility of pastors but of all believers, encouraging everyone to engage in conversations about God and to confront sin with love. Idleman warns against the dangers of closet Christianity and the need for boldness in sharing the gospel, while also addressing the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit to effectively contend for the faith. He calls for a return to a passionate and active faith, reminding the congregation that true love for God and others will naturally lead to a desire to defend the truth.

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## Transcript

The message this morning is a call to defend. A call to defend. I was going to go through the book of Jude on Wednesdays, but I feel it's very impactful for Sundays as well.

We need it mainly for the congregation on Sundays. So we switched that recently. So a call to defend.

The book of Jude you'll find in the New Testament obviously. And it doesn't make for easy reading. I love the book, but those who are carnal, those who are false prophets, false teachers, they won't even avoid it.

They'll get the scissors out on that one. Because it's just calling it out. And sometimes, you know, it's good to do that.

We have this impression in the church that we're just supposed to be doormats. You know, just love them in their sin. Never confront the sin.

No, no, no, no, no. How dare we? Just love them. And we do have to have love as our underlying, undergirding umbrella motive.

Of course, it all has to come from love. But there is a time to defend the truth and stand up for the truth and things that are right. Especially in the church, in our country.

And what I'm going to do when I'm talking about a lot of these things, God's given us different callings. So for me to defend the truth, it's going to look a lot different than you defending it sometimes. You might just be witnessing to your neighbor, to your friends, and that is the same as what I'm doing.

Sometimes we think, oh, what you're doing is so much bigger and better. No, it's not. It's just calling.

It's gifting. What God has called a single mom to do and her spear of influence is no different than what I'm doing this morning. Because we have different gifting, different callings.

And you can defend the faith and stand up for the faith in your community and with your friends. I've seen so many people, they'll say this, well, that's your job. Well, that's what you're supposed to do.

Well, we're all supposed to defend the faith to some degree. So keep that in mind as we look at the book of Jude. Actually, there's no chapters, it's just verse 1. Jude, who is a bondservant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James, to those who are called, meaning to those who are believers, this is a specific letter to those who are called of God, the believers, sanctified by God the Father, meaning they've been changed, they've been transformed by God, and preserved by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ holds us. He holds our faith together. Mercy, peace, and love will be multiplied to you.

So let me just stop there for a minute. Most scholars identify the writer as Jude, the half-brother of Jesus. So he might know a little bit about what he's talking about, I'm thinking.

He came to know Christ as Redeemer and Savior later on in his life, obviously his family members at first didn't believe. And what he's doing, he is writing a plea, a plea to defend the faith. And many times when you plea, you turn up the volume.

If I'm pleading with you, it's probably not going to be like this. Okay, guys, next week we're going to try to be here, try to defend the faith. No, pleading has some volume in it.

It's got some edge to it, that knife. It's a pleading, it's a slap in the face. And that's what Jude does, he slaps us in the face.

It's a hard book, but it's very good. And the irony is, I learned this this week, when he talks about mercy, peace, and love will be multiplied to you. Do any of you want that this morning? Do you want mercy? Do you want peace in your life? Do you want the love of God in your life? It often follows those who contend for the faith.

Because when we don't contend, what's the opposite of contending? Coward. Closet Christianity. I'll never forget, I worked in construction, as some of you know, many years ago.

It was a water district here in town. I ran heavy equipment. Very stressful job crossing gas mains and water mains and different things.

But I worked with two guys separately. And I talked to this guy about faith. He went forward in a Billy Graham crusade.

Loved the Lord, at least he said it. And we talked all the time about it. Then I had this other guy, his name was Heath, I won't mention other last names.

And I loved this guy. Younger kid, we talked about, I'm trying to get him back on track. He's going to church here locally, and we're talking about God a lot.

One day, we all worked together. Now these guys have been working together at that point about three months. And so now we're all working together.

I bring up the topic of, somehow God came up. And they said to each other, I didn't know you were a Christian. Well, I didn't know you were either.

Like, you guys have been working together for three months. Closet Christianity. They'll talk about alcohol and the game, pornography, but not God.

Now they're either not saved or they're very carnal in their walk. They're not filled with the Holy Spirit of God. So they will not experience mercy, peace, and love.

Because that boldness of the Holy Spirit is not there. They're not contending. They're not living like God has called us to live.

So be encouraged in this. When you step out in boldness and contend, these things will follow you. You will have love and peace.

Maybe that's what some of you are missing this morning. If God feels distant, you don't have the love of God that you used to. There's not a lot of peace.

There's a lot of turmoil. You're avoiding controversy. You're not talking about God much, if at all.

There's not a lot of peace in that. Because that's not what you were called to do. Just like when it comes in, that healthy, like up at the High Sierras, I've talked about this before, that beautiful river out of the June Lake Loop and Rush Creek and runs beautiful, runs right into Grant Lake and then out of Grant Lake into Mono Lake.

Oh, it's dead. It smells. I think brine shrimp is the only thing living there.

But this beautiful water's coming in, but nothing's going out. There has to be an outlet. So as we're getting fed, we go out.

That's where the health comes from. Healthy heart, mercy, love. And that's one of the reasons why we promote the hospital homes.

We have hospital homes every Sunday. People leave here and they will go out and minister to people. And often I hear this and I love it.

I don't get upset. That was better than going to church. And I'm happy when they say that.

Shane, you wouldn't believe this person. I encouraged them. I went to Walmart, bought them socks.

I put them in connection with their family again. I prayed with them. See, that's what we're supposed to do.

And I've been there myself. We sit in the pew. We get fed.

And that's about it. And that's why often there's not a lot of peace and love in our lives and we're not doing things for God. If we were to take a survey, I would think that many of you in this room would want to do a lot more for God than you are right now.

I go through those seasons. I feel that way sometimes too. And a lot of it is because when I'm not giving.

Fortunately, I get to give right now. Give of what God's put in my heart. But that doesn't take the place of giving outside of the church.

Another big misconception is the church is just where we come like a pep rally. We worship God. We get built up.

We equip the saints to go out and do the work. But what's happening a lot of times is we don't go out and do anything. We just come here locally and get fed.

A coward has little fellowship with God. They miss out on His powerful presence. And I'm not using that word coward to poke fun.

I have to go back and forth with this word too. Sometimes I coward back from things and should be more bold. I should be more lovingly aggressive.

What I mean is pursuing people and their faith when they lack faith and go out and talk to them. So this is a struggle we all have. But I think Jude makes it clear that we need to defend the faith.

He goes on here in verse 3. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation. So he was very diligent. He wanted to write about their common salvation.

He says, but I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once and all delivered to the saints. So it's kind of this change here. I'm writing to you about the common salvation.

However, there's a call that needs to go out exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith. Now, is anybody kind of curious about or upset about what's going on in our nation? Or is it just me? I better stay out of that for a little while. But the problem is many people don't contend.

We don't say a lot. We don't challenge in love. But it has to be inspired, motivated, and ultimately driven by the Holy Spirit or it won't go anywhere.

Because if all I'm doing is contending and the cheerleaders are being encouraged and I'm upsetting everybody else and nobody in the middle is being changed, that doesn't accomplish a lot. Politics won't save us, but prayer will. Protesting won't save us, even though it's a good idea sometimes, but prayer will and the power and the moving of the Holy Spirit.

And often he changes things through bold contending for the faith. What are we celebrating Monday? What happened? It ruffled some feathers. The abolition of slavery even before that ruffled some feathers.

The big movement now trying to stop the murdering of innocent children in the womb. When you contend, it gets interesting. And I heard a video, I think it was Ben Shapiro speaking at the Right to Life.

I was kind of bummed. I was asked to speak at one of their gatherings a couple years ago and I wasn't able to. I've always regretted that.

But anyway, he said something, not along these lines, but I thought, you know, I want to share that with you and I'm going to kind of paraphrase here. But the position sometimes we take, what I take, especially from this church, what you take, that's why you're here, is we're labeled sometimes as extreme. And you have to get to the point, you say, you know what, you're absolutely right.

We are living in extremely critical times. This is not time for passivity. This is a time to be extreme.

Not violent, extreme. Fasting, prayer, seeking God, worshipping, contending God, pull down heaven, change our churches, change our nation. So he's saying here, don't wear out.

Don't wear out. I'm exhorting you, I'm encouraging you to still contend earnestly for the faith. Contend for the things that are right.

Contend for the things that are righteous. I will tell you up front that any time you contend for what is right and contend for what is righteous, you will be mocked. You will be ridiculed.

There is a battle. There is a fight. You're not going to stand up for the truth of God's word and everybody's going to like you in your school district or in the governmental offices.

I'm not talking about going out and getting fired. I think we should be the best example of an employee wherever we are at. Gracious and loving and understanding.

But there's a boldness there. So however you do that, write, speak, blog, pray, contend somehow. And if you don't know what to do, here's a good prayer.

I prayed this prayer before 18, 19 years ago and I had no idea how God would answer it. God, help me. Show me how you want me to contend.

What have you called me to show? Lord, show me. That's what some of you should pray this morning. How should I contend? And contend doesn't mean fighting all the time.

It just means standing up for what is right. We're contending. We're holding the ground.

You can be loving. You can be firm. You can be gentle.

Some of you have it in your hands. If not, it's on our website or at least [shaneidleman.com](http://shaneidleman.com). A lot of news organizations picked it up the last few days and a few more are picking it up this week. Interestingly enough, I got an email from the lady who did my last Fox News interview and she's interested in possibly me talking about this with somebody on the other side on a podcast.

I don't know if that would go anywhere. But the title is an open letter to the United States of America. The atrocious demeanor of our elected officials must stop.

From F-bombs and death threats towards our president to the total lack of humility in governmental offices. Our arrogance has reached a new level. We are calling good evil and evil good.

We turn a blind eye to sexual sin and wink at pedophilia. Where is the outrage? What I also included is there was recently posted a photo to Instagram showing a 10-year-old transgender boy who was next to a

naked man. Where is the outrage? America, your silence is deafening.

Yet we have a mental breakdown when a border wall is being considered. And I don't mind different views on this, but my Lord, put things in perspective. We protect LGBT rights and I love those people, but we murder the innocent children in the womb.

We encourage children to switch genders but not turn to the one true and living God, the only true source of hope and peace. Our schools resemble battlegrounds and our families remain shattered while churches stay silent. It appears that pastors would rather cave in than fight, tickle the ear than challenge the heart.

And our pride will be our downfall. Are we striving to be pleasers of men or pleasers of God? And I went on to say, what kind of a nation do we live in where a newly elected congresswoman can tweet and impeach the explicit about our president? Any president. Obama, Clinton, Bush, our current president.

Where in God's green earth do we live where that is allowed? To say that I and countless Americans are embarrassed is an understatement. Many of our leaders need to look in the mirror and repent or resign. And that is a portion of contending for the faith.

It's a platform God's given me. Not everyone. I don't like this platform.

I wrote this whole article down in five minutes. And then I had some editors work on it. But it needs to be said.

When God gives us that burning fire. And Jude is also a call to passive believers. Silence is not always an option.

When we are filled with the world, we are not bold. I think that could be the problem. Some of you listening to this right now.

When you are filled with the world, when I'm filled with the world, I'm not bold. What am I bold with? I'm bold with the things of the world. But the more you read God's word.

Just spend some time in the Psalms. When you spend time in that word, this boldness comes out of you. I like what Vance Havner said.

The tragedy today is that the times are desperate but the saints are not. So content here means earnestly, sincere. There's an intense conviction.

And if you say, but Shane, I just don't have that. You will not have that without the empowerment and filling of the Holy Spirit. You won't.

I won't. Nobody is going to contend for the faith without that. So you have to ask for that filling, that mighty empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

And he says here, once and for all, there is a finality. There is one gospel, one truth, one God. There's a finality.

There's not many different gospels. He says, once and for all, deliver to the saints. What was delivered is it.

So here's the key we can take from this. Don't be a closet Christian. Step out in faith.

Begin to witness. But Shane, I don't know what to do. Do you have friends? Do you have family members? Just say, hey, have you ever thought about God? Do you know where you'll spend eternity? And you can open some good dialogue and begin to contend for the faith.

Or, and this is a different call, don't hide behind a judgmental attitude with the words, I'm defending the faith. See, on the flip side of this, it's really ugly. Because on one hand, you guys can be the passive side.

Well, let me, that doesn't look good. Let's do this side, easier to remember. You're the passive side.

Okay, and it's a call not to be passive. But this side, it's equally dangerous. And this is the person who yells and screams and is mean and nasty, but I'm defending the faith.

They put down everybody online. They're a modern day Pharisee. They're not defending the faith.

They're pulling down everybody and everything. And so we have to find that balance. Because most people gravitate or tilt one side to the other.

Right? Type A's over here. Type A personality, judgmental, can just tell them like it is. There's no black, there's no gray.

It's black and white. And I'm going to defend the faith. And you have these heresy hunters.

They're looking for sin in everybody's life. And we get those emails too. Oh, I can't believe you played some of those songs.

I thought you were a solid church. What songs are you talking about? Because they don't meet your criteria. You don't like emotional songs.

So you're going to put down things. You misquoted Proverbs. Yeah, and I might misquote a scripture today.

We're imperfect people talking about a perfect God. See, modern day Pharisees, that's dangerous because they love this verse. They use all capital letters and explanation points.

Two or three of them, they don't know grammar rules, say just one is fine. Capital letters. This, I'm contending for the faith.

No, you are an arrogant Pharisee. And often it's conservatives bashing charismatics or those who embrace the work of the Spirit is where a lot of this comes from. I don't know if I should go here, but I will.

I saw a video, I'm not going to name names, of some people critiquing Beth Moore because she believed God spoke to her and told her to do something. I'm sitting there, what's wrong with that? As long as it lines up with scripture, it's edifying others, it's building up others, it's encouraging others. God does lead.

Sometimes through things we're not quite clear with. I think she felt God told her to go and comb this guy's hair at the airport. He looked like he just got out of the hospital or something.

And they were mocking her, going, oh no, God would never tell you that. He's just going to tell you to go preach the gospel. Yeah, that's going to happen.

That's coming. That's coming, but you might have to step out in love first. Arrogant Pharisees.

Arrogant Pharisees who think they're defending the truth and they're actually quenching the work of the Holy Spirit. They'll bash anybody. Matt Chandler has a dream they believe God gave to him.

Oh, that must be heretical. No, it's biblical. Joseph, Mary, you might want to go a different direction.

The wise men, hair's going to kill you, you might want to go a different direction. Jacob, I mean, I don't understand it, I don't embrace it, I'm not this guy caught up in dreams, but I know God can do whatever he wants. He can warn somebody through a dream.

If it lines up with Scripture and it edifies and it builds you up, but what do they say? We're contending for the faith, we've got to pull these people down. No, you're not. You are an arrogant Pharisee that needs to stop.

You have sound doctrine, but you don't have a right heart. Oh, don't, don't, I could stay there a while. The irony is, here's the truth.

We're just not well known enough yet to be on their hit list. I guarantee they would tear me apart just like they tear them apart. If you embrace the work of the Holy Spirit, conservative Christians will mock you.

Because they've never experienced that move of God. I think many times they're prideful, they're jealous. They've never experienced that, so it can't be true.

I've got a master's degree in divinity. Yeah, but does a master have your heart? So be careful in this area. I'm not in any way, shape, or form throwing bad doctrine underneath.

Let's hide it, let's just get crazy, let's get odd, let's get weird. No, let's hold the sound doctrine, contend for absolute truth in a post-modern culture. We love the truth, we put everything through the filter of truth, but let's not put God in a box.

And then pull apart those who seem to meet God at a deep level. And these same churches would mock a church where there's people at the altar weeping. Oh, that's emotionalism.

No, that's people experiencing God, straight up. I came to shoot you straight this morning, because I'm tired of some of these Pharisees and heresy hunters. So here's a little meditation that might help.

Here we go. People say, okay Shane, I understand, and I saw this on Facebook, I told her I might use these. But I don't know what to say.

Amen? Can you relate to that one? I can sometimes. I got a little tongue-tied, you might find this funny. Me and my wife were out of town just for a few days, and we're talking, and this guy seemed so nice.

You know, he could tell God's Word, Scripture, he was living it. And come to find out, he's a Mormon. I'm sitting there, we're having lunch, and I'm like, oh, mmm.

Do I listen for a little while? Do I say anything? And he goes, oh, you're a non-denominational church? My friend is. And he tells me I'm going to hell, because I believe in all this. And I said, oh, that's interesting.

What are you trusting in? So it caught me off guard, because I wasn't prepared for that. So what do you say? Fortunately, I gave him a book and said, here, contact me if you have some questions. I want to talk to you about this a little bit more, but it wasn't the right setting.

Also, how do you say it? How do I say it? Or they'll take it the wrong way. What about this one? But I'm not a good example. I'm not a perfect example.

They see my life. Let's talk about these briefly. I don't know what to say.

Well, what I recommend is learn a few things. Learn a few things about your faith, just bullet points that you can grow in and learn. Do you know what Mormonism believes, or Jehovah Witness, or different cults? Fortunately, you don't have to have a whole list.

You ask them, what do you do with Jesus Christ? Because most of them will add to the work on the cross. Yeah, we believe in Jesus too, but you have to be a member of our church. We believe in Jesus too, but you have to worship on Saturday.

We believe in Jesus too, but you have to go door to door and knock and do good things. You can isolate and have some scriptures handy. Not by works, by faith alone, and that he's the only way, the only truth, the only life.

Just be prepared. Don't try to just wing it. Do a little bit of studying.

Contend for the faith. Study yourself to be approved, rightly dividing the word of truth. And also, watch Ray Comfort sometimes.

His videos are funny. Dave told me he spoke here, right here, 15 years ago or so, 16 years ago. So that's what I do.

I watch a lot of videos, I read books, I read the Bible, of course. And you just have a better understanding of what your friends believe. How do you say it? Well, that's pretty easy.

Say it with love. You seek to listen. You never want to go into this, I'm going to win this argument.

No, no, no, no. You enter with love. Listen to them, with the person I was talking to.

I would listen and say, have you thought about this? Because either Jesus Christ is right or Joseph Smith is right. You can't have them both. What do you mean? Well, did you know that Jesus said this? That God is not human, he's spirit.

And those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. And God was from creation, God's always been. In his state, Joseph Smith said that God was once like us.

God was once like us, me, and someday I'll be like God. Did you know that Bible calls that blasphemy? What do you mean? Well, we're not like God. God was not like us.

And you give them things to think about. Remember, you're not trying to win an argument, you're just planting seeds. They'll take it the wrong way.

Yeah, they might. They may take it the wrong way, but if it comes from love, you planted seeds. I've had a lot of discussions, which I'm sure some of you have, with atheists or Mormons, different groups, and often, I'd say nine times out of ten, it ends fine.

LGBT and those who struggle with homosexuality, and I look at them as anyone who struggles with any other sin. There's not way up here on the sin, anybody struggling with sin. We love them.

We point them to the cross. We point them to Jesus Christ, the hope. And they can listen to you and hear you and hear your heart.

If you're not arguing and your tone's respectful, and, hey, have you considered this? Well, I appreciate your heart. Boy, you really seem to have a sincere faith in what you're believing, but we can be sincerely wrong, too. Want me to show you? It's often not what you say, but how you say it.

But ultimately, yes, you will ruffle some feathers. The gospel ruffles feathers, and we have to remember that. But I'm not a perfect example.

Well, for me, not being a perfect example is a great opportunity to share why we need Jesus. And you can even tell the person, hey, you've seen me before. You've seen me get angry and upset, and I apologize for that.

You've seen me do this and hold an unforgiveness, and I've apologized for that. You've seen this in me, and that's why I need Jesus. I'm perfect.

And, see, that's a big misconception out there. A friend of mine was struggling on Facebook, and I was going to respond, but I didn't. Somebody I'm kind of helping with, I've known for a long time, struggling with alcohol.

He keeps falling into it, and he's posting things like, I'm a hypocrite, I can't do this. And I want to remind him, you're struggling. You're struggling.

A hypocrite is someone who intentionally deceives you. It's a Greek word that comes from putting on a mask. I'm this today, I'm this tomorrow.

So there's not a lot of hypocrites in the church. There are, coming in to intentionally deceive. Oh, praise you, brother, knowing they're going to leave here and just be as mean and nasty as ever.

They're a hypocrite. But somebody who's struggling in sin is not a hypocrite. If there's anybody in this room not struggling with sin, I would love to meet you after the service.

Tell me, how do you accomplish that? How do you keep that tongue in your mouth? And that anger? You know, lashing out at people. Yeah, anger. How do you keep that? How do you not stumble or fumble here and there? So see, we have to encourage people, and it's a perfect example.

When I was in construction, I was not a good example sometimes. They knew I didn't drink. They knew I didn't do sin.

But boy, I almost beat the tar out of this one guy. It wasn't good. I had to go back and I apologized.

So it wasn't right of me, you know, and I apologized and said, but if you open your mouth like that again, I'm going to pop you. But joking with them, you know. And so I had to ask for forgiveness a few different times.

But people see that. See, people see, when you do that, they see that it's genuine. Okay, it's real.

I like this person because they see it anyway. We might as well admit it. But here's how many people get out of contending.

We say, I'm not their judge, and I'm not their jury. I see these mega pastors on like the Today Show and Oprah, different things, and the question often comes up, you know, well, what do you think about gay marriage? What do you tell gay, well, I'm not the judge. I'm not their jury.

I'm just called Oprah to love people. No, you're a coward. You've just been given an opportunity to tell millions of people the truth that, hey, I love all these people.

We struggle with sin, but I would tell them that this is not right according to God's word. The Bible's clear on this issue. That's contending for the faith.

But they say, I'm not their judge, I'm not their jury, it's not up to me. But you're a proclaimer of truth you're a defender of doctrine, you're a broadcaster of righteousness. How can you remain silent? And here's what I've learned, you're either turning toward God or turning away from him.

Galatians 1, 6 through 9, I marvel, we might actually have it up there, Galatians 1, I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of Jesus Christ to a different gospel, which is not another, but one who would trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. Now this is important, you need to learn this scripture, you need to even show people, I believe the Mormons will even have this in their Bible and other Jehovah's Witnesses might have it in their Bible, I didn't check this week, I probably should have, but this famous verse, though we or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel than what we have preached, let him be accursed.

What is the gospel?

The main gospel, most of you know, praise God, but not everybody knows, the main thrust of the gospel, the gospel means good news, I was dead in my sin and trespasses, I was under the wrath and condemnation of God, that's not very popular, that's not very popular, but it's the truth, but God rescued me and you and those who believe through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, so you can't add anything to that, I've told you before when I talked to that priest of a large Catholic church, I said, why do you promote purgatory, well we have to be purged of our sins and guilt, no, no, no, no, that's the point of the cross, if that's not what the cross is for, did Jesus go up and do an incomplete work, a partial work, I almost got it for you guys, now if you could just finish it, see

that's blasphemy, that is heretical, to use that word heresy just means a self-willed opinion that opposes the truth, to say we have to go somewhere and be punished for our shame and guilt and sin after we've already acknowledged Christ and we are believers is not correct, it's adding, adding to the gospel, that's another gospel, that's another truth that is not taught in scripture, so maybe you need the gospel this morning, you need the good news, have you repented of your sin and believed, have you repented, it's that simple, oh the simple gospel, we sing that song, the simple gospel, next week I'm going to talk about the trademarks of a false prophet, but here's what I want to, it's kind of going to be a long ending so I don't know when I'll leave, maybe 5, 10 more minutes or 15, so

here's the key, is Jesus the central, the main, the core focus, that's how you determine something is true or not, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh is not of God, it's really that simple, what do you do with Jesus, see so here's the definition of a cult, you hear the word cult right, a cult is a group of people that deviate from the essential, essential scriptural truth, they deviate from it, so that guy Dave Koresh in Waco, when you're drinking Kool-Aid, somebody just told me on Facebook, hey you're drinking

Kool-Aid, I said I'm drinking the truth, you're drinking Kool-Aid, because they, remember the Kool-Aid guy, they poison themselves, Jonestown and you know

cultish, a lot of other groups are cultish, meaning they deny, deny the main truth is that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life, he is the son of God, end of story, the essentials of the Christian faith, now when they deviate from that, they're called a cult, for example, the Roman Catholic Church, when I talked to that priest, he told me that one of the problems they have with denominations is, you have so many denominations, but see we are the one true church, and I want to remind them that no, when you look the same, taste the same, smell the same everywhere you go, that's a reflection of a cult, a denomination, there's freedom in Christ, there's differences in their distinction, but they all have the essentials of the Christian faith, they all agree to the essentials,

but if you go somewhere and it's the same thing, the same room, the same building, the same setup, that is control and that is cult, that's a cult like thing, now you can go somewhere, Calvary chapels have Calvary chapel distinctives, the four square, vineyard, reformed churches, there's a lot of freedom, we just are non-denominational because we just don't line up with a certain denomination, we take the good from all of them, I don't know who we would line up if we did, but a lot of churches are non-denominational, not because they think they're special, but just because, for example Pentecostals believe that the evidence of the spirit is speaking in tongues only, I wouldn't agree with that, the reformed denomination follows out of the reformation, the way they believe the rapture, you

have to believe that a person can possibly walk away from their faith, their form of church government is one person leading, where we have a plurality of elders, so you have differences, but it's not over the essentials, and then this group breaks up from this group, but they're all still focused on the essentials, cults often look the same exact way, you go to one in Wisconsin, you go to one in Las Vegas, you go to one in LA, it's the same type of structure, same type of control, and a lot of times they want to control your money, so let's just read this from a website, yes, and I'll tell you who it is afterwards, yes we believe in Jesus, we have faith that Jesus came to earth from heaven and gave his perfect human life as a ransom sacrifice, we also believe that Jesus is now ruling as

king of God's heavenly kingdom, however, we take Jesus at his word when he said the father is greater than I am, so we do not worship Jesus, let me circle that one for the next service, make sure I don't forget that, we do not worship Jesus as we do not believe that he is almighty God, let me just stamp, JW.org, I pulled it right from this website, you want to know what to say when they knock on your door, just show them this, but see here's where they make the mistake, the ones I've talked to they don't have, here's the scary part, why I feel for this group, they don't have certainty of salvation, there's no certainty, we don't know until the end, until we make sure we don't get confused on one verse, when Jesus said the father is greater than I am, they forgot about the doctrine of

incarnation, the bible says that Jesus became less than the angels, taking on the form of a man, he became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross, so Jesus humbled himself, again the doctrine of incarnation, he humbled himself, took on the form of man, fully God and fully man, so he lowered himself, he humbled himself, that's why in Philippians, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation, so as he humbles himself he can say the father is greater than I, you have that one verse, but you have, I could have read a dozen verses, but I'm just going to read you two, John 1.18, no one has ever seen God but the one and only son who is himself God, and is

the closest relationship with the father, he has made him known, John 10.33, we are not stoning you for any good work, they replied, but blasphemy because you, a mere man, claim to be God, and we could keep going over these, the reason is, why would they say that, they also don't like the concept of hell, so they remove that, and this is what cracks me up, about this topic, what I'm talking to you about, it's not going to sit well with some people, Jehovah Witness or Mormon, or even Roman Catholicism, all I'm doing, is reading what they said, or in the Roman Catholic Church purgatory, what they teach, and what the Bible says, or what they said at the Bible, now I'm just, just reading what each teaches, that's it, but see, something you always have to remember, truth, when you have the

truth of God's word, it invites scrutiny, it says come on, I invite your scrutiny, when you have air, you run from it, I've asked the church down the street, a half dozen times, let's talk about the differences, unless an act from almighty God, that is not going to happen, why, let's see what the Bible says, let's look at the truth, no, let's not, but he suggested we can do a community event together, okay, if we can talk later about the differences, or I'll sit down with the guys in the door, let's talk about, oh no, no, let me go get my elders, you're knocking on my door, trying to win me to your faith, but don't go get your elders, you better know what you know what you know, let's talk about these things, I've got family members, can we sit down and can I show you, no, no, I don't

want to talk about it, why, because it's a cult, it's demonic, it's not, when you talk about the son of God, and the truth of God's word, who in the world is going to want to sit down and talk about that, because the demons will even flee with the mention of God's truth, they don't want to hear God's truth, and he's going to show them the light, that's impossible, I remember I was at a Mormon bishop's house, many years ago now, we first started the church, and after an hour of giving us a spill, I finally read this scripture, though an angel from heaven preaches any other gospel, let him be a curse, this book is of the devil, I think so, and that was out, get your shoes, let's go out of my house, why are you so mad, if you have the truth, share it with me, for the love of God, if you have

the truth, share it with me, if I'm dying, if I'm on my way to hell, share the truth with me, why can't you share the truth with me, there's no other truth, so it is above everything, the name of Christ is above every other name, so when you go in with the word of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Christ, you already have authority and dominion, that in and of itself is the strength you need, and that's all you need, but they won't listen, they're getting upset, who cares, it's the truth, remember that truth invites scrutiny, I'll sit down with any group, and share what the Bible says, there's a local atheist group, I've told them three or four times, hey I'd love to come to your group, I might bring some bodyguards, but I'd love to come to your group, let's sit down,

let's talk about, I'm so deceived, and I'm naive, and I'm stupid, I'm an idiot for believing there's a God, let's talk about it, let's talk about it, nobody jumps the opportunity, why?

Because you're coming with almighty God, they have nothing, but a lying deception, Mormons believe that all men and women, ever to be born, including Jesus Christ, lived with God as his spirit children, see right there, that's not correct, that's so out there, do you know, maybe it's just me, but the Bible is clear, and then you have this teaching that says, you'll be like God someday, you'll be married, to your spirit wife, and have celestial sex, and have spirit children, and rule planets, am I in the twilight zone?

I mean, again I'm not trying to mock, because I know some of you say, but this believes, and it's blasphemous, you believe this, you're on the highway to hell, that's not an ACDC song, that's a reality, my

Lord, this is serious stuff, they believe that God was once like us, I told you this, and lived on earth, he was resurrected, glorified, and grew into his deified state, according to Joseph Smith, and I could read more, and more, and more, for example, they believe you'll be married in heaven, that's why there's marriage ceremonies, are sealed in the temple secretive, and just whisper, Jesus said there's no marriage in heaven, you'll be like the angels, so who's right, Joseph Smith, or Jesus Christ?

Joseph Smith says he found, he found, some tablets, but we don't know where they're at anymore, and guess what, and some special glasses, to read the tablets, and this angel told him, that all churches, for the last 1850 years, have been wrong, and God's going to give him the restored gospel, so that means Spurgeon, D.L.

Moody, Ignatius Polycarp, Arrhenius, the church fathers, all the early beliefs and teachings were all wrong, but now this man has got the revealed truth, by special spectacles, and tablets, but nobody will let me tell them that, because they don't want to talk about it, and they've been warned, oh no, no, no, no, Christians are brainwashed, they're going to try to tell you, things just don't, don't go there with them, but folks, we have to, we have to pray, that spiritual blindness, is taken away, we have to pray that, let's pray that after the service, because God has to, take away that spiritual blindness, you're going to, they say, well we believe in the Bible, as much as it's interpreted correctly, or transcribed, edited correctly, we believe it, but we put these other books above it,

so you have a Bible, where you can go find, where Jesus walked, you can go confirm it, in Roman historian, Jewish historian, Josephus, historians, it's in, Britannica, what's that big encyclopedia, it's all documents, all there, the kings, the kingdom, the coins, the tools, everything is there, but when you get to the Book of Mormon, nothing can be found, nothing, so you're building your life on, you're changing, drifting from God, because some guy, found tablets, an angel spoke to him, if we are an angel, from above speaks to you, any other gospel, let him be accursed, watch out for Satan, because he comes as a, angel, of light, how many, how many false religions, started because somebody, spoke to them, an angel spoke to them, here's what happens, we drift, from God, when we are not

anchored, we drift, when the force pulling us away, is greater than the desire, pulling us back to God, so if you're drifting, that's probably what happening, is happening, something is pulling you, away from God, and that pull, is stronger, than your desire to return, that's what drifting is, drifting from the truth, so this church, was drifting from the truth, and Jude said, no come back, contend for the faith, contend, and we drift, when we have lost our motivation, and our desire, to serve God, so I want to leave you, with this thought, this morning, return to your first love, if you know, if you know Christ, and you've drifted, just return to your first love, if you don't know him, repent and believe, repent, saying I see sin, as God sees it, and I'm repenting, I'm turning from that,

there was such a good testimony, that came in, I have to share this, with you, it's on our Facebook page, I might share it, in the bulletin too, there's a lady, by the name of Liz, she actually transcribes, every word I'm saying right now, into sermon notes, so if you ever want those, they are available, I believe under our audio section, and she really cleans them up, praise God, because I'm glad, she doesn't put every word, and she was working on, one I did a while back, on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I didn't know where, she was going to stand on that, but obviously I find out, we're on the same page, but I said, so tell me your story, and she said, listen I want you to listen, staff, ushers, media, sound, children's ministry, who's ever listening, listen to this, because I

believe, this is for many of you, in this room, staff, members, all of us, my Christianity, went from a dead fish hypocrite, to an on fire, loving the word, loving prayer, loving people, person, I was saved in 1997, and I looked like your typical, Christian homeschooling mom, active at church, but we never opened the Bible, until church on Sunday, I taught with Christian materials, but we never had family devotions, and worst of all, I did not have a love, for people, that's the key, that's the key, if you do not have a love, for people, and she went on to say, I yelled at my kids a lot, anger was a mark of her, but in the spring of 2011, I was looking over, our new curriculum, for the kids, called my father's world, some of you know, what that is, which contain a set, of missionary

biographies, which I started to read, I read one book, after another, and thought to myself, these people are willing, to die for Christ, why am I not like that, what do they have, that I don't have, at the same time, that was happening, the Holy Spirit, was convicting me, about my anger, and yelling at my kids, I was doubting my faith, living a double life, it seemed that, Jesus wasn't even real, maybe all this, was just made up, maybe I got suckered, into believing this, one day my husband, had to go out of town, I put the kids to bed, and then had this talk, with God, I was crying, and thinking, about all of these things, and specifically, remember asking myself, am I even a Christian, I sort of had it out, with God that night, and that's a good thing, I would encourage you, to do

that, because he will win, but nothing extraordinary, happened I fell asleep, except that the next day, I was totally, a different person, yelling stopped, almost immediately, I was so full of love, for people, and so hungry, for the word of God, and for prayer, we start a prayer meeting, in our home, born again, became a literal thing to me, not just a Christian term, I knew what it meant, other things begin to change, my choices of movies, and television, the shows I watched, I wouldn't just push, the envelope anymore, I didn't want, to watch the things, of the world, I was interested, in what God wanted, for a long time, I'm ending here, I thought that I was saved, at that time, for a long time, I thought that I was saved, at that time, and not years earlier, because people told me,

there's no such thing, as the baptism, of the Holy Spirit, call it what you want, but I know that 1997, I felt a real, physical burden, being lifted, when I believed, but then something different, happened eight years later, I've been telling you guys, this for eight years, I believe you have, all of the Holy Spirit, at conversion, but does he have all of you, no, in the case of many people, he doesn't, that's why God, is distant, that's why you hear me, talk about these missionaries, are dying for Christ, it's the last thing, you want to do, and I'm just telling you this, because I love you, I love you enough, to tell you the truth, that many people, are not filled, with the Holy Spirit, the very thing they need, is the very thing, they're running from, what she experienced, is the fully

surrendered life, she got to the end of herself, see she was following, all the rules, you catch a homeschooling mom, the Bible, Christian, but that's not enough, that's not enough, the heart has to break, so maybe this would be, a good opportunity, this morning during worship, is to say like what she said, wrestle out with God, and say God, I'm surrendering my life to you, I'm surrendering everything to you, Joel 2.13, he said, rend your hearts, rend your hearts, and not your garments, now return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious, and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love, Jeremiah go, and proclaim these words, to the north, Jeremiah's proclaiming, he's in Judah, he's south in Judah, he's proclaiming these words, to the north, possibly even Israel, what's the words,

Jeremiah, return, return faithless Israel, and declares the Lord, and I will not look upon you, for in anger, for I am gracious, thus sayeth the Lord, there's always this call, that goes out, return to the God, return to

God, with prayer, and brokenness, and humility, fully surrendering your life, what type of Christian, only gives God a portion, that type of Christian, is miserable, miserable, when we don't give God, everything, and of course it comes up, when I talk about this, well I can never do that, that's impossible, to be perfect, you're right, I haven't given God everything, I'll freely admit that to you, the sin is there, the flesh is there, it fights every step of the way, but what you do, is you say God, I'm giving you everything, this morning, my finances, my addictions, my

friends, my time with you, I don't know you like I should, worship's boring, I can't wait to get out of here, I'm hungry, I want this Christianity, that you talk about, that Shane talked, I want it, I want it, what's wrong with me, God says that's all I need, that's all I need, a humble broken person, to admit it, because most of us don't do that, we do this, I've been a Christian 30 years, I'm through that Bible once a year, my grandpapa was a pastor, my whole family, I'm a Christian, no, but does God have your heart, that's a good test, do you truly love people, do you truly love people, are you pretty ticked off at people, critical spirit, angry, don't want to deal with people, or do you truly love them, because when you fully surrender your life, God will give you that love, and then

you will contend for the faith, because it comes out of you, what comes out of you, is what's already inside of you, so this whole message on contending for the faith, if you're just going to try to wing it, yeah that sounds good, but if you say let me try that out, it's not going to work, because whatever is inside comes out, for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, so get right with God, fully surrender your life, and watch what God does, I'm sure many people are going to say, but Shane you talk about this a lot, how long are you going to do that, when everybody fully surrenders their life, in this church, I will stop, I will stop, when I see, is that a deal, when I come in here and go, my Lord, this church is broken, they're humbled before God, they don't want to leave,

the services are flowing into the next, this altar is full, people are crying out to God, God's delivering, He's setting free, people are broken and worshiping God, they can't get enough of God, I better switch my subject matter now, but until we get there, we are going to contend for this truth, because I believe God can show us, piece by piece, areas that are lacking, that God wants everything, and you can experience what Liz experienced, that, what I just read, is the abundant, victorious, Christian life, that's what it is, the spirit filled life, this is abundant life.

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