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Contend for the Faith

By Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

What a time in which we are living! The last decade has brought so much change to our nation and culture it is quite shocking. This change, unfortunately, has not been for the better.

Back in 2012, North Carolina voters approved an amendment that would recognize that marriage between a man and woman would be the only marriage that would be recognized in this state. Of course, we all know that the will of the majority of the voters, not only in N.C. but in states across this nation, was overruled by the supreme court, and same-sex marriage was legalized in our nation. Warning after warning was sounded across this land from conservative leaders, preachers, and pastors about what was about to happen. I personally can remember telling my congregation about the dangers of removing a boundary that should never have been crossed. We warned over and over that once that definition was changed, it would figuratively open up a "can of worms". Once that line is crossed, anything goes. The supporters of same-sex marriage kept saying that would not happen. Well, fast forward to today!

Look at what is taking place in our nation. Men are now saying they want to identify as a woman. Women are saying they can identify as a man. Politicians in our government and professors of supposed higher education are proclaiming that there are unlimited possibilities of the number of genders one could identify. Biological men are now participating in women's athletics and winning. Our presidential administration gave a national award for women too, you guessed it, a man! Regardless of how ridiculous it may sound to most folk with common sense, this lunacy has gained traction and attention across the land. Those who would dare speak up against this ideology, are vilified, harassed, and declared ignorant. The powers to be are now demanding that the rest of us join in on this madness. All of a sudden, biology, science, education, and basic common sense have been tossed away and replaced with "wokeism".

Well, it should not be surprising at all what unbelievers, lost people, and those who claim no relationship with Jesus will say and do. But what should surprise us is what is happening in so-called Christian churches, leadership, and organizations that are supporting and condoning this kind of ungodly and wicked behavior. Basically what is being promoted, is that one can name the name of Jesus and live any way you want. No repentance, no Lordship of Christ over their lives, & no striving for righteous and holy living. Just proclaim Jesus, and because of God's grace, you can live and do any way you choose, even if it contradicts the Bible.

Jude addressed this kind of teaching in his letter.

Verses 3-4 "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*
For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

False teachers had crept into the church, distorting the grace of God in salvation and turning it into decadence and immoral freedom. Basically teaching, because they are saved by God's grace, unmerited favor, they can use grace as an opportunity to do whatever they want. They even denied the lordship of Christ over the life of the believer which leads to repentance and Godly living. Jude goes on to talk of how God's judgment would be brought to those who teach such heresy.

This kind of teaching is exactly what is going on in our culture today among many who claim Christ. They are teaching that a person can come to Jesus without repentance or allowing Him to have Lordship over their life. They are teaching that you can name the name of Jesus as your Savior but you can continue to live any way you choose, even if it is in direct contradiction to the Scriptures. This is a false doctrine that is being taught and it must be corrected.

Jude pleaded with the Christians of his day to contend for the faith. He taught that true Christians must combat this false doctrine with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I recognize that this is straightforward teaching. For many, it will be hard to swallow. But I'm afraid that this culture around us has crept into many churches and allowed this teaching to happen. We must contend for the true Gospel of Christ. I believe with all my heart that we are saved totally and freely by the grace of God and by His grace alone. But that same grace that saves our soul is also the same grace that leads us to a repentant life that follows Jesus as Lord. Do not be deceived by false teaching just because it's popular or will keep us from possible persecution. The souls of men are depending on us to contend for the faith!

Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.

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