

A Contending Church

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a contending church, as exemplified by the Antioch Church in Acts 15. The speaker highlights the need for churches to stand firm against false teachings and to protect the integrity of the gospel, as seen through the challenges faced by Paul, Barnabas, and Peter. The message calls for vigilance and courage in confronting errors that threaten the faith, encouraging believers to contend earnestly for the truth of the gospel. The sermon also illustrates how a single leader's stand can impact an entire church and its mission. Ultimately, it urges the congregation to be a church that does not compromise on biblical truths.

Scripture: Acts 15:1-2, Jude 1:3, Galatians 2:11-14, 1 Timothy 6:12, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 1:27, Hebrews 10:23

Topics: "Contending for the Faith", "Church Integrity"

Description

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Transcript

Let's go to the Word of God tonight, Acts chapter 15. I want you to turn there to Acts chapter 15. I want to bring you back into this series on the Antioch Church, a vision for LCC, a vision for Limerick City Church, but it's not confined to us.

We have no personal, special, unique vision for this church. We haven't written out a special vision or calling for ourselves. Our vision in this church, our peculiar part to play is uniquely biblical.

And what I preach in this series is for every church and every nation and every culture of every generation, these things apply to them. And so tonight we're coming to part seven of this series, and I'm changing gear. I can't help it because this is a vital part to do with the Antioch Church.

Let me just remind you before we read from Acts chapter 15, where we have been. In part one, we talked about an evangelistic church that was dynamically evangelistic. In part two, we talked about a gifted

church, the gifted preaching ministry of prophets and teachers and apostles.

In part three, we dealt with a culturally diverse church that the church and the leadership of the church were from different nations, different colors, different languages within the same church. And then we looked in part four, it was a Christ-like church. Their Christ-likeness lifestyle was so dynamic, they were called Christians.

In part five, we said it was a ministering church, ministering to the world, ministering to other Christians, ministering to God. And then the last time, I think it was two or three weeks ago, and we're going to move on here. In part six, we said the Antioch Church was a missionary church.

It sent out apostles. Most stayed, but they sent out vibrant apostolic ministry across nations that raised up many, many churches like Corinth and Ephesus. And now we come to part seven.

You see, having dealt with these six previous parts, all that I've just said, reminding you, look at this church. It's dynamic. It is powerful.

It is spreading. It is influential. It is dynamic.

You would say, nothing can stop this church. This is an on-airing church. It's a dynamic church.

It's a powerful church. You wouldn't think there was any problems in this church, would you? But we're going to begin to deal with it tonight in part seven. This is part seven tonight, and I want you to listen carefully because this is a dynamic church impacting its city, its nation, now many nations.

And right at that point, something happens. I call this message part seven, a contending church, a contending church. And you know what I want you to know? Sometimes one man, one preacher, one man of God can still make a stand in a church, a movement, or in a certain area that his life impacts an entire church at a time where the church needs to contend.

It could easily not contend, and everything could depend on one man, one leader in that church to make it a contending church. Reading from Galatians chapter 2 in verse one, our message tonight, a contending church. Verse one, and certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren.

That is an Antioch. We're dealing with Antioch. This is about Antioch.

Certain brethren came down and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and the elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and of the apostles and the elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good time ago, God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the

word of the gospel and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bared them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

Then all the multitude kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me. And I could continue reading this, but I want to preach from this here tonight on Antioch as a contending church.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the word of God. It is profitable, Lord God, to instruct us, to teach us, to edify us, to rebuke us, to correct us, Lord God, to stir up these hearts, to believe you.

Father, I pray, make LCC, make us so, God, make everyone who hears us, Lord God, even in this message, Lord God, to be part of a contending church. Lord God, thank you that when the Holy Spirit is at work and when error comes in, false teaching, false, Lord God, preachers, Lord God, when foreign things come into the body, Lord God, that you do instruct us to contend for the faith, and Lord God, to dispute with such men, and Lord God, to stand against error. We're not to accept it.

And Father, I pray, set our hearts ablaze tonight. Set us on fire, O God. Give us an indignation against, Lord God, error and heresy and false teachers, my God.

Lord God, that we might rescue the saints of God, those that wobble, those that get confused, those that are prone to go off into error. Help us, O God, to rescue them by your grace and mercy in Jesus' mighty name. Lord God, help us in this message tonight.

Amen. My message of contending church, and I'm going to show you how Antioch was right at the center in the book of Acts, literally, of one of the greatest controversies, one of the most dangerous movements of that generation, one of the greatest attacks of hell upon the real gospel, Antioch stood at the very heart of this, at the center, and this battle was going to rage around this church, and from this church, it would go out into the entire body of Christ, good and bad. This battle that was waged, and I'm going to take you to four points or four battlefields tonight.

See, if you're a contending Christian, you must contend for the faith. It says in the little book of Jude, very simply, verse three, it's a little book. Jude was the brother of Jesus Christ, or the half-brother of Jesus through Mary and Joseph.

Listen to what he says. He lifted up his pen to begin writing on to them about the common salvation, just being born again, being saved by God's grace. He wanted to write to them on that subject, but he said he couldn't.

He couldn't. And so, he begins to exhort those he's writing to, listen carefully to what he says, to earnestly contend for the faith. This half-brother of Jesus called Jude instructs the real church, Christians everywhere.

He says, I instruct you. I want to write just about being born again, being saved, but I couldn't. I had to write and say, contend, fight for the faith.

The word contend here means to fight, or it means a hand-to-hand wrestling match with an enemy. It means to strive, to sweat, to labor, even to the point of exhaustion, to labor or to fight fervently, intensely, to not give any ground, to not yield, to not give up, to wrestle until you have the victory. Now, this word fight in the New Testament is the Greek word agonizeme, where we get our word agony, or to agonize.

In other words, it's saying, Jude is saying, you need to agonize or wrestle to the point of agonizing, agony. You've got to wrestle for the faith, or the truth of the gospel, or sound teaching in the church. You see, there's an hour, there's a time in every church.

You're going to have to fight. You're going to have to agonize. You're going to hear the call, contend earnestly for the faith.

In other words, the body of teaching, the accurate gospel of Jesus, the message of salvation in Christ, by faith, through grace, in Christ alone. At Calvary, you're going to have to agonize. You're going to have to wrestle.

You're going to have to fight for this. The gospel, and it goes on to say, which was once delivered to the saints. What that means is just once transmitted, once for all.

At the beginning God isn't keeping on giving us extra bits of the gospel, or the faith. He delivered the faith once, never to be added to. You have it here in this Bible.

You don't add to it. You don't take away from it. You don't need anything else than is in this book concerning salvation, being born again, being right with God, the righteousness, which is a gift of faith.

It was delivered once for all before Jude's time. He said, it was handed over to you, the body of doctrine in the epistles, in the gospels, it is given to you. What your job is to do is fight for it, protect it, agonize.

Anyone who challenges that, you wrestle with them. He then goes on the next verse, verse four, listen carefully. For there are certain men crept in unawares, unawares.

Notice who they are. Do you know when it says they've crept in unawares, it means to come in sideways, to come in unnoticed, to come in over the door, or it actually means to come in and sit down beside you. And some of you go, oh, where'd you come from? That's what the word actually means.

He comes in and sits down beside you in the church and you don't even notice he's come in. That's how subtle or cunningly he comes in. They crept in unawares or in a dishonest manner or very serpent-like or like undercover agents, CIA, MI5 and whatever other secret agents come in sideways.

They have the appearance of something, but they just want to come in unnoticed, sit there, and then they begin bringing their plans and strategy out. And notice what he says about them, ungodly men. Do you know what sort of men creep into the church with an agenda, with a plan, secretly? Do you know who they are? They're ungodly men.

You know, a real Christian, everything is in the light. If you try to work in this church secretly, covertly, hiddenly, and your motives are hidden, I want to tell you there's something wrong with your heart. That is wrong because a real Christian is always in the light, is always open-hearted, is always upfront about everything.

They don't work covertly behind the scenes trying to gain converts in the church. You don't do that. That reveals something about the heart, the methodology.

And notice here, it actually says ungodly men. You know, when you get an ungodly man, be very careful. Notice that these ungodly men who crept into the church, notice what else Jude says, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

Notice what these ungodly men do, and this is what ungodly men do. They change the grace of God into lasciviousness. In other words, they turn it inside out, upside down, back to front.

Oh, we believe in the grace of God. I want to know what sort of grace you believe in. Oh, we're under grace.

Really? What do you mean by grace? Please define it. Because these ungodly men who had sneaked into the church, you know what they do with the message of grace? They begin turning it back to front. They confuse it.

Oh, they still use the word grace. But look how they confuse it. Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

The word lasciviousness means unbridled lust. In other words, your desires, your passions, what you want, what human nature is, you turn God's grace into that. Unbridled lust, or it can mean filthiness.

In other words, there's no restriction. Unbridled lust means I can do anything. So you take the grace of God and you begin to turn it inside out.

You confuse the message of grace. Say, I can be in grace. I can be in the church.

I can be a Christian, and the grace of God that saved me can allow me to have unbridled lust, to be sinful, to be filthy, to be wicked, to disobey God's word. There's no limit on me. There's no prevention on me.

There's no barrier on me. Please don't tell me. Give me commands.

Please don't tell me if I continue in holiness. You're trying to bring me under law. Do you know what the Bible says? These men who come in begin to change the message of grace.

You need to be very careful of a grace that tolerates sin. If you meet anyone that talks about God's grace and it doesn't restrict sin, disobedience, passions, lust, do you know that's a false grace? That immediately defines it, that that man, that teacher, those believers do not understand the real grace message. They've confused it.

They've changed it. They have destroyed it. That is why Jude says, contend earnestly for the faith.

It's for this reason. Do you see why he calls them to contend, to fight? He says, because there's those that have crept in unawares, in your own midst, and they are ungodly in their lifestyle, and they're changing the message of grace, and they're sitting there beside you. And you know what you need to do? You need to contend.

You need to agonize over it. You don't ignore it. You don't just pray about it.

You don't excuse it. You don't justify it. You know what you do? You agonize against it.

It is poison. It is dangerous. It is unbiblical.

And it says that these, they even go as far as denying the only Lord God or Lord Jesus. They deny Him. Oh, they don't say, I don't believe in Jesus.

They don't say that. The word deny here means to contradict, to contradict. They deny Jesus, but there comes that, I believe in the grace of God.

I believe in Christ. I'm born again. I'm a Christian.

But they are contradicting by their lifestyle, by twisting grace, by changing the word of God, by living ungodly. If you live ungodly and yet claim the grace of God, oh, I'm in grace. I'm born again.

And yet you're filthy. You are contradicting Christ, Jesus. I could be in grace, under grace.

I preach grace, but I preach a grace that tolerates sin, allows sin. You can never restrict my grace. Then your grace is no grace.

If your grace doesn't have barriers and boundaries and commands and doesn't challenge the flesh, your grace is not real grace. And I want to tell you, it is contradicting the Lord Jesus Christ. And so my four points, that just gives you a backdrop to what I'm about to say.

Here in Acts chapter 15, we come again to the church at Antioch. Look what it says in Acts 15 in verse 1. And here's my first point, the first battlefield, contending at Antioch, contending at Antioch. Acts 15 verse 1, and certain men, notice that phrase, certain men.

It's like Jude, certain men, certain men. I've met them along the way. Certain men, which came down from Judea.

In other words, from Jerusalem. Do you know here they say come down, but if you look in the map, they go up, because Jerusalem was always the center, always the high ground. So they said, they came down from Judea, from Jerusalem, certain men.

And said, and look what it says, they taught the brethren. They actually come from Judea, from Jerusalem, into the church at Antioch. See all the things we've preached for this week.

Just think of the church at Antioch, what it looks like. There's Barnabas. There's Paul.

There's the church evangelizing, on fire for God, growing, spreading. It's a missionary church. The first missionary journey's over.

It lasted two years. Now Paul and Barnabas are back again. What happens? Thank God they were there.

Certain men come in and begin to teach. Do you know what happens in the church? Certain men come in, and immediately they think they have a right to sit at these tables, and begin to sit in your living room, and sit around in our fellowship, and come into this church, and they begin to teach. You know that word teach? It's talking about a methodical, deliberate teaching.

In other words, they had a whole teaching they were presenting. It wasn't just opinions. It just wasn't thought.

They bring in an entire teaching. These men who come in, these certain men, and they come into the church at Antioch, and there's not just one of them. There's a bunch of them, and they begin to teach.

They sit around in fellowship times. They begin to get invited. Do you want to go for a cup of tea? Of course, they never said that.

They had some other chai, or whatever. Chai, whatever it was. They are coming into the church, and they begin to fellowship, and they're in the church, and they begin to teach.

They're systematically teaching. These are men who've traveled 300 miles by foot, by road. They actually travel all that distance.

Why? They deliberately come to Antioch with a deliberate message to do a deliberate job in Antioch. Look at all that's happening there. These men come.

They're not going to sinners. They're not evangelizing the lost. They're not pioneering new churches.

They're coming into an established good church that's functioning, and they begin to teach. They have an agenda. They have walked 300 miles, and they begin to teach.

What do they teach? Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved. That's not what Paul taught, not what Barnabas taught. Here they are.

They come right into the church at Antioch. Can you imagine the brazenness? Of course, if you've been around here a bit of time, you do understand the brazenness, because for 10 years in this church, it's happened time, after time, after time, after time, and someone's got to contend for that. Christians go, surely you Christians ought not to fight.

Who says? Who says? It's a command by Jude. It's the example of the Bible. It's the example of Jesus.

Oh, I'm a peace-loving man. Honestly, I am. I'm a lovely man, and a gracious man, and a kind man.

I'm filled with charity. I'm filled with love. Until someone comes preaching error, then I'm a fighter.

I will contend against error. You just watch. If you haven't seen me like that, just hang around for a bit, because every time it appears here, I'll go from being a loving shepherd to a contentant fighter, a soldier of Jesus Christ.

That's who I am. And so they come in, and they begin to teach, you need to be circumcised to be fully saved. Being saved by faith isn't enough.

By the blood isn't enough. By the finished work of the cross isn't enough. You need this, and this, and this, and there's no end to that.

Once you begin going down that avenue, there's no end to their message of salvation. And yet they bring this in. And notice, they weren't standing in the pulpit.

They weren't allowed up there. They're in the congregation. They're doing this secretly.

They're beginning to move amongst people in the church. Be very careful who comes in here to try and teach. Don't go to YouTube for your teaching.

Begin to test the things with the Word of God. And so here come in these men. And it says, when therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension.

Do you know when it says no small, it means it was a mighty dissension. It was a large dissension and disputation with them. Now look at this, Paul and Barnabas.

It didn't say the whole church, but I'm talking about a contending church. You need men in this church, leaders who know what they're doing. You need a Barnabas.

You need a Paul who when this happens will stand. And what do they do? Dissension, not a small dissension. You know what? You'll see a mighty dissension from this preacher.

You say, but you're just meant to love everyone. No, I am not. No, I am not.

Not when error and false teaching is trying to be brought in. Absolutely not. And so it says, Paul and Barnabas, there was no small dissension.

It means to stir up a rebellion, an insurrection, to uproot sedition. In other words, a violent commotion, a upheaval of everything, a disturbance of the peace. You know, if someone comes in here with false teaching, I'm going to create a stir.

I'll cancel a meeting. I'll stand up. I'll point it out.

I'll speak against it. You know, Nehemiah, that beautiful man, I identify with him greatly in the Old Testament. If there's one character I identify, it's Nehemiah, his temperament, personality, character, his manner of doing things.

But you just watch calm, calculated, cool, smooth Nehemiah. You just watch him thinking before he acts, careful of his words, careful of his decisions, very slow, maybe a bit slow. Some would think he's too slow.

No, he's very deliberate. But do you know what? When he sees revival, then he goes away and he comes back and they've got compromised and the wrong influences come in. Do you know what he does? He goes off his head and begins to pluck their beards and pull their hair.

You're watching a very different man. You know why? Because he's contending for the faith. Who let this in the house of God? If I went away on a two-year mission trip and I come back here and you've let everything in that I preached against for 10 years, I assure you, you're going to see a different man in this pulpit.

And that shouldn't scare you. That shouldn't bother you because it's protective. It's good.

It's loving. It's caring. It's healthy for you.

You know, I'm not an angry man. I'm not innately an angry man. If I get angry, it's very deliberate, slow calculated, and it's against something that's very dangerous.

That's who I am. And so Paul and Barnabas stir up this dissension with these men. And it says a disputation.

That means quizzing. Listen this careful to question, dispute, controversy, argument. Oh, we're not going to argue about small little things and words.

I know we're not. Sure, we don't argue in here. You know that.

We don't sit and debate argument around the tables. We're not there picking up silly things. I don't pounce on every little issue in your life that you need to work through sanctification on over the next 10 years.

We don't do that. We just deal with things as they arise. But listen to me.

We ought to be when false teachers come in, our false teaching, we ought to begin to quiz, ask questions. Oh, you shouldn't be questioning me. Yes, I should.

If you're bringing error, what do you mean by that? What's your understanding of grace? Why are you teaching people in this church? Why are you doing this? What's your motive? Where are you going with this? What exactly are you saying saves a man or woman? And so you see these two gifted godly leaders, they are disputing, quizzing, questioning, holding to account, arguing. I will argue with false teachers. Let them come in here.

I'm not going to go out into their churches. I'm not going to argue with them on the street. But if they come in here, I'll go, hold on a second.

Just stop right there. And then it says, in the light of this, when this is happening, they stopped the mouse of these false teachers. They brought it to an abrupt start.

You know what they've done? They protected Antioch from this. They contended. They're a contentent church.

Then it goes on to say, they determined, talking about the church, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles. Notice it's the church determined, decided, said, we have to do this. The word determined means to arrange in an orderly manner, to create a pattern.

I'm sure the souf of the Antioch church must have been going, now here's your travel plan. Here's your tickets. Here's where you have to go.

Take this route on your way to Jerusalem. Be careful of this, Ben. There's a lot of robbers in around that area.

There's no Ryanair flights at that point. But here you have, they, the church, determined, they arranged. And again, notice they send out two missionaries.

Now they send these two men and say, go to Jerusalem. Go to Jerusalem. Go deal with this.

Go to Jerusalem. Bring it into the light. You're not going to hide these things, say, we don't want any arguments with Jerusalem.

We shouldn't be stirring this issue up. No, go to Jerusalem. What, because it's the headquarters where the apostles are? Is that why? Because it's the mother church? No, not at all.

This wasn't a headquarters. You know why you go to Jerusalem? Because the problem came from Jerusalem. Not because they have apostles.

Not because it's Jerusalem. Not because it's the mother church. That's where the problem came from.

These men came up from Judea, that area, that city. So go there, get to the root of it. Bring it into the light. Expose it. Challenge it. Where it originate, go check the facts.

Go to the very root and heart of this thing. Find out what is actually going on. So that's what they've done.

But it says that certain other men went with them as well. Now the book of Acts doesn't tell you who went with Paul and Barnabas. So here's an issue in Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas saved the day. They contend against this. They wrestle with it.

They say, no, no, no, no, no, no room for it. Oh, let's dialogue. No, it's error.

It's false teaching. Well, well, can't we all just agree to differ? No, we can't. This is error.

You're talking about how a man gets saved. You're talking about salvation. There's no negotiation here.

No discussion. You can't sit in this church and say, well, I just believe about the blood differently, or how you're saved, or I don't believe you need to be holy. Then you're a heretic.

You're in error. You're in deception. You're going to damage your soul.

We can't just be silent on that. Oh, live and let live. No, no, we won't do that.

Oh, well, you have your view. I have my view. No, absolutely not.

Oh, we're very broad on worship. We're very broad on many different things. We're broad on many issues that are important, but this is essential.

There's no discussion about it. Salvation is an essential doctrine. We don't discuss.

We don't give room to anybody else. We cannot do that. It says in verse two, and other men also, who went with Paul and Barnabas, Titus.

If you go to the book of Galatians, you find out they took a man called Titus with them. It's the first mention of Titus in the entire New Testament. Titus is mentioned four times in Paul's letters.

Only four times, but he's a very important preacher, but this is him as a young man at an early stage. He is going to go into this situation. Who is Titus? Why is Titus going with them from Antioch? Do you know what is his first mention? I believe he could have been from the church in Antioch.

He could have been a citizen from Antioch. He could have been a local man, and here he is, a young man. Later, he'll be an apostle.

Later, he'll go minister and raise up elders all across the island of Crete. He becomes an apostle, but listen here. Titus, it's the first mention of him concerning this journey to go to Jerusalem over this issue.

In the book of Acts, Titus is never mentioned once, and there's reasons people argue over this. Why take Titus? Barnabas, and we know from Galatians, Paul chose to take Titus. Why did you choose Titus? Why did you take him to Jerusalem? Why did you make him part of the group? I'll tell you why.

He's a Gentile. Both parents weren't Jewish. Paul was from a Jewish family.

Barnabas was from a Jewish family. Peter is. All the rest of the apostles.

This Titus was a Gentile, and you know what Paul's saying? Here is an example of a Gentile. He's born again, filled with the Holy Ghost, on fire for God, living holy, sanctified unto God, but he isn't circumcised. You people who come down here say you've got to be circumcised physically in order to be born again.

You've got to become a Jew. You've got to come and keep the law of Moses. You've got to keep dates, laws, circumcision, Sabbaths, and commandments to be a Christian.

You know what Paul's doing? I'm going to take Titus up to Jerusalem and show here's an example of a man born again in the body of Christ, totally on fire for God. That's the first one. Do you know what Paul and Barnabas done? They won a victory at Antioch.

We're to be a contending church. The Antioch church is a contending church. It's an evangelizing church.

It's a worshiping church, but it's also an agonizing, contending church. It contends against error, and there was a great victory here. Number two, contending at Jerusalem.

It says in verse four, and when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles, and of the elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. Now look, as soon as they reach the church of Jerusalem, they testified all along the way. On this 300 mile journey, they stopped at churches everywhere, sharing.

Guess what's happening amongst the Gentiles? They stopped at little groups, little assemblies, little churches, said, guess what God is doing? He's opening up the gospel to the Gentile nations, and everyone was happy. Everyone's rejoicing. Then when they get to Jerusalem, the church, the elders, the apostles, notice elders are different than apostles.

They're distinct. They're two different groups. There was a group of elders in the church, and there was a group of apostles in the church, and then you've got the entire church that are distinct from them, and they all gathered together.

They all received Barnabas, and Paul, and Titus, and these men from Antioch, from the church at Antioch. This is men from the church at Antioch who are responding over this issue, and notice what they do, and they declared all things that God had done with them. They didn't walk in saying, who did you send down to us? Who are these men? Why are they coming in? They didn't do that.

They come testifying, saying, guess what? They just told testimony after testimony after testimony. Guess what happened here? Guess what happened there? Guess what happened in this province? Everywhere we've gone, Gentiles are just getting born again, that's a good way to deal with error. If you ever want to deal with error, just start testifying.

Some of you need to learn, rather than arguing with people, rather than disputing with them, rather than trying to convince people, just begin to testify. Tell them what Jesus has done in your life. Begin to tell the testimonies in this church.

The next time you're sitting with someone, rather than arguing and debating and trying to bend their arm behind their back, just start thinking of all the people in this church. Start giving Hannah's testimony, and Sue's testimony, and Mary's testimony, and Inga's, and Lisa's, and Elvis's, and you go all the way through.

You know what? You're going to have some shocked people out there.

Just tell them the truth, the simple truth of what God has done. You know what? You're going to get people going, are you being serious here? Are you telling me all those people are sitting around you in a Sunday service, breaking bread, loving Jesus? Yes, I am. Yes, I am.

You know what? The power of that is almighty, and so they come into the Jerusalem church, and they're just telling testimony after testimony after testimony. Doesn't look like contending, does it? But it is. It is.

They're contending for the power of the gospel, the truth of it. Guys from here have come to us saying you need to be circumcised. Let us tell you what it looks like for a Gentile not to be circumcised, but to be alive in Christ.

You know when people come and start saying, you need to be this, and this, and this, and this, and this. What about the power of the new birth again? It is almighty. It's amazing, and as they shared these good stories and testimonies, first five, in Jerusalem, but there rose up certain of the sect of Pharisees which believed.

In other words, right there in the real church, sitting in the real church, was this group within the church. It's an entire church, but a group within the church who were a group of Pharisees who believed in Christ. They got born again.

They come into the church, but they're Pharisees. A whole group, remember Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee. He was the most radical Pharisee in Jerusalem, persecuting the Christians.

Here's a whole group of Pharisees. Remember how they do mint? Remember how they tithe? Nine for you, sorry, nine for me, one for you. They count out the salt, and the herbs, and the flowers.

Count them out like this. Don't want to give God too many. They count it out and go, there, I'm tithing.

One for God, another for God, another for God, and they're doing that with everything. That's Pharisees. That's Pharisees.

They know the law. They know the word, but they are not that. They're hypocritical.

They're all caught up in arguments, disputes, debates, but not in living for the Lord Jesus Christ. So this group of Pharisees who believed in Christ, as soon as they hear these testimonies, they rise up in the church of Jerusalem. Listen to what they say.

That it was needful, in other words, absolutely necessary. It had to be. It was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

So they hear these testimonies. What's their response? Right in the church in Jerusalem. You know, this church in Jerusalem, it's got a whole group of elders, and it's got a whole group of apostles, 12 of them, all in this one church.

And yet there's a group in that church who are saying, hold on, we are born again. We love Jesus. I'm washed in the blood, but we are saved.

Pharisee, I don't think they got rid of any of their Phariseeism. I want to tell you, they brought it right into the church. You better be very careful of what you are in that world.

You don't bring into this church. You bring in your ideology. You bring in some of your thinking, some of your worldliness.

Well, I just think this. Is it biblical? Is it biblical? We do this as a family in the world. Well, you know how we are.

Yeah, I do. But is it biblical? How you conduct yourself? How you think? How you act? Are you bringing it into this church? You better make sure it's biblical. Here's a whole group in this church in Jerusalem, and they actually have the neck to say, you Gentiles have to absolutely be circumcised.

In fact, we ought to, our leadership ought to be commanding you. Same, you have to be circumcised. You have to keep the law of Moses.

And listen, verse six, and the apostles and elders came together for to consider of the matter. The apostles and the elders all gathered together. And Paul is there, and Barnabas is there.

And you know what? They begin to talk about this and discuss it in a very open and real way. In verse five, we read about the sect of the Pharisees, which believed. You read later about them, verse 24, it says, this is what they said, ye must be circumcised and keep the law.

Since this was in Jerusalem, now the leadership of Antioch are moving into Jerusalem. You know what they're doing? They're contending for the faith. All of this is sitting there in the church, but going on dealt with.

Now you get two men of God. They're both Jewish by background, but they bring a Titus with them right into the church of Jerusalem. And you know what? They're testifying, you can be born again without the law of Moses, without being circumcised, you can be saved by God's grace alone.

Verse six, and the apostles and elders came together to dispute on this matter. Now I'm not going into all of this, all that happened in Jerusalem. There was a whole gathering for a whole period of time.

First of all, you get Peter standing up and speaking. He gives his testimony. When I went to Caesarea in Cornelius's house, remember how he got that vision of the blanket being held down? Don't call unclean what I call clean.

It was all unclean animals representing the Gentiles. The Lord said, eat. He said, I can't eat, I'm a good Jew.

I never defiled myself. The Lord said, eat. You know what he was saying? Don't you dare call Gentiles unclean, just because they didn't convert to become a Jew.

They come in through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is salvation. That is the new birth.

The Gentiles weren't going to become Jews. They are being born again. And so Peter begins to speak like this.

And then second of all, you have in verse 12, Barnabas and Paul standing up declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among them. And then this is followed by James. Who is James? A half-brother of Jesus Christ.

He's not James the apostle. He's James the brother of Jesus Christ. You've got the apostles of Jerusalem, but you've got the elders, James and the elders.

You know, the apostles began to travel. Who was in charge at the church in Jerusalem? James and the elders. He was the half-brother of Jesus Christ.

He was a half-brother, sorry, a full brother to Jude, who we started with. So you've got James here in Jerusalem. He was a leader and he also begins to speak into this situation.

He begins to share and he says, verse 24, for as much as you have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words subverting your soul, saying you must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we give no such commandment. Now I want you to see here, those that went down to Antioch had told those at Antioch, we come from James. We come from Jerusalem.

We've been sent down here. What is James saying here? When James stands up and speaks, he said, they are saying this. We didn't send them.

They are lying. They didn't come from us and he says, they are troubling your souls. See down to Antioch.

Thank God for Paul and Barnabas. Thank God that you come and address this and made it an open issue. Do you see what we do? We bring everything into the light.

Never in the church keep anything hidden and you know there's things we keep hidden. You understand what I'm saying? But I'm talking about when men are coming in with false teaching. If anyone starts whispering in your ear, false teaching, come speak to me please.

Because what we do, let's have it open. Don't let anyone give you secret prophecies. I believe the Lord's saying this to you.

Never give secret prophecies in this church. Never. I will correct you for that.

You know why? Make it public. Let's all test it. Usually people who pass on prophecies, they don't want to test it.

But bring it into the open. Same with teachings. Well, I believe this.

Well, what about this? I've listened to this on YouTube. Bring it into the open. If someone is scared to bring it into the light, there's a reason.

They don't want their works exposed. What Jesus said in John chapter 3, they don't come to the light because they're scared of the light reproofing their works. That's how you know someone who's right.

They walk in the light, live in the right light. They talk in the light. Someone who walks in darkness going, no, don't tell anyone.

You ought to get concerned about that. Now I'm just sharing with you, but don't share with anyone else. And I know there's issues we don't share.

There's issues you've told me, a number of views. No one else will ever hear that. That's between you and me.

It's got nothing to do with anyone else. But I'm talking about teachings on faith or walk with God. Don't let anyone mess with that or play around with that.

And so you have here, James says, they trouble you. That means to agitate. It means to make your heart beat faster.

How do they do that with their words? When they went to Antioch, they began speaking to you and your heart began to beat through their words. You're not saved unless you're circumcised. You've got to keep the seventh day Sabbath, the Saturday.

You ought to be keeping dates. You ought to be keeping the feasts of Israel. Why aren't you doing this? Why aren't you doing that? Just bring it into the light and we'll check it.

And so he said, they have begun to trouble your souls, but we never sent them. And in verse 24, he said, subverting your souls. That means to dismantle.

Be careful of people, teachers, very gifted teachers, very eloquent teachers who say, I come from James. I come from Jerusalem. Men on YouTube.

You're going to pick on YouTube a while. You don't mind, do you? If you can't discern, if you're not long in the faith, don't just watch anything. Oh, he sounds good.

She sounds good. Do you know what the marriage is like? Do you know who they are? I'm amazed at people who watch things. You haven't spent five months investigating, researching, or looking at who they are.

You haven't even come and asked. Most people are popular. You come and ask me.

I don't need to research. I'll tell you things about them you don't know. Most of them.

Because I check. I check facts. Before I listen to them, before I buy their books, I actually test them out.

I'm talking about a contending church at Antioch. I'm talking about a warfare on behalf of the gospel. He says, they subvert your souls.

They dismantle. They raid your bags. They plunder your pockets.

What would you do if there was someone sitting in this meeting, and as the meeting's going on, they reach into your pocket and steal your wallet, or reach and just grab your money. How would you react? Yet we let people do that in the church. Whispering, murmuring, suggesting, posting, sending.

They do all of that. They're plundering your bag. They're trying to steal the grace of God, your liberty, your freedom, your enjoyment.

Don't let people come in here and separate you, cause division with you sitting in the body of Christ. Things you never thought. What about that? What about that? What about that? It amazes me what happens in the body of Christ.

I know exactly what I'm speaking about. I do. To whom we give no commandment.

They're liars. They claim to be something, but they're not that. They're dangerous.

They're wilts. They're deceivers. Over in Galatians 2 and 4, and because of false brethren, listen to this carefully, because of false brethren, unawares brought in who came in privily.

Oh, I thought that was in Jude. No, there's no Galatians. I thought it was Jerusalem.

No, this is Galatians. Listen to it. And because of false brethren, unawares who have come in, you didn't notice on their false brethren, false Christians, you didn't even see them coming in.

You were unaware that they were coming in sideways, sneaking in with agenda, with a motive. Who came in privily, see that word privily means secretly, secretly, deceptively, in the side door, illegally. They didn't come in the same way as you.

They come in beside you and sit down. They have hidden motives. They begin to whisper things they ought not to if they know the gospel.

Do you know I've got the right, biblically, to shut my eyes. People say, who do you think you are? I'm a preacher of the gospel. I'm a shepherd.

Your Paul says to young Timothy in Ephesus, shut their mouth. Those false teachers, shut their mouth. It's a command.

Don't you think I have the right, the biblical authority when false teachings come in to shut those mouths? I've got a command. If I care for you, I'm going to want to shut the mouth of false teachers. I want to warn you about because it's dangerous.

It's soul destroying. It is damaging. They come in secretly, stealthily.

Remember the stealth fighter? Remember, they used to have an aircraft. They could make it invisible, not to be seen on radar. Stealth.

It's a stealth fighter. That's the word in the Greek. Here comes an invisible, a false apostate.

You can't even see him. Near, straight into the church. I believe in grace.

I believe in Jesus. I'm an expert on the word of God. I'll teach you.

I've got special revelation. You need to be aware of that. Here they are in Jerusalem.

All of these things are going on. Listen, this is speaking in Galatians for false brethren who are brought in unawares. Listen, privately are privileged to spy out your liberty in Christ.

It then talks about Titus. Remember, Titus is in Jerusalem and they're dealing with this issue. It said these false teachers came in, sneaked in, hiding behind curtains to spy out your privacy, your liberty.

Titus isn't circumcised. Let me paint a picture, but not too graphic. Titus wasn't circumcised.

These Pharisee Christians are hiding behind curtains spying out his liberty, peeking behind curtains. That's how ridiculous false teachers get. I'm telling you, that's how ridiculous this gets.

Paul is dealing with it, thinking back and all that, saying that's how ridiculous they were in Jerusalem to go, Titus isn't free in Christ. He can't have liberty. He's not circumcised.

How ridiculous. How utterly, utterly ridiculous. And you know what Paul is doing? He says they're false brethren.

They're not talking about the grace of God and the power of salvation and the blood of Jesus. You know what? This is legalism. You've got to be careful of all false teaching.

Third of all, contending with Peter at Antioch. I told you five hours tonight. Contending with Peter at Antioch.

Oh, I thought they'd won the victory at Antioch. Yes, they did. I thought they won the victory at Jerusalem.

Yes, they did. Because James stands up, and Peter stands up, and Paul and Barnabas stands up, and then do you know what they do? They send out a letter from the church of Jerusalem, and two men go back with Barnabas and Paul, saying they go from this church to tell the church at Antioch, and then two entire regions, nations, go from church to church to church, saying there's a letter from us. Don't let anyone disturb your peace.

This is the real gospel of Christ. We're not telling anyone you need to be circumcised or keep the seventh day Sabbath or to keep certain feasts and dates and times and seasons. We never said that.

If you're a Jew, fine. Keep some of these things. Be circumcised.

If you're circumcised, there's nothing sinful over that, okay? But if you get circumcised because you're trying to be more religious or spiritual, you've really got a spiritual problem. You have a serious problem. You'll have a physical problem as well, I want to tell you.

But contending with Peter at Antioch. Listen to what happened after this conference. After this conference, they're all together.

The leadership, they've dealt with this. Then guess what? Peter comes for a little break to Antioch, of all places. The dispute's over.

Why don't I go visit the brethren? Listen to what it says in Galatians 2.11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face. Boy, what just happened? After this conference, Peter comes to Antioch into the church and something happened where Paul had to stand up and it says, I withstood him to his face. It means to stand against, oppose or resisted him.

What happened? Well, Paul explains to us. Listen very carefully. I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles. But when they were come, he withdrew himself and separated himself. This is after the council.

This is after these previous two scenarios. Now, here's a third battlefield. Peter comes down.

And you know what? Before this group come down from Jerusalem, he sits at the table. Initially, he upheld the Jerusalem decree. He did eat with the Gentiles.

He sat with them, talking at mealtimes like we do on every Sunday, sitting, fellowshiping, talking, communing together. Peter sat there. None of the food's kosher.

It's not kosher. And Peter is sitting at the table. He's got his feet up.

He's enjoying fellowship at the same table. They're saved out of immorality. They're saved out of homosexuality.

They're saved out of abominations, like idolatry. And they're all sitting, but they're born again, washed in the blood. None of them are circumcised.

There's some Jews there who got converted as well. And they're all sitting around. Peter is loving this, preaching to them.

Can you imagine? This is the man who saw Pentecost. This is the man who saw revivals. This is the man who walked with Jesus for three years.

This is the man who walked on water. And then what would this church be like? We had Peter. Keith, are you telling me he's coming for a week? Is he coming for a month? Is he going to stay here? Will he be there Wednesday night? I can just imagine he's around the table.

You're all going cramming around to sit around Peter. What was it like to walk in the water? What was the tongues of fire? I can imagine the questions you would have. Now, when you say it was like tongues of fire, was it literally, Peter, did you see tongues of fire? I could, it would be a thousand questions a minute in this place.

You'd be just asking, asking, asking. Tell us again about the 3,000 What must we do to be saved? All this is going on. What happened? Listen, suddenly when these certain men came down from Jerusalem, from James, again, they're claiming to come from James.

You'd think they'd learn, wouldn't you? They come down and it says that Peter, when they were come, he withdrew himself. The word withdrew means to slowly, gradually or cautiously draw back. As soon as he sees them coming, uh-oh, here they come.

The Judaizers, the Pharisee Christians who believe in the blood, believe in Jesus, believe in the cross, but here they comes in. You need to be circumcised. You need to keep the law of Moses.

You can't eat with Gentiles. You can't eat with unclean hands. You need to wash your hands.

They come with all this. As soon as he sees them, he goes, man, I'm living like a Gentile. I'm fellowshiping like a Gentile.

I'm just accepting all these Gentiles. Do you know what he does? He slowly at the beginning, slowly begins to stand up, very unnoticed, doesn't tell anyone, begins to move away from the table, begins to walk away from them, distance himself. Then it says he's separated.

That means total separation, to put up a barrier, to stand at a distance, to not touch them. This is Peter. Can you imagine the devastation? If that ever dawns, this is Antioch.

This is the church we preached about for weeks, filled with new converts, young Christians saved a year and a half. They're all in there, saved out of all manners of sin, and they've been fellowshiping with Peter. Now Peter goes and distances himself even after all that happened.

Can you imagine the devastation of this? And it says, why did he do it? Fearing them. He was frightened. He was alarmed.

Oh, that's Peter. You can't point anything wrong out about him. Brother, don't create any division.

You'll confuse the young Christians in the church. Paul, I know what you're like. I can see your cheeks.

I can see you beginning to tremble. I see that twitch in your hand. Oh, Paul, please don't say anything.

Say anything. You think I'm going to sit here? This is Peter. This is one of the 12 apostles whose name is going to be in the New Jerusalem.

He's going to sit in judgment of the angels. Do you realize that? A unique man, an unusual man. He was there.

He was a preacher of Pentecost. Now he comes down with all this. Here he is just pulling away.

He's scared. He's becoming legalistic. Can a real believer do this? Of course they can.

Could a real leader compromise? Of course they could. And so you have all this going on. And it says, listen, it gets worse.

This is the church at Antioch. The other Jews dissembled likewise. They followed Peter's example.

The word dissembled means to act hypocritically. It's made up of two words, act hypocritically, united together with others. Do you know hypocrisy is usually because of others.

You're scared of others. You don't want to be different. You want to be like them.

So you act the hypocrite. You're thinking about what people think. So I'll just fit in with this.

I'm a Jew. Peter's a Jew. He's born again.

I'm born again. I'm a young Christian, but I'm a Jewish Christian converted. And Peter does that.

What do they do? They pull away as well. This is getting bigger. This is in the Antioch church that we had preached about.

Peter starts it. It moves through all the converted Jews in the entire church. This is bad saints, but listen to me, it gets worse.

It goes on to say Barnabas also was carried away with this. The word carried away means like a mighty flood carried away with popular opinion and action. I wonder what you would do as an individual.

If someone come in here with a new trend, a new gadget, a new way of doing things and so falls for it and Paul falls for it and Rory does and person after person, do you have the courage, the understanding, the wisdom to make a stand? Would you have the courage, the insight, the biblical stamina to understand what to do at that point? You see, it's not easy whenever it's just someone on the fringe, but when it's the

heart of this thing, even Barnabas. Paul's sitting there watching this. First it's Peter, then all of the Jews, now Barnabas, even Barnabas.

Barnabas, where are you going? Carried away with this. They're all pulling back and you've got a division in the church at Antioch. It's crazy and it says that Barnabas was caught up with this dissimulation, this hypocrisy.

What does Paul do? I withstood Peter to his face, but when I saw that he walked not uprightly, that means straight-footedly to go directly forward. When I saw Peter not walking right, then I withstood him publicly to his face. I said unto Peter before them all, you should have taken Peter away privately in a wee secret room and told him.

You shouldn't have embarrassed Peter. You shouldn't have shocked the young Christians. We shouldn't see Paul and Peter arguing publicly.

Paul, you're the younger Christian. Paul, you were only a Bible teacher, an elder in one local church. Oh yes, recently you went off on that missionary trip for two years and you started to be called an apostle and you started to pioneer new churches.

We know you've done that, but you're not Peter. Peter is the old guy. He is the old apostle, the man with much history.

You're a young guy. You're the youngest of apostles. You're a newbie.

You're fresh. You're only here in Antioch. You're a teacher in Antioch.

Who are you to stand against? Peter, the apostle on the day of Pentecost. Do you see what courage this took? Do you see what a contented church this is? They've already contended for Antioch and for Jerusalem. Now they've got to do it again against Peter.

You had Paul arise and to his face confront him very directly. It took an awful lot of courage. Do you hear Paul writing about this in Galatians? Listen to what he says, a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump.

He's talking about this teaching, this doctrine, this thinking. Remember what leaven is, ladies, because those guys are so ignorant, but not if you're taught in this church. I've mentioned it so many times.

A little bit of leaven. You take leaven and you put it in the dough, bread. You're making bread.

Just take a bit. You put it in there. It goes through everything.

It spreads only a little bit, but its influence spreads. It spreads. Oh, it's only a little bit of doctrine.

Well, you have your opinion. I have my opinion. You don't have that right.

Neither do I. A little bit of leaven, but it's only a little thing, a little teaching. It's my personal view. It's what I was taught.

It's what I've learned online. I'm listening to great teaching online and they're teaching this. Okay, well, let's go to the Bible.

I mean, I'm up for it. Maybe I need to learn something. Please post it to me.

I'd really love to learn something. You think you've learned something that we don't know here. Please let me in on it.

After all, you mustn't love us if you don't want us to have the great revelation. Are you trying to keep it to yourself? Let me know it as well. Please come and teach me.

Because either you need to stop teaching it, believing it, or else you need to share it with me. Then I'll preach it from the front. If it's biblical.

Of course, if it's not, it could take about five minutes, maybe two minutes to dismantle it, to show that it's not right. Let me finish. There's one of those nights I got asked the other day, do you ever finish and you have stuff you haven't preached? I got loads tonight.

Mega loads. I could preach a series within this series, but I want to finish because I want you to understand it. I want to keep this simple.

I want you to grapple with it. My fourth and last point, contending in Galatia. Now, I honestly have such important stuff around this, contending in Galatia.

First at Antioch, then in Jerusalem, then back to Antioch with Peter. Now, down the road a it's going to be dealt with in Galatia, an entire Gentile region that's in present day Turkey. The book of Galatians is a commentary on this entire dispute over a little bit of leaven.

False teachers coming in sideways, teaching in a local church, adding to salvation, denying blood atonement, that the blood, faith, the cross is sufficient. No, you need to come back to Judaism. There's a whole movement in the church saying, you need to go back to your Jewish roots.

I walked into a church in Wales and the elder, he's a Welshman, thoroughbred, no Semitic blood there at all. He's wearing a skull cap in the prayer meeting. The Bible says a man ought not to pray with his head covered, but he is being Jewish.

He's going back to his Jewish roots. You're a Gentile. You're a Gentile.

Paul taught the Gentile churches, a man must not cover his head when he prays. It's dishonorable. I said to someone recently, took his hat off to pray.

I said, why do you do that? I don't know. I guess it's just custom. I said, you've done that because 1 Corinthians 11.

The other part of it is a woman ought to cover her head when she prays publicly in the church. Of course, we don't believe that anymore. Why is it men all across the Western world, conservative men, take their hat off? I know it doesn't happen now.

It did when I was young. It has recently. They take their hat off.

They don't even know it's 1 Corinthians 11 anymore. See, when you come to the book of Galatians, you see the controversy begin to spread there. Paul preached in Galatia, an entire region, Gala, Gauls, Celts.

That's who the Galatians were. They were Celts who moved into Turkey and settled there. There were 15 major cities in that entire region.

There were Celts. One minute, they love you. They'll give their eyes to you.

They'll treat you like an angel. The next minute, you tell them the truth, and they want to murder you. They hate you, real Europeans, Celts.

Here, these Gauls have come down. Now, they're for generations, and they mix with the local population, and it makes the Galatians. What Paul started with the Galatians in the east, Patrick finished with the Celts in the west in Ireland.

Those are all the Celtic peoples, and it all began here. Paul moved in, seen them born again, but what happened? Certain men came in who troubled you. Paul raised up entire churches, born again, received the Holy Spirit.

Churches raised up, began to live by faith, and then these Judaizers come to these Gentile churches and said, you need to be circumcised. You need to keep the law of Moses. You need to keep special feast days.

You need to keep all the law in the Old Testament, and the Galatian churches all followed this. What did Paul say? Are you soon removed from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of God, and have you perverted it, changed sides, turned it upside down, and believed a false gospel? It's a gospel, but not the real gospel. It's not the same as our gospel.

And then the entire Galatian movement, are you falling from the faith? People argue, you can't fall from the faith. Then throw Galatians out of your Bible. You know what Paul says? You've fallen from grace.

You were in grace. You've fallen from grace. Now you're living by law.

You started in the Spirit. Now you're walking in the flesh. Don't tell me this can't happen.

Don't tell me entire churches in the region can't move from grace to law. You need to rip these pages out if it can't happen. They fell from grace.

I didn't say they lost their salvation. I said they fell from grace. We need to be very precise in our doctrine, our teaching, our words.

Don't use terminology, words, disputes that aren't written in the Bible. Stick to biblical scripture and what the apostles teach. Don't go off into saying, I believe in once saved, always saved.

It's not in the Bible. I believe you can lose your salvation. That term is not in the Bible.

Why are you even using terms on both sides of this argument that aren't even in the Bible? Why not come back to the Bible? And just to throw a spanner in the works, Jesus said, I've lost none that the Father's given me. But it says here you can fall from grace. Boy, I'm opening up a can of worms.

Saints of God, let me finish with one brief testimony. I literally could keep you. I could preach three sermons, just keep you, go back into this.

But I want to close because I want you to understand what we've just dealt with, a contending church. The church at Antioch was not only evangelistic, not only worshipping, not only gifted, it was contending. Paul in the midst of this church, even when Barnabas, one of the leaders, one of the main leaders, got carried off

in this, Peter from Jerusalem, Paul rose up and was a contender and it saved this entire movement.

Because this air is dangerous. It affects entire churches. Let me tell you as I close about one of my heroes of the faith called Robert A. Brown, born in Northern Ireland near Enniskillen in Fermanagh.

As a young man, he moved to New York in America, got born again, filled with the spirit, become a pastor and become a leader of a great church called Glad Tidings Assemblies of God in New York City. But I'm jumping ahead of the story. Let me tell you this.

I just want you to know he came from my country. Okay. He spoke like me.

He sounded like me, but he went to New York. And in fact, the church he pastored eventually became the biggest missionary financial given church in America. They were the best known Pentecostal church in America.

They were very influential and sent more missionaries out than anyone. But I'm jumping ahead of the story. This is what I want you to hear.

Because I want you to hear about R.A. Brown, a contender for the faith that when everyone goes AWOL, he stood straight because of the word of God. In 1915, 1914, the Assemblies of God started in America. About 300 preachers joined together at Springfield, I believe, Missouri.

And they formed the Assemblies of God. Today, it's one of the biggest movements in the world, one of the biggest Christian missionary movements in our world. And it's only just over 100 years old.

That was in 1914 it began. And these 300 preachers raised up a new movement. It was going to be a missionary movement, a revival movement, a Pentecostal movement.

But in 1915, a crisis came to those churches. That new movement, one year old, and a crisis came. It was called the New Issue.

It began to move east in America when preachers began to impact the Assemblies of God churches. Church after church began to hear these new teachings or revelation. They said it was a special revelation concerning Jesus Christ, about His name.

If you were baptized in a Trinitarian formula, in Father, Son, Holy Ghost, you needed to be rebaptized in the name of Jesus only. They began to reject the teaching of the Trinity. They said there isn't three gods.

Well, no one said there was. I believe in one God. They denied the Trinity or the triunity of Father, Son, Holy Ghost and said it's error, it's heresy.

This began to come into the Assemblies of God. In 1915, they rejected the Trinity. Some went further and said to be born again, or if you're saved, to be saved, you need to be rebaptized in Jesus name only.

And you need to speak in tongues or you're not reborn again. And this began to sweep church after church. And these teachings under the guise of special revelation or deeper truths began to affect leaders amongst the Assemblies of God.

And do you know, it went so far that all of the Assemblies of God churches in Louisiana got caught up in this movement, like Barnabas. Good men, good churches, entire churches, all the elders, all of them

switched in one year, in a few months for this. Ian Bell, listen very carefully.

Ian Bell, the first general chairman of the AG, their most central, best known, greatest preacher of the Assemblies of God of that era. He published a number of articles from March 1950 through to July against the new teaching. But to the shock of everyone, he publicly got rebaptized in an Assemblies of God convention in Tennessee at the end of July.

And then he went back to the main Assemblies of God magazine and wrote an article promoting being rebaptized in Jesus name only. It's an entire movement that's going to spread worldwide. And this hits them one year into their birth.

What's going to happen? And so he began to publish another article in August that year, promoting the oneness of God. He later admitted when he got broke free out of this, he said, I was tired. I was dry.

I had worked all day, every day. I was almost worn out as a preacher. And also the fear of losing influence and confusion come to my mind and then deception came in.

He's a real leader. He was later recovered to sound practice and doctrine. But for a short time, it seemed like the entire movement was in grave danger and everything was going to be lost by this wind of doctrine, this Assemblies of God.

But Robert A. Brown from Northern Ireland with an accent like mine, especially for any Americans online, just want you to know this accent impacted America as well. From his pulpit at Glad Tidings, Robert Brown gave clear scriptural, biblical, determined instruction. And he warned against this new teaching in his magazine, in his preaching, in his evangelism, writing in his magazine in May 1915 called The Midnight Cry.

This is what he said. We are confronted with another class of people who teach what they call baptism in the name of Jesus. Not only this, but we have learned from authoritative sources that these teachers make this an issue and ground on which they enter in and split entire assemblies or entire churches.

Do not get mixed up or confused over the forms of baptism, foot washing, the name. It is not water or the right words that save you or that keep you clean. It is the blood of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Robert A. Brown contended. You know what? Before this, he was reluctant to get pulled into the Assemblies of God. He kept himself at a distance.

But when the movement got into crisis, he ran into the midst of that movement and on three different occasions became the key person in Assemblies of God to stand up and to contend for truth. He was a key vessel that stood straight, uncompromising, and preached against all the air. He exposed it.

He taught the Word of God. He strengthened the hands of leaders that had grown tired. He wasn't tired.

He wasn't confused. He wasn't weary. He was spending time on his face, fasting, praying, alone with God.

Saints of God, let me finish. The church in Antioch is a contentent church. And this church, if it's going to be biblical, is going to be a contentent church.

It doesn't wear me, weary me, scare me, or hinder me to think of contentment. I am called to this. This is like preaching the gospel.

You must be born again. When it's attacked, I'll stand up and say, let's contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let's agonize.

Let's protect it. Anchor yourself. It's the blood that cleanses you, not water, not special words, not keeping Sabbaths.

That isn't Christianity. It's the Lord Jesus Christ and being born again. Please stand with me.

Let's pray together. Just lift your hands. Begin to pray for yourself.

You do not know what you're going to face in the future. You don't even know what this church will face. Do you realize that this church standing strong, walking straight, preaching clearly, and whatever hits the body of Christ in the days ahead, this church could have a voice that stabilizes many, that anchors them in truth, that makes them to stand strong in the word of God.

Let's pray for ourselves. Let's pray for those that even listen to us tonight. Father, we pray in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Oh God, make us a contentment church. Lord God, I pray let the voice of God resound out of this church. Lord God, let it be heard by many leaders, many churches, many movements, even politicians, that they're going to have courage to stand in this hour ahead.

Father, make us a church that won't bend, that won't move, that won't give up, that won't yield ground, that won't compromise, that we're not going to get caught up with every wind of doctrine, but Lord God, that we're going to stand for the power of the gospel, the simplicity of the gospel, the truth and veracity of the gospel. My God, believe in the blood, believe in the cross, believe in the authority of the Bible, and my God, I pray for your grace, the real grace of God, that makes us live holy, to walk holy, to speak holy, to believe the truth of God. Lord God, let our doctrine be sound in this church, and my God, sanctify us, teach us, oh God.

Make us firebrands on the streets to evangelize, but also make us firebrands in the church, no good to burn against heresy, compromise and false teaching. In the name of Jesus, we love you, we bless you, we thank you, we glorify you, in Jesus' mighty name, hallelujah. Oh, we bless you, we love you, we worship you, Lord Jesus, hallelujah.

Oh, magnify your name, magnify your name.

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