

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 5- Loving the Truth **Jude 3**

26. Loving the Truth- Part 1

WOSM Monday 12/10/07; WPAS Monday 05/26/08

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue in our new section of study which will deal with the importance of Sound Doctrine. So, let's read **Jude 3** together:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Christian friends- I have tried my best to go through this study very carefully with you. And I am doing this on purpose. This is the 26th broadcast on the Epistle of Jude and we are still on verse 3. The reason for this is not because I simply enjoy hearing myself talk; but rather because the issue that caused the Holy Spirit to change Jude's letter is so important to us today- that we dare not miss it.

The phrase that Jude used in verse 3 that was translated into English as "**contend earnestly**" means that we are to "intensely struggle"; that we are to "seriously fight"; and that we are to "consistently maintain". And the reason that I have taken so much time about the seriousness of the war that is being waged against the Truth today is that because it is simply human nature that none of us will be willing to intensely struggle for any length of time unless we are convinced of two things:

1. We must be convinced that what we are fighting *for* is worth fighting for. In other words- we must be convinced that what we are fighting for is valuable.

2. We must be convinced that the attack against what we value is a real and serious threat.

Unless *both* of these things are true- human beings will not fight or if they do fight- they will not be faithful to *continue* the fight until they win. By default, Jude assumes that both parts of this equation are true with his readers. But I want to make sure that these two things are true with us today.

So, let's look at this for a moment. Is what God said valuable to us today? Do we value Divine Truth? Have we put a high value on what God has said? Does Truth matter?

Can we, who live in the 21st century even begin to imagine the sacrifice that it took for men to give us the Bible that we have today in the English language? Do you know that for many, many years, it was against the law to print the Bible into English or to even read it? Do you who own a Bible today, but who never seem to have the time to read it, understand that many, many people died and had everything they owned taken away from them because they believed that the Bible was so precious that we needed it in our own language? When you hear names like John Wycliffe, and John Hus, and many, many others, do you know that these men were tortured and were defrauded and maimed and killed because they valued the Word of God so much that they were willing to die in order to bring us the Bible in our language?

If you would like to have your attitude adjusted about the value of the Bible- go to the bookstore and buy a copy of *Foxe's Book of the Martyrs*, by John Foxe, and read of how those in the early Church valued the Bible and you will never be the same again. According to *John Wycliffe, the Morning Star*, a DVD published by Vision Video- The Roman Pope- Martin V- was so infuriated with Wycliffe for bringing the glorious Gospel to the people in the English language that he ordered his bones to be dug up 13 years after they had burned him at the stake and his bones were put on trial, condemned and then burned again- all because Wycliffe valued the Word of God.

So here is the first test. Do we hold God's Word to be that valuable today? For example- is Biblical and inspired Truth more valuable to us today than our possessions or even our lives? If it is- then I suggest to you that we will spend time with this Book. We will

read it; study it; ponder its great truths and we will meditate upon what it says. I suggest to you that if the Bible is valuable to us- we will seek out others to discuss aspects of what it teaches, and we will begin to have more time- not less time to spend with so that we may understand it; proclaim it; defend it; and fight for it against any attack from any source.

But if God's Word is not a big deal to us; if Sound Doctrine really isn't that important- we will certainly not value it and therefore we will not spend time with it. We will not study it; we won't know it; we won't proclaim it; we won't defend or fight for it- because we really couldn't be bothered. Only you can answer that question for yourself.

Is our failure to value Truth a result of Truth actually not being valuable or is our failure to place a high value on Truth the direct result of us being carried away with the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? I'm just asking.

Here is a test. If we value something, then we could rightly say that we love it. And it is good thing that we love the things that we love. But we need to ask ourselves some questions about the things that we love. Do we love things that are not worthy of our love? And do we hold back our love from things that are very worthy of our love? Listen to this. Jesus said in **Mark 12:30**:

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

This verse tells us that it isn't because we love something that makes it valuable. But this verse tells us that there are things that we *do* love that are not *worthy* of our love. Jesus said that we are to love God more than we love anyone or anything else. And that is because God is more valuable than anyone or anything else. So it isn't just that we love- in a generic sense- but that we love God. And if we love God- we will value Him. And if we love and value God- we will serve Him. If Christ is not valuable enough for you to drop everything that you are doing to serve and follow Him- then Christ is not valuable enough for you to love Him.

So if God and His Word and Sound Doctrine and Biblical Truth are valuable- then we will love them and we will defend them.

Let me explain. I say that love football. I enjoy watching it and I especially enjoy playing it. But I do not love football enough to defend it or to fight for it. So even though I *say* that I love it- I really don't value it. I love my possessions a lot more than I love any sport. And I love my children more than I love my possessions. And I love my wife more than I love my children. And I love Jesus more than I love my wife. As I go up the scale- not only does my love grow deeper, but the value that I place on it grows as well. And as the value grows, my willingness to defend it and fight for it grows.

So we can see that there are degrees to our love. And likewise there are degrees to valuing something and therefore, there is a corresponding willingness on my part to defend that which I deem to be valuable. Jesus brought this out with Peter in **John 21:15-17**:

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

Here Jesus is asking Peter the same question three times. Why did He do that? The first time Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, Peter replied, **"You know that I love You."** And that was a very good answer. Peter had been with the Lord long enough to know that anytime Jesus asked a question, that the safest thing to say was, **"You know"**. Peter knew by now not to lean on his own natural understanding when Jesus asked him something and that ultimately he knew that Christ knew his heart better than he himself did.

But if that is true- and it is true- and Jesus really did know Peter's heart- then why did Jesus ask him the same question again?

And not having any better answer, Peter responded in the same way to Jesus, **"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You"**

And before Peter could try to comprehend what Jesus was doing, Christ asked him the very same question the third time. This time,

Peter was disturbed. The Bible says that Jesus asking Peter the same question the third time grieved Peter.

By this time, Peter was asking himself questions like, *“Does Jesus know something that I don’t about myself? Does He see something in me that I don’t see?”* There must have been a lot of questions that were brimming in Peter’s mind at his point, but once again, Peter defaulted to the only thing that he knew to be true and he said,

Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You...

Now to be sure, we can get many different sermons from this passage. We could talk about the three times Jesus asked Peter with the correlation that Jesus wanted Peter to have with the Triunity of God. We can also talk about the various Greek and Aramaic words that were all translated as “love” in English, but which meant various degrees of love.

But what I want us to see here today is that it is certain that because Jesus emphasized this to Peter three times, Peter was not going to quickly forget it. And the degree of uncomfortableness that Peter had with Jesus repeating His question translated into how Peter would value this love that Christ was talking about.

So it is safe to say that whatever other message that we get from this passage, we must get that Peter’s comprehension of how important love was to Jesus and how much Peter valued this love was greater after this meeting than it was before.

So, it is true throughout all of Scripture. Whenever we find God or Jesus or angels or Prophets or Apostles of the Lord repeating something over and over- we must be as Peter became. We must become grieved. It must trouble us. We must sit up and take knowledge that since we know that God is not glib of tongue- there must be something very important that He is saying to us, and we would do well not to treat the subject at hand with any degree of frivolousness or shallowness.

Beginning with Jesus and continuing with all the Apostles and all of the leaders of the New Testament Church, the issue of spiritual deception and of false teaching and of false doctrine and of heresy and of false prophets and false teachers and apostasy was real and serious

and important and it is mentioned over and over and over in Holy Scripture. Since that is true, it is a fool's errand for us to treat the issue that Jude talks to us about here in this Epistle with anything other than the utmost of gravity and soberness with trembling.

The concern that His disciples would be moved away from the Truth into False doctrine was so real to Jesus, that the first thing that came out of Jesus' Mouth when His Disciples asked Him what was going to be the sign of His return and of the end of the world was recorded for us in **Matthew 24:4**:

See to it that no one misleads you.

So while it may be true that many in the Church today do not view Sound Doctrine as being an important issue in the 21st Century; and while it may be true that they have not placed a high value on Truth- Jesus did not share that opinion did He? No, Jesus said that what we teach and what we believe is a real big deal. And Jesus said that deception was not only *possible*- but that it was a real and serious threat to all of us.

The Apostles of the Lord also viewed deception and heresy and false doctrine as a big and a real and a serious threat to the Church and the people of God. That is why they warned us over and over by telling us not to be ignorant and to take heed and to watch and to exercise spiritual discernment and to test the spirits and to know the Truth and to do whatever it took to make our calling and our election sure.

So we can see that many today in the Church are completely out of step with those in the Bible about this issue aren't they? And it is this low value of Divine Truth that will hinder many from seeing the need or of having the desire to do what Jude says here and to seriously fight for it. I pray that we will not place a low value of the things of God- but that we will take Jude's warning seriously and we will earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Well, I have to stop right here- but please join me again on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of Jude. May God help us all.

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