

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

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

Chapter 2- The Doctrine of Sanctification **Jude 2**

8. Mercy, Peace, and Love

WOSM Wednesday, 11/14/07; WPAS Wednesday 04/30/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse journey through the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to begin a new section of study and look at what Jude taught about "Mercy, Peace, and Love"- so let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 2** together:

May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Now Jude uses the typical Jewish blessing to his readers here in this second verse by saying to them, "**May mercy, peace**" be multiplied to you." And if he had stopped here; if he had simply wanted Mercy and Peace to be added to his readers- Jude would have been totally accepted as an Old Testament writer and would have been well received by the Jews of his day.

But Jude went one step further than the normal Jewish greeting here and he adds the statement, "**and love**" to his blessing. And Jude adds this third blessing that most Jewish writers would *not* have added.

And by Jude adding "**love**" to his blessing- he gives us an idea of how he personally valued love and he tells us the importance which he himself placed on this- the greatest of all gifts- and the attribute that best describes the Father.

Now Jude was talking about three kinds of love here: The first is the singleness of unlimited, holy Love that God gave and showed to Man. The second is the "tri-unity" of love that God demands *from* Man- which is, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength and then to love your neighbor as yourself and then thirdly to not just *know* the Truth;

not just *understand* the Truth; not just *believe* the Truth- but to actually *Love* the Truth.

Jude tells us here that we are to love. And by saying this- Jude is agreeing with John and Paul and Peter and the writer of Hebrews and Matthew and Mark and Luke. All of the Apostles of the Lord talked extensively and endlessly about Love. And not just a *generic* kind of *human* love- not that they loved football or that they loved macaroni and cheese; not that they loved a woman, or a good song or a beautiful waterfall, or a brilliant sunset- but John and Paul and Peter and all the rest talked first and foremost about God's Love for them. For example- the Apostle John said this in **1John 4:10**:

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

So here John focuses on this the first and foremost of all loves- the single Love wherewith God loved us. John says that it isn't that **we** loved God. It isn't about *our* devotion to God; it isn't about *our* dedication to Christ; it isn't about *our* service in the Gospel- it is the simple fact; the unbelievable fact that God loved us. But not simply that God loved us- but that He loved us fully and totally and completely and without reservation from the beginning of time. It is that God loved so thoroughly; that God loved so completely; that God loved so entirely that He gave.

But God doesn't give like we give. For example- we take a shirt out of our closet that we don't even wear and that has two buttons missing and one in which the sleeves are way too short and we give that shirt to someone else- and for some reason- we feel good about that. We take a dresser that is not being used; a chair that has one leg missing; a book that has a broken spine and we give those items to someone else and we feel good about what we have done. But let us look at what we did. We gave away our junk; we gave what we didn't need; we gave what we did not place a high value on; we gave what we were not using; we gave what was broken or not useful to us.

Thanks be to God that God doesn't give like we do. God's giving is based upon His Love. God didn't give what was broken. God didn't give what He did not value. God didn't give what He did not need. God didn't give what He was not using. God didn't give us junk. God gave the best that He had. God gave the most valuable Commodity in

all the Universe. God gave what was more valuable than anything and everything on earth. God gave His one and only Son. God gave the best. God gave what was priceless.

So, we really cannot consider ourselves to have given anything at all unless that which we gave is something that we value highly. We really cannot consider ourselves to have given unless and until we give that which we needed; that which we use; that which means something to us. So until we give the best that we have; until we give something that is priceless to us- until we give what we love- we cannot really consider ourselves to have given anything at all.

But *why* did God give? God surely saw that the need of Man was great. God surely knew that unless He made the first move- Mankind would be lost forever. But God did not give simply because we had a need. God's giving was not primarily based on *our* need. No, the Bible says that God's giving was based primarily on His Own Love.

You see, dear friends, God's Love is infinitely more important than *our* love. God's Love is much more valuable than our love. God's Love is perfect and entire and full and without degree. Our love is fallen and corrupt and selfish and in part and is very, very inconsistent.

So, when Jude gives us this blessing- he added love to the normal Jewish blessing. And we must understand what this meant to Jude. Jude was not a "touchy feely" guy who had come into contact with his "inner female" side. Jude was not an effeminate man. The Apostles of the Lord were not the first "flower children" who wore daisies in their hair as they ran through the fields and held hands and sang Kum-ba-ya.

John and Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Their hands were rough and gnarled from pulling the nets. Paul knew what it was like to take another man's life. Before his conversion- as a Pharisee- Paul had been able to keep himself composed while the council laid the clothes of Stephen at his feet right before they stoned him to death.

And with apologies to Leonardo DaVinci- the Apostle John was not a dainty small man with doe eyes who resembled a frail woman either. The men of the Middle East of that day were brutal, and rough and violent, and strong men. They had to be strong to just live. They were people who had an occupying army in their land. The Romans were vicious and cruel and brutal people who utterly dominated those

that they conquered. So the Apostle John was as rough as they came, as he spent a good portion of his life fishing all night long.

And Peter was violent too and so when he cut the servant's ear off at the place where Jesus was arrested- that was simply an accident. Peter was certainly not trying to cut off the servant's *ear*. He was trying to cut off the servant's *head* and the servant ducked, and Peter only got his ear. So, all of those men whose lives Jesus had radically transformed were very rough men who were accustomed to cruel and barbaric lives.

And yet all throughout their Epistles, these rough and violent and cruel men talked and over and over about love. They marveled at the love of God; they rejoiced at the love of God; and they were astonished at the love of God.

But they didn't stop there. They commanded they declared; they demanded; they stood unanimously on the Foundation that those who are saved; the prophets; the preachers; the men of God must know and they must believe and they must preach and they must love the Truth. 21 times in John's Epistle and 20 more times in his Gospel account, the Apostle John talked about the Truth. To John, the Truth was not something mystical; it was not something that someone could not learn. To John, Truth was obtainable- we can know Truth. To John, Truth was not a carrot on a stick that was always just out of reach- no, to John, Truth was objective. It was propositional. It was obtainable and it was something that could both learn and teach. And John said we must love Truth.

But not just the Truth. Jude and Paul and Peter and the rest of those who had actually seen the Lord, unanimously taught that we must love God. We must fall in love with the Immanuel- Who is God with us- Jesus Christ. These Apostles and servants of God all taught that it was not enough to love what Jesus *said*- we must also love Him. We must serve Him; we must rely on Him; we must follow Him.

You see, Christianity is not a group of people who simply have figured out a correct system of theology; we are not those who have simply discovered the correct morality. We are not a group that has simply agreed with some historical information about God. No, Christians are those who are bought and paid for by Jesus Christ. We belong to Christ. We are His and He is ours!

Yet Paul said that the knowledge of the Truth was imperative;

that unless we know the Truth and unless we *love* the Truth- we cannot proclaim the Truth and we will not obey the Truth.

And Peter said that if we do not love God, our religion is in vain. And John said that the only way that we know that we are His is if we have love- because God is love. John said that the single sign; the one characteristic; the single attribute that the lost, unsaved world will know for certain that we belong to Jesus- is not our ability to preach; it isn't signs or wonders or how much we prophecy or how big our churches are or how nice we dress. No, the one single sign by which the lost world will know that we are Christians is the love that we have one toward another.

So we see that it is not simply love; it isn't that we loved – but it is that God loved us first. And after that- we see that our love must be three pronged. Our love must be in three parts. First that we love God and that we love Him with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul and all our strength. And then it is that we love our neighbor; that person that we cross paths with on that particular day- that we genuinely from the heart love them to the same degree that we love ourselves, and then lastly it is that we genuinely and sincerely love what God has said.

We can't just love the parts of Scripture that give us personal benefit, but we must love all of God's Word; all of God's Truth; all of God's Specific Revelation to man equally- even the parts that seemed to be hard and the parts that are difficult for us to grasp.

Now we need to know that the fear of the early Church was not that the pagan armies would interrupt their services and take their leaders from them and kill them. That happen and it happened quite often. But to those in the early Church, the greatest fear was not that liberals would take over the Government and raise taxes and intrude into our daily lives- no- those in the early church all completely and totally understood that we are strangers and pilgrims just passing through and that this world is not our home. The early Fathers of the church understood clearly what we seem to have forgotten today that we are commanded *not* to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life and that we must look for a City whose Builder and Maker is God.

No, the greatest fear of those in the early Church was not persecution or Big Government- their greatest fear; their greatest concern was that any of them could go for one minute and be at odds

with another believer- that anyone of them could think that they were right with God while not loving another brother.

Those whom God used to begin the Church of the First Born loved one another fervently. They understood that each soul was precious. They all knew that every saint must love every other saint- or else they have already been overcome with evil.

The Apostles all taught that to love God and not to love your brother was the same thing as being deceived. The early leaders of the Church that had Jesus as Head all knew that God *did not* and *would not* receive their gifts or their offerings unless they were reconciled to their brother.

To the first Church, fervent and consist of and genuine love between the brethren was not nice and it was not sweet and it was not optional. No, the Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ taught and believed and practiced that genuine and fervent love between and among the brethren was *mandatory*; it was a *requirement*; it was a *commandment*; and it was irrefutable proof that they were saved.

And Jude understood these things and so as he blessed his readers with Mercy and Peace and Love- he gave a final blessing. He did not simply desire that we touch into Mercy, or that we become some what familiar with Peace; or that we periodically rub up against Love. But Jude's blessing to us is that not only would we know about these three things; not only would we become personally familiar with these attributes, but Jude's blessing to us was that all three of these that Mercy and Peace and Love would be compounded to us; that they would be multiplied to us that these blessings would come upon us and overtake us.

I tell you that we all need to know about Mercy and Peace and Love. And I tell you that we need to put these qualities on and I tell you that we need to walk in them and allow God to make these attributes our own and then we will see that God will multiply them in our eyes and in our churches and in our cities and in our nation.

Well, I've got to stop right here- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

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