

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

## An Expositional Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

### Chapter 3- The Common Salvation **Jude 3**

### 10. The Common Salvation- Part 2

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WOSM Friday 11/16/07; WPAS Friday 05/02/08

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 continue to look at what Jude taught about, "The Common Salvation" so let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 3** again 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.**

Now on the last broadcast- I told you that as he began to write- Jude says here the Holy Spirit had strongly showed him that it was a **necessity**" that he *stop* writing about the "**Common Salvation**", and that he write this Epistle to the Church and tell the Church that they must:

**... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.**

And last time- as we began to see just what Jude meant when he talked about "The Common Salvation" we looked at **The Acts 2:44** that says:

**They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

So, from this verse- we see that the early Church had four things that were common or that were alike or that was consistent among those that believed:

1. They continually devoting themselves to the Apostles' Teaching
2. Consistent Times of Godly Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread or the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion
4. Fervent and Effectual Prayer

These four things are what made the Salvation that we all enjoy to be “Common” or “alike” or the “same” among all believers. Now last time, we began our discussion about the “Common Salvation” with the first of the four characteristics of what the church held common and that was the Apostle's Teaching. And I need to dig deeper into this issue today.

Now for some reason, the issue of Church Doctrine has gotten a bad rap over the last several years. We are told today that Doctrine is bad; that it is negative; that it is divisive; that it is boring; that it is dry and dull; and that it is useless to a technologically advanced society.

There is a belief that is gaining in popularity in the modern Church that goes something like this: *“We don't need doctrine today- all we need is Jesus”* or *“Who cares about Doctrine- it really doesn't matter- we just need to love each other”*.

And what is meant by statements like this is that Doctrine will divide people over issues that are not important and since our primary goal is to bring people together- we must leave doctrine totally out of our equation at best, or we must grudgingly allow very vague or general doctrine on a small and minimal level- so that the people that we are trying to bring to the Lord won't get offended- or so that our effort to unite everybody will not be hindered.

And that sounds great. And that even sounds noble. But is it true? Is it right? Let's find out. If the goal of the Christian Church is to simply unite everybody- and therefore anything- including Doctrine that might hinder that- is to be avoided at all costs- then won't the Bible teach that somewhere? So, let's find out.

For example- if we are to correctly define the term, “Apostle's Teaching” here in **The Acts 2:42**; if we are to use the very same definition of “Doctrine” that they used in the Scriptures- then we must call the Apostle's Teaching by its Biblical name- which is “Divine Truth”.

So if we replace the word “Doctrine” with the word, “Truth” in our examples- let’s see if it still sounds as good as it did. Let’s say, for example that we need to drop the Truth in order to win people to Christ. That just doesn’t sound right- does it? Or let’s say that we need to minimize or marginalize the Truth in order to achieve unity in the Body because if Biblical Truth takes center stage- then the Truth will offend and it will divide. Well, that doesn’t sound too good either. Or let’s say that we want to unite people together and in order to do that- we need to eliminate or minimize Truth. Then about what are we united?

You see, beloved, when we say that correct Doctrine stops or even hinders people from coming to Salvation- we are saying that the Truth of Scripture stops or hinders people from coming to Salvation- and that is simply not the case and that is not even possible.

I do not for a minute question the motive or the intention of anyone who teaches that doctrine hinders or stops people from being saved. I do not have the power or the right to challenge the heart of anyone who thinks that the best way to bring people to Christ is to develop a personal relationship with them and not preach the Gospel to them out of fear it might offend them. But I *do* have the right and I do have the *responsibility* to hold that logic accountable to the Authority of Scripture- and when we do that- we will see that this method of “relationship evangelism”- that has become so enormously popular in the modern Church in recent years- is not taught anywhere in the Bible.

Trying to do God’s Business in any other way other than the one single way in which God said to do it- which is to preach the Gospel to every creature- is as old as mankind. I have been guilty of this in years gone by and many of you have- but that doesn’t make it okay and that doesn’t mean that by us *trying* to do God’s Business in a fleshly or carnal way that it doesn’t actually *hinder* or fight *against* the actual saving of souls- because it does.

Is it true that what the Apostle’s and others wrote in 27 Books of the NT in the first century has actually become the *enemy* of the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? If so, then why did God give this Revelation and why did the Apostles teach it and on what authority did we change it?

If it is accurate to say that Sound Doctrine is dull and dry and boring- and therefore unnecessary- then why did the saints of the early church devote themselves continually to it? If it is true that to understand Divine Truth and to operate Biblically is to quench the Spirit- then why did all of the Apostles tell us to teach and learn the Truth? Are we to assume that the only way to come to Christ is to *not* to know Truth? Are we to assume that the only way to have a genuine move of God's Spirit in the Church is either for us to be *ignorant* of Divine Truth or to ignore it?

Are you and I supposed to accept the premise that the very thing that God gave to us and the very thing that we are commanded to do and empowered to do and held accountable to and that which distinguishes us from everyone else has now become the very thing that hinders the only thing that it was sent to do?

We now have all kinds of church growth gurus who have written books and who have produced tapes who teach us how to employ the new methods of soul wining and how to change our churches and change our vocabulary and change our doctrines and change how we view God and change how we view man and change how we view salvation and change how we view the Bible to fit what they call, "the new paradigm of Church growth", and how to "think outside the box" and how to throw out that which the church has held dear and sacred and holy and productive for over 2,000 years.

Based on what? On whose authority? Because it's new? Because lost or lukewarm people find it attractive? Because it draws a crowd? Because these people say so?

I suggest to you that it is precisely because the Church has left off teaching and believing and understanding and living sound, correct, biblical doctrine that these unscriptural and unbiblical practices are even considered to be valuable at all. So the very fact that we no longer know Truth- is a sign that we have lost what we had.

Because we do not value right and wrong more than we value friendships; because we do not cleave to that which is good at the expense of that which is evil; because we would rather be popular than faithful; because we would rather be cool than holy; because we would rather be in the click than in God's Presence; because we would rather be relevant to the culture rather than be submissive and obedient to Holy Scripture- we are accepting things that the Bible

says not to accept and we are doing things that the Bible says not to do and we are involved in practices and ideas and concepts that God didn't give and that God didn't authorize and that God won't bless.

God already loved lost mankind to the point that He gave the very best that He had to save them. So we must begin our soul winning activities with premise that God wants to save lost man a whole lot more than we do. God loves the lost a whole lot more than we do, and God has a whole lot more invested in saving souls than any of us does. And we also must agree that God is the One; He is the *only* One Who can indeed save those who are lost. This whole business of winning lost souls was God's idea in the first place- not ours. And so we are safe to say that if God doesn't save the soul in the way that he said that He will save the soul- then that soul cannot and will not be saved.

Look, if you and I can save souls simply by being clever- then why did Christ die? If *we* have the ability to change a man's nature by using natural methods- then why did Jesus suffer so much? If all we have to do to get people born again is to become their friend and take them out for a sandwich- then why did God say to preach the Gospel? **1Corinthians 1:18-29** says:

**18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

**19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."**

**20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**

**21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

**22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;**

**23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,**

**24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

**25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

**26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;**

**27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,**

**28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,**

**29 so that no man may boast before God.**

So we see that the one single Biblical way to lead people to Christ is to preach the Gospel. Everything else and anything else that we do *beside* preaching the Gospel to save souls is either a lead up to preaching or it is fluff and may not help God's chosen method at all, but may very well hinder it.

So if we believe that God chose preaching and if we believe that God chose that the Gospel is what is to be preached- then any idea; any concept; any theory; any effort no matter how noble and no matter how well intentioned that reduces or minimizes or that eliminates preaching or that waters down or marginalizes the Gospel that is to be preached is indeed contrary to God's written Will and is not of God and may well be hindering or reducing the impact that the Gospel does have on saving the lost.

So all our efforts; all our money and all our time should not be spent in minimizing the impact that the preached Gospel has on the lost by convicting them of sin and by making them feel guilty or by causing them to feel sinful or offending them- but our efforts and our time and our energies should be spent in making sure that what we are preaching is in fact faithful to the very same Gospel that Jesus preached; that the Gospel that we preach is the very same Gospel that Paul and Peter preached; that the Gospel that we preach is, in fact, the very same Gospel in all of its beauty and fearfulness that John preached and that we are careful to be faithful that we do nothing that will marginalize or that will in any way minimize or that may hinder the full impact that God wants on the sinner as the Gospel is preached.

Far too many of the natural and practical and carnal methods and techniques of winning the lost and of growing the church and of packaging the Gospel and of building our ministries- are actually the very same methods and techniques that the lost world has developed in marketing their products and growing their businesses and in

selling insurance. And, of course the big hindrance that stands in the way of the Church from adopting these new and exciting but unbiblical methods is this pesky little thing called “doctrine” or Divine Truth.

So as I see it, we have a choice before us, beloved. We can adopt the ways of the lost and unregenerated world in order to make a holy thing look good and less offensive to the unsaved, or we can trust God that His way is best and that His way is right and that His way brings glory to Him. And I pray that we all will go God’s Way.

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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