

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

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

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

12. The Common Salvation- Part 4

WOSM Tuesday, 11/20/07; WPAS Tuesday 05/06/08

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 in our new section of study and look again 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 we have been studying what Jude meant by using the term, "common salvation" here in verse 3 and to do that- we are looking at the four characteristics of the first Church that we found in **The Acts 2:42** that says

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

So, we can see that based upon this verse- what made the Church of Jesus Christ to be "common" or alike was that these four characteristics were the same in all of the Churches:

1. They continued steadfastly in the Apostles Teaching
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread
4. Prayers

Now over the last several broadcasts- we examined the first of these four characteristics- the Apostles' Teaching- and what that meant and today I want to begin to look at the second characteristic- godly fellowship.

As we read the Bible – we can see that social status didn't matter to these saints. Whether God had blessed one and had made him rich didn't puff him up above his brother who was a slave. The rich sat and worshipped with the poor. The educated sang praises with the uneducated. The tall wept with the short. The fat rejoiced with the skinny. The young embraced the old. The saved Jew was able to genuinely love and serve God with the saved Gentile. Truly these people had a "common" Salvation.

And one of the most wonderful and beautiful and common characteristics of the early Church was their godly fellowship. These people were saved together; they worshipped God together; they suffered persecution together and many of them died together. They developed a bond; a love; a comradeire that was different from anything else the world had ever seen.

In the Bible, the saints greeted each other with a holy kiss; they united their hearts and their minds together. They were kind and gentle to each other. They couldn't bear to have disputes between themselves. They were quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to wrath and quick to repent. They preferred each other in love. They helped each other; they worked with each other; they sang together, and they prayed together; they confessed their faults to each other, and they ate together.

And the horrible persecution they all endured didn't limit their fellowship- it actually *strengthened* it. These believers thought nothing of giving to each other. They did not want to abound while their brother was abased. They didn't simply wish people well- they gave, and they provided for each other. Truly the world stood in amazement at such a diverse collection of people who fellowshiped together in the Church.

And we need to know that the godly fellowship that the early Church enjoyed had nothing to do with things of this earth. No, their fellowship was about the things of the Lord. They talked about how God had been faithful to them; one over here would say that God had blessed him; this one rejoiced that God had showed him something in

His Word; a young person would walk up and embrace an old man and ask him if he could pray for him; an older woman would place her arms around a young girl who as preparing for marriage and would teach her things that she needed to know.

I tell you that what made their Salvation “common” was their Doctrine and it as also their fellowship and I pray that we can repent and that we can return to the pattern of Church that God so clearly laid out for us in the Bible and that we can enjoy and be edified by wonderful and precious times of godly fellowship.

The third ingredient or characteristic of the “common salvation” was the breaking of Bread. Now in the Bible, the term, “Breaking of bread” did not mean those times of fellowship where we sit down at the table and eat together- no, this is referring to one of the two Sacraments Ordinances that Jesus gave to His Church- Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper.

In the Bible, Jesus gave two Ordinances to the Church- Baptism and Communion. And it was the breaking of bread- the Holy Communion- that was common among those who made up the Church in **The Book of the Acts**. The Church had communion together and the Church had it often. Communion should not be looked upon as an interruption of the worship service- Communion *is* worship as is preaching and as is everything else that we do as unto God as believers.

The Communion service is carried out by the Church for one reason- Christ commanded it. In **Luke 22:19**, the Lord said to his disciples:

... do this in remembrance of Me.

The Apostle Paul said in **1Corinthians 11:26**, that every time we eat of the bread and drink of the cup in the Communion service:

... you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

So, we can see that to partake of Communion is not to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ; it is not to celebrate His return as King of kings and Lord of lords to this earth. We do not eat of that bread and drink of that cup in order to celebrate His miracles or His teachings;

but we are to partake of Communion in order to remember the Death of Jesus Christ and we are to remember His death until He returns.

Now some teach today that to constantly be reminded of the Death of Christ is morbid and depressing. But I will tell you that what is morbid, and depressing is anyone who could teach such foolishness and think that they are following Christ. Beloved, none of us would have eternal life had Jesus not died. We humans have a need to constantly be reminded of just who we are and just who Christ is and of just *why* Jesus had to die.

We are the servants, and He is the Lord. We are the slaves, and He is the Master. We are the sinners, and He is totally sinless. We are the ones who *needed* His death and He as the only One Who was worthy to die for our sins. We are the lost and He is the One Who finds us. We are the depraved and the fallen and He is the risen One and the exalted One. We are below and He is above. We are those who transgress and disobeyed, and He is the only One Who perfectly obeyed all His Father's Commandments.

Some teach that we have graduated into a higher spiritual realm and that we have no further need to break bread together. Beloved neglecting the Communion service is not being spiritual- it is being rebellious and disobedient. Jesus Himself said to continue this service until He returns.

But others teach that the Communion service plays a part in our Salvation. They teach an unscriptural doctrine called the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which says that once the bread is blessed and broken that it *literally* becomes the physical Body of Jesus Christ and that once the cup is blessed, that it literally becomes the actual Blood of Jesus Christ. And great care is taken with these people not to let any crumb fall to the ground or that not one drop spill, because it is now the Body and the Blood of Jesus.

Beloved, this teaching violates in every sense what Salvation is and about how God converts the human soul. We take Communion and the Church in the Bible took Communion out of the humble and loving response to already being saved- not to obtain Salvation.

Nowhere in the Bible does it teach that Communion is instrumental in our Salvation in any way. Teaching like that is simply not in the Bible. Beloved, Communion cannot save you any more than baptism or singing hymns can save you. There is nothing

in the Communion service that has the power or the ability to save your lost soul. In fact, lost people have no business taking Communion in the first place. Communion is to be given to the saved; to the redeemed; to the disciples and not to people that are lost.

The historic position about Communion that the Protestant Reformers taught is that Christ's *Presence* is real in the Communion service, but that He is emblematic in the physical bread and the cup- and is not *actual* in the elements. Again, what this means is that we must trust Christ alone for our Salvation- and not depend on any works of righteousness which we do ourselves. That means that we *remember* Christ's broken Body when we eat the bread; we *mediate* about His sacrifice; we stand in awe of His great love toward us as we eat- but the bread is not the literal broken body of Jesus Christ- it *represents* His Body.

We remember the Blood of Jesus that washed us and that created the New Covenant when we drink the cup- but Christ's literal Blood is not in the cup.

But having said that, we must remember everything that Christ and everything that the Apostle Paul taught us concerning Communion. While it is true that Communion is manifested out of humble and loving obedience to Christ's command and not as a means by which He saves us- the Communion service *is* holy and it *is* important and it *is* nothing to be played with- and we should partake of it with godly fear and in awe and in reverence and in caution for there are great rewards for taking Communion properly and there are great problems for taking it in a manner that the Scripture says is "unworthily".

Let us turn to God' Word for the Truth about Communion in **1Corinthians 11:18&19:**

18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

Now the Apostle Paul was showing us here the importance of Christian unity as it pertains to this service. Paul had heard that there were divisions among some of the saints at Corinth and he

evidently knew the people in that Church well enough to know that what he had heard was probably true.

But Paul was not content with simply saying that he knew that some evidently had problems among themselves so he could then move on to something more important. No, Paul is saying here that this wasn't good enough for them to partake of the Lord's Supper or the Communion Service. What we need to know here is that the clear teaching of the Lord and of all His Apostles was that our relationship to each other as people who have been born again and as Christians and as members of Christ's Church and as covenant brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus is so important to God that in order to give gifts to God; in order to be spiritual; in order to please God; in order to worship God; and in order to partake of the Lord's Supper- people must be reconciled to each other in the Love of God.

Having ought in your heart toward another brother or sister is sinful in God's eyes and to take Communion without being reconciled to your brother or sister brings great condemnation upon you. We must remember here that the very purpose of taking Communion is not to be saved- but it is to remember the Lord's death. And how could anyone have unforgiveness in their hearts towards another brother or sister and at the same time remember why Christ died?

Well, I'm out of time for today- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our examination of the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

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