

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

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

Chapter 15- How to Combat Heresy **Jude 17-21**

182 How to Combat Heresy Part 18

WOSM Thursday 07/17/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are continuing to go over what Jude taught about "How to Combat Heresy". So, let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 17-21** again together:

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,
18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."
19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.
20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Now we are continuing to go over the way that Jude gave us to combat heresy when it comes to our Church. And the best defense that we have against the long and protracted "War on Error" is found in verses 20&21. And so, we are continuing to explore the first thing that Jude teaches will help us to combat heresy when it comes and that is:

Build Yourselves Up on Your Most Holy Faith

And as we have discovered- there are 10 Biblical keys for every believer to utilize that when combined will build himself up in his most holy faith. So, let's go over the list again:

1. Prayer

2. Bible Study
3. Godly Fellowship
4. Obedience
5. Being Filled With the Spirit
6. Confession
7. Love
8. Hope
9. Witnessing
10. Discernment

Now on the last broadcast, we began to look at the ninth key to becoming spiritual strong- Witnessing- and I want to continue to explore this key today.

The Bible does not view witnessing as being optional. Passages such as **Matthew 28:19** and **The Acts 1:8** makes it clear that all believers are responsible to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

The issue is not should all believers witness for Jesus, but the real issue is are all believers being an *effective* witness for Jesus? Do all of us portray Jesus correctly to the lost? That is an issue that we should discuss.

I want to say here that while I think all believers should read and study the Bible every single day, and while I truly believe that it is unconscionable for anyone who has been saved for any length of time to not know the Bible- you don't have to be a theologian to be an effective witness for Jesus.

The blind man who was healed by Jesus in **John 9**, probably didn't know how to answer even the basic question of Church Doctrine, but he was, nevertheless an effective witness for Jesus Christ because he could say with all sincerity and truthfulness,

John 9:25

... one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.

This man was truthfully and honestly telling everyone what Jesus had done for him. That is something that all believers can do regardless of how unlearned or uneducated in Doctrine and Theology they may be.

Now when I say this, some of you may be getting the impression

that I am saying that Doctrine and Theology are nice, but they really don't matter. I am not saying that at all. Both Doctrine and Theology matter very much- they matter so much to God that He inspired several men to write down words that testify to God's concern about this issue in Scripture. What I am saying is that while we are all trying to learn Sound Doctrine; while we are in the process of being taught clear, objective Truth- we can be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. While we are in the ongoing and systematic and line upon line and precept upon precept study of the only Book that God gave to man- we can still go out and sow seed in the hearts of unbelievers. We need to do that; we should do that; I do it every day and you should too.

Simply because God showed mercy and grace and regenerated someone under your ministry while you didn't know Doctrine is not an indication that Doctrine doesn't matter. No, God was simply moving in spite of your unpreparedness and saved a soul in spite of your lack of training.

But don't wait until you are fully trained to go out and sow seed. Sow seed every day in the way you live your life; and the way you conduct yourself and by what you engage in and what you refuse to engage in and with your words. All of these things added up together make up your witness for Jesus.

So, because that is true- it matters what you do; it matters what you laugh at; and what you agree with; it matters where you go and what you read and what you listen to and what you watch. It matters how you spend your money and who your friends are and how you dress and how you view the world. All of these things serve to make up what the lost world sees about Jesus Christ- and this is so vital for their sakes because they don't read their Bibles- they don't learn about Jesus from Scripture- they learn about Jesus from watching you and when you sin- they are hindered from coming to Christ.

When Church leaders are caught in ongoing sin- everyone suffers- even the lost soul. That is why God's Word sets such a high standard for leadership. To be a leader in the House of God is the hardest thing for anyone to aspire to and that is good because it is the most demanding place on earth and the most wonderful. No man in his own power can meet all the Biblical qualifications to be a leader in the House of God- God has to Sovereignly choose that person for ministry and then Sovereignly equip him with what he needs in order for him to

stand.

But when the Church is blessed by good strong godly men to lead them- the entire Corporate Witness of the Church is magnified in the Community and Christ is exalted and even the lost world benefits.

When men who stand and proclaim the Gospel do not love their wives; or do not live what they teach- everyone loses. So fervently pray for your leaders. If you have someone in leadership in your Church who is not what God expects them to be, rather than you getting mad and taking your ball and going home, pray for that man until God makes that man into someone who is after God's heart. It is always easier for people to quit the Church and leave- that takes no courage at all; that takes no power; and that takes no ability. And that doesn't ever fix the problem. That is how the lost, unregenerate world handles conflict. Just quit and leave. The world does this because lost people are only involved in something that benefits themselves. And when that something ceases to benefit them personally- they just leave.

But saved people serve the Lord not to be blessed or filled or empowered, but so as to faithfully and consistently bring glory to God. The testimony of the lost world screams out, "Me, me, me!" but the testimony of those in the Church should be, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus".

To fast and pray and encourage and work real hard to help make something or someone who is weak to be strong, now that *does* take courage and that *does* take a lot of supernatural power and that *does* take a lot of ability, but that is precisely what the Bible says we are to do. Leaving a Church that is faithfully preaching and teaching the Truth simply because there may be some people in that Church who are not what you want them to be is a terrible testimony for Jesus Christ. That sort of behavior tells the world in no uncertain terms that the Church and the people in the Church are not worth the effort.

We live in such a self-centered society today that long term faithfulness in a Church that is fully submitted to Scripture and is really trying to follow Jesus is almost a thing of the past. And we are all much poorer for that. If God's people are not faithful- who will be?

If you are a member of a local Church- then get involved; attend the services; participate in the activities; study and learn and pray and fast with your brothers and sisters; weep when they weep and rejoice when they rejoice- be kind and tender hearted toward them as they are

your covenant family. The world looks on and marvels at a Church where the people genuinely love each other.

Beloved, as Bible believing followers of Jesus Christ- neither you nor I have the right to arbitrarily leave a Church unless that Church is in direct violation of Scripture. To simply leave a particular Church because you have ought in your heart against someone else is to act in rebellion to everything the New Testament teaches.

This renegade spirit that has permeated our culture where everyone feels that they can individually make these kinds of decisions without any counsel cannot be found anywhere in Scripture.

The Bible is clear that in every Church there are to be highly trained and qualified men who hold positions of Elders who are charged by Jesus Christ Himself to guard the souls of the faithful. These men are responsible to God for you, and they are commanded by Scripture to love you and shepherd you.

And almost everyone would agree with that- But you are commanded by the same Scripture to humbly and graciously submit yourself to their rule and to love them and pray for them and follow them. And this is where the rubber meets the road. Unless and until you have submitted yourself to the authority of Scripture – you will never submit yourself to the rule of another man. But until you do that- rest assured that you are in direct and hostile rebellion to Jesus Christ- Who is the Head of the Church.

When you make major decisions on your own without counseling these men who have a charge to guard your soul- you are testifying loudly that Scripture doesn't play a prominent role in your life and that you believe that you are free to do as you please. But beloved, that is not freedom- that is anarchy- and it is ugly and unproductive for the corporate testimony of the Church and your own personal testimony as well.

The issue here is not one of control but one of obedience. The issue is also not one of whether the Bible teaches these things- because it clearly does- the real issue is will we submit to what the Holy Scriptures clearly and consistently teach?

Remember, part of the Old Adamic nature of the unregenerate heart is self centeredness and operating in the best interests of yourself. But when we receive the new, divine nature- all that we do is for God's glory alone and it brings God great glory when individual people set

aside their individual differences and come together in holy unity around divinely inspired Truth.

This kind of action speaks loudly to the lost world that the Church is different from the world and that the people of the church are real.

We do not have the right to arbitrarily choose which verses of Scripture to obey while leaving the other parts out. We as believers must obey the Word of God or be counted as rebels.

So be careful that you as an individual follower of Jesus Christ are part of a larger, local visible body, which is in turn part of a worldwide body, which in turn is part of an invisible, historical body, which in turn is part of a great cloud of witnesses in Heaven. Truly since Immanuel has come, we who love and serve the Lord are not alone and should not function or operate alone.

Is your Corporate Witness in line with Scripture? Have you graciously and humbly submitted yourself to shepherds who are charged by Scripture to guard and feed your soul? If not, I encourage you to do so quickly.

Christian friends, the Bible says that we belong to Christ if we are saved- but the Bible also says that we also belong to each other, and we are to work real hard to make sure that the Corporate witness of the Church is strong and healthy in the Community. The Corporate testimony of the Church is so very vital that many, many people have lost their lives over this very issue throughout history. So, make sure that you are contributing to a strong and healthy witness for the Church at large in the Community and not simply looking out for number one.

Now I have so much I could add to this, but I am out of time, but join with me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the **Epistle of Jude**. Well, I have 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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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.