

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**

187 How to Combat Heresy Part 23

WOSM Thursday 07/24/08

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 discuss how to obey verses 20 & 21 of Jude. These verses tell us that the best way for any of us to ward off heresy and false teaching is to "**build yourselves up on our most holy faith**" and to "**keep yourselves in the love of God**".

Now we all can see from these verses that God wants us to be strong and I don't think that any of us wants to be weak- but precisely how do we get strong? Exactly how do we build up ourselves on our most holy faith and how do we keep ourselves in the love of God?

On earlier broadcast, I went over the ten keys to gaining spiritual strength- those ten keys are:

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

And we went over all ten of these keys at length, but now we are looking at what we need in order to accomplish these ten keys.

Now I don't think for one minute that these keys are complicated. A child can understand them. Yet today in the modern Church fewer people are actually engaged in these ten keys now than at any time in the 2,000 year history of the Church. And as a result of our unwillingness to get strong in the Lord and our unwillingness to build up ourselves on our most holy faith and our unwillingness to keep ourselves in the love of God is that ancient and vile heresies that the Church confronted and rejected centuries ago are making a huge comeback in our day.

Why is that? Why would anyone who is Blood bought not desire to be strong? Why would anyone who is saved not be willing to do whatever it took to obey God's Word? I believe that our unwillingness to do what is necessary to get strong has everything to do with a warped sense of what Christianity is all about. That is why I am teaching right now on the three aspects of discipleship that Jesus taught in **Mark 8:34-38**. Let's read those verses again.

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Now I realize that today if I were to hold a healing service in my Church- people would be lined up down the aisle and the line would run out the door and down the street. If I was to give away free food- the people would flock the Church. If I were to hold a free concert with the latest music star to hit the scene- my church would be packed out. The reason that I know this to be true is because I have done all three of those things through the years and that is exactly what happened.

But if I were to call an all night prayer meeting; or if I were to call a Solemn Assembly where we could fast and pray all day long or if I were to teach about how to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Jesus- we could put elephants in every pew and still have plenty of room for the people. Why is that? It is human nature for the overwhelming majority of people to be perfectly willing to serve God as long as it is on their terms. But whenever God begins to make demands on us; whenever God begins to require something from us- very few are willing to be faithful.

And Jesus had the very same response. There were crowds of people who thronged Jesus as long as He healed them and as long as He fed them; and as long as they perceived that Jesus was going to do something for them. But when our holy Lord began to teach things like we should deny ourselves; when Jesus Christ began to say that one of the requirements to be a disciple is to take up our cross; when the incarnate God had the audacity to suggest that the pathway to being a disciple was to follow Jesus- all of a sudden the crowd thinned out real fast and all Jesus had was a handful.

The Bible says in **John 6:60**, that during one of Jesus' teachings that many of Jesus' disciples interrupted the Lord and said, "**This is a difficult statement- who can listen to it?**" And just six verses later, the Bible says this:

John 6:66

As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

So, we find that even the Lord Himself didn't have very many who were willing to go all the way with Him. And the more that we teach people that the purpose of Church is not to glorify God and submit ourselves to His ways, but the more that we teach people that the purpose of Church is so that God can meet all of our wants and wishes and the more that Church services are redesigned to minimize solid Biblical teaching and to minimize our confrontation with our own sinfulness and to minimize conviction and to minimize repentance- this problem will get worse and the people will be less and less willing to do anything that is inconvenient or that costs them anything and so the people will not deny themselves; they will not take up their cross and they will not follow Jesus and therefore they will stay weak and unprepared and unable to ward off heresy and false teaching and they will be sitting ducks for deception because they have not built themselves up on their most holy faith and they have not kept themselves in the Love of God like Jude told us to do.

Brothers and sisters, let me give you a real life example of why denying ourselves is so important. It is impossible for a child to grow and become responsible in the natural without clearly established rules and boundaries and without order and discipline at work in their lives. And order and discipline and structure and guidance like this don't just pop up out of the ground. These things originate from parents who love the Lord enough and love society enough and love their children enough to deny themselves and not give their children what they want- but give them what they need.

That is why God set up biblical order in the Home beginning with a godly father and husband who loves the Lord more than he loves his wife and children and who loves his wife like Christ loved the Church and who leaves the safety and the security of his home and earns the living and takes on the responsibility to bring home the bacon. This man is to be the priest and prophet of his house and he is to guard the home and watch over the souls of his family not allowing the enemy to come in and not allowing the enemy to influence his household.

This godly man is to love his children and administer discipline to his children and cause them to fear God and fear him and to obey him and he is perfectly willing to make good on that promise with swift and sure punishment when they rebel against his authority or when they dishonor his wife.

This man is to teach and train his children in the right ways of the Lord and he is to give them a tangible example of Christianity at work by living what he teaches. But a man cannot possibly do this without denying himself. So, he has a choice. He can come home from work and throw the paycheck at the wife and lay down on the couch and watch the game- or he can obey the words of Jesus Christ and deny himself and lead his family correctly.

This holy order of God then flows down from this good man to a godly wife and mother who loves the Lord enough to humbly and graciously submit to the authority of her husband and who has dedicated herself to her family- over and above her own career. She too must deny herself along with her husband if together they hope to have the kind of family that will bring honor to God.

Make no mistake about it- having the kind of family that the Bible describes is hard work and it simply cannot be accomplished unless and until both the man and the woman are willing to deny themselves in humble submission to the Word of God.

But when they are willing; When both the man and woman love the Lord enough to be willing to deny themselves and follow Jesus in doing what it takes to have a godly home- the world looks on and marvels. A godly home brings great honor to God and exalts Jesus Christ and is the bedrock of civilization.

It is in this kind loving and godly environment that offers the best possible opportunity for children to grow up well balanced and prepared to contribute to this life and be prepared for the next.

The point here is that while everyone desires a home like this- we have fewer of them now than we did 50 years ago, and that is because men and women today are not nearly as willing to deny themselves and do what it takes to have a home like that as they were in the past. Part of the problem of course is television which brings sin into the home and makes sin look attractive and which fills our mind and eyes and heart and ears with messages of self centeredness and self fulfillment rather than self denial.

Another hindrance to having godly homes is the glaring lack of Bible knowledge and Bible study among God's own people who are perishing due to this lack of knowledge.

Most of the popular teachings that are circulating through our nation today do not promote the biblical concept of denying ourselves and

taking up our cross. In fact, most of the false teachings that I am aware of promote self fulfillment and self gratification at the expense of self denial. In other words, most of what you will hear from many of the popular preachers today actually fights against the clear teachings of Scripture about this issue.

The point that I am making is that while we all want to have godly homes and we all want to be strong in the Lord and we all want to bear good fruit – we simply cannot accomplish these things without obeying the words of Jesus Christ and learning how to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus.

And unless we deny ourselves and unless we take up our cross and follow Jesus- we will not be able to accomplish those ten keys to spiritual growth and therefore- we will not build up ourselves on our most holy faith as Jude commanded and heresy and false teaching will continue to deceive us.

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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