

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

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

### Chapter 12- The Characteristics of the Heretics **Jude 12-13**

#### 126 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 4

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WOSM Wednesday 04/30/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse ‘Journey’ through the Epistle of Jude and today we are continuing to examine what Jude taught about “The Characteristics of the Heretics.” So, let’s read verses 12 & 13 of Jude again together:

**12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.**

Now Jude is showing us in these two verses the characteristics of the heretics who will try to creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy. As we have said on the previous broadcasts, Lies hate Truth; error despises Biblical Truth. Heretics cannot flourish where there is Sound Doctrine taught and believed and practiced. It may come in- but heresy will not stay in the Church where the Scriptures have authority.

Jude tells us here in verse 12, that the heretics are like “**hidden reefs in your love feasts**.” Now the Greek word that was translated as here is *spilas*, which means: *a rock or a ledge or a reef that lies just under the sea*. So, Jude is telling us that the heretics are like spots on a nautical map- they are like “hidden reefs” lying just under the water- waiting for some ship to sail by so that they can shipwreck them.

Now hidden reefs are undersea coral formations usually located close to the shoreline. They are potentially harmful to ships because

they can rip open the bottoms of their hulls causing the vessels to sink. And like those hidden reefs- Jude says the false teachers embed themselves just under the surface of the love feasts that the early Church had, and from that vantage point – they were able to tear into unsuspecting people with their lies and false teachings leaving the people shipwrecked in their Faith.

The Apostle Paul dealt with something similar to this and I want us to read about it in **1Timothy 1:18-20**:

**18** This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my* son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,

**19** keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

**20** Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

In these verses, Paul the Apostle links true Faith together with a good conscience. The Faith that Paul mentions here in verse 19 is a reference to the Christian Faith- The Gospel- the Word of God. “Holding Faith” therefore means holding fast or being faithful to that revealed Divine Truth.

Timothy's first responsibility to the Lord was to remain loyal to the objective propositional collective body of Truth that was Divinely revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Unlike those who turned away from this faithful ministry- Paul is telling Timothy- and by extension you and me- that Timothy as well as all ministers of the Gospel are to remain unwaveringly devoted to the Word of God. In fact, he was to guard it; nourish himself on it; believe it and live it personally; and he was to teach it and preach it.

You see, beloved, a good conscience is the result of a pure life. Like Paul, Timothy was to maintain a blameless conscience. Conscience is a God-given device in every human mind that reacts to that person's behavior. It either *accuses* us or it *excuses* us. Our conscience produces feelings of well-being, peace, contentment, and calm when our behavior is godly. But when our behavior is evil, our conscience activates guilt, shame, remorse, fear, doubt, insecurity, and

despair. The God- given purpose of our conscience is to warn the person of the fact that he is sinning.

What a blessing to have such a warning device! A good healthy conscience is to the soul what pain is to the body. Pain warns us that something threatens the body's well-being. And Guilt warns that something threatens the well-being of our soul. And unless our conscience has been seared with a hot iron and has become unable to register legitimate guilt- the conscience is an amazing instrument in God's economy to help keep us holy and pure before God.

So, it is true to say that Doctrinal purity must always be accompanied by purity of life. There is an inseparable link between truth and morality, between right belief and right behavior. This is why it is true to say that all theological error or all Doctrinal error has its roots in moral rather than intellectual soil. For example, in every case where the Bible mentions heretics- it also mentions ungodly living. So, the Bible is clear- heretics not only *teach* wrong and *believe* wrong- but they also *live* wrong. And it is their wrong living that is the basis or foundation of their wrong theology and Doctrine.

This is true because people often teach wrong doctrine to accommodate their own sin. For example- when the preacher is living in sin- it warps the way that the Gospel is presented and one of two things happens: Either the edge of the sword is dulled so that when he preaches- he won't condemn the acts that he himself is doing in secret; or else he will lash out at sin so violently in response to his own guilty conscience that he forgets about mercy, and love and forgiveness.

That fact is proven true by the immorality that so often characterizes the false teachers. This is why Paul emphasized godly *living* every time that he emphasized Doctrinal purity. And this is why John talks about love when he also talks about Truth.

Sound doctrine and godly living are the twin towers guarding the purity of the Church. Paul told the young pastor in **1Timothy 4:16:**

**Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.**

By remembering his responsibility beyond himself to the Lord and to the church to keep himself pure, Timothy would be able to fight

the spiritual battles he faced. He would serve well as a "good soldier of Christ Jesus".

But we live in a time like Paul did when many are "putting away" the Faith. They are leaving off teaching Sound Doctrine. For the most part, people in Church do not value or respect or understand or know Sound, Biblical Truth and as a result- they view the Word of God and the Truth of the Divine inspiration of Scripture as some weird aberration that has no place in the modern Church.

We are actually living in the day when people in the House of God are heaping to themselves teachers to entertain themselves rather than to edify themselves. They want smooth sounding words that are shallow and simple, and which require no change of behavior on their part. They want more music, more dance; more comedians; more entertainment; more drama; more puppets; more games; more toys and at the same time- they also want less preaching; less Bible Study; less prayer; and less deep serious meaningful discussions about eternal things.

We live in a time when anything but the real true, Biblical Gospel of God will be accepted. We want an easy Gospel that makes no demands upon us. We want a bloodless Gospel that requires no repentance. We want a social Gospel that has replaced Salvation with being socially responsible. We want a political Gospel that replaces a real relationship with Jesus Christ with being on the right side of political legislation. We want a prosperity Gospel that makes us rich and famous without actually walking with God. We want a psychological Gospel that builds up self and makes us feel better about ourselves without being truly saved. We want a feel good Gospel that speaks of love without responsibility; and joy without sacrifice and we want a fantasy Gospel that teaches that everybody who is sincere about anything is saved.

Beloved, you and I live in a day when it is hard for people to even *endure* Sound Doctrine anymore. And I suppose that I have heard more arguments against Sound Doctrine over the last five years than anything else. You would think that it was Biblical Truth that was the problem instead of being the solution that the Bible says that it is.

The Truth is that by coping out on Sound Doctrine we have made the people of God spiritually poor and we have made them weak

and we have made them unable to live rightly and we have contributed to making sin look attractive and we have promoted ungodliness in the name of the Spirit.

By putting away the faith- the leadership of the Church has made the people addicted to spiritual hobby horses and the latest fad that the Church growth gurus invent every six months or so. Because we refuse to do what the Bible clearly tells us to do, and teach Sound Doctrine, we have watched the people of God bounce off the walls and go from doing what Jesus Would do to being a God chaser to praying the prayer of Jabez to being wild at heart to being a promise keeper to becoming purpose driven and whatever else is coming next.

We wear wrist bands on our wrists and ball caps on our heads and we have the bumper stickers and tee shirts. We know all the slogans and all the cute phrases and all the clever statements but, for the most part, we do not personally possess the power of God to overcome wickedness and to live holy and to resist temptation because we keep looking for shortcuts and easier ways and simpler methods and there just aren't any.

Make no mistake about it- walking with God will consume your entire life. Serving Jesus Christ will demand everything you are and everything you own. Jesus Christ is going to be Lord of all, or He won't be Lord at all. You and I must die to ourselves and pick up our crosses daily and follow Him or else we are free to go our own way. To be a Christian means that you give up all claims over your own life and you submit yourself to be a bought and paid for bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And those activities that build up flesh and which promote carnality, and which tickle the ears, and which make no demands on your life are for the most part the very activities that are the most popular today in the Church. But those kinds of things will never bring you to Jesus. Carnality can never bring forth holiness. Flesh can never produce spirit. Earthly and shallow and base things do not have the ability to break the arrogance and the pride of man and save the soul.

But God can. And God does. And God will when what God gave is done the way God said for it to be done. God's recipe for lost sinners is to preach to them the full Gospel. God's recipe to make the people of God strong in the Lord and the power of His might is to bring them

into a culture of repentance; to teach them to pray; to encourage them to fast. To strengthen them in Truth. To teach them the Bible; and to get them to fellowship with each other.

Doing God's business God's way will bring forth the results that God desires- genuine; heaven sent; sin hating; God honoring revival. Preaching the Gospel rightly, fully, and fearlessly will bring forth a revival of the fear of God; it will bring forth a revival of the desire for prayer; it will bring forth a revival of love for Bible Study; it will bring forth a revival of holiness and of actually living and walking with God.

You and I live in a time of the greatest event in all of human history. We are living on the threshold of the end of the ages, when we shall see Jesus split the eastern sky and come back to this earth riding a white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords.

You and I have the honor and the privilege of serving the Lord now; we get to bow our knees now. The day will come when everyone will have to bow then, but you and I can bow our knees now. Every tongue will be forced to confess that Jesus is Lord in that hour, but we get to confess that Truth right now. They will be made to bow, and they will be made to confess, but we bow and we confess because we love Him and because He saved our wretched souls and because we desire with all our hearts to glorify and magnify His holy and majestic Name and this is why we need to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. 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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