

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**

127 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 5

WOSM Thursday 05/01/08

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 on our previous broadcasts, I was showing you how that in these two verses- Jude gave us five characteristics of the heretics that would creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy. Jude equated the heretics with these five natural phenomenoms:

1. Hidden Reefs in your love feasts
2. Clouds without water
3. Autumn Trees Without Fruit
4. Wild Waves of the Sea
5. Wandering Stars

Now as we have discussed earlier, the correct translation of “hidden reefs” in verse 12 is *nautical* spots on the maritime maps of that day. In other words, these “spots” are actually “hidden reefs” which lie just under the surface of the water near the shoreline, and which wait for ships to sail by so that they can cause them to wreck in the sea.

These hidden reefs of apostasy were serious problems for the Christian Church because we can see that heresy and heretics caused other people to become shipwreck. Let's read **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.

Unlike many of those in ministry today, Paul was bold to name names and to clearly identify the heretics in the Church. Paul speaks of two here to Timothy, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Paul tells Timothy here to hold faith and a good or a clean conscience. It is vital that we all realize that you cannot preach Truth long term without living Truth long term. Those who endeavor to preach Truth without actually living the Truth will soon be exposed as the hypocrites that they are.

Integrity in the ministry is so very important if we are to have a Church that will bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. There are far too many people in the pulpit today who have a marvelous way with words and can speak for hours without notes and who can wow the audience with clever phrases and interesting information, but inside many of these people are corrupt to the core and their preaching reflects that.

When a person is wrong on the inside; when a man harbors unrepented sin in his life; when a preacher is engaged in secret sin and continues to preach- it greatly affects the way he preaches. He is sinning and he knows it- so his own conscience condemns him, and he has to overcome that guilt before he can preach.

There is only two ways to overcome guilt- the right way and the wrong way. The right way to overcome guilt is to accept the fact that God the Holy Spirit has convicted your heart and go ahead and admit your guilt; confess your sin; and then turn from that sin or repent. John tells us in **1John 1:8-10**:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not

in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

I have been with many in the ministry who are caught in what I call the “ministry trap.” These people view their position in ministry as preventing them from repenting when they sin. This trap is insidious and is not Scriptural. All men must repent when they sin, and the Bible prescribes confession as the prerequisite for repentance.

Without clear confession of sin- the sin will be repeated over and over and over again.

But when that sin is brought into the light- it has no where to hide. All of its hideousness and wickedness and blackness and horror is brought into the light and the people who already have the new divine nature inside them are repulsed by it. And this is the key. Let’s read **Psalms 38:18:**

For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.

David said that he will confess his iniquity and he was the King! He was sorry or grieved because he had sinned. But David knew what we need to know that confession of sin is vital if we are to repent from it and not continue in it.

In my experience as a pastor, I have found only two reasons why people will not confess their sins: One is pride, and the other is gossip. Those who are filled with pride will think that if they openly and freely confess sin in their lives that others will think less of them. The very thought of confessing sin wounds their arrogant heart and overrides their desire to be in right standing with God- which should be the only consideration.

But we must remember that all men sin. And since all men sin why do we pretend that we do not sin? John told us that if we say that we have no sin we are only deceiving ourselves. Those who think that they don’t sin are deceived and foolish and are at best little babies in Christ and at worst are really not saved.

The other main obstacle to genuine confession of sin is gossip. Gossip is a violation of the ninth commandment and is a horrible sin in the modern Church. Gossip is like a cancer that flows throughout the whole body. Once gossip gets started it is very hard to stop and almost impossible to stop without losing some of the sheep that was affected by the gossip.

When I find someone in my Church engaging in gossip- I confront them to their face and expose them publicly for their wickedness. Church should be the one single place on earth where sin can be easily repented of, and gossip prevents people from confessing their sin. It is far better to lose that one long tongued member than it is to stop the glorious process of heart felt confession in the Church.

It is up to the leadership of the Church to create what the Puritans called a “culture of repentance.” The House of God should be the one place where sin can be preached about; where it can be discussed openly and freely; where sin can be confessed without pride or gossip interfering with it; and where sin can be repented of so that the soul can be set free. Without that ability; without that environment; without that kind of culture that allows men to confront their own sin and deal with it and be set free from it- you really don’t even have a Church. You may have a social club or a neighborhood gathering place or a club- but you don’t have a Christian Church without confession of sin and repentance going on constantly.

I want you to notice what Paul said about these two heretics, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Paul said this about them:

... whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

Now even though this is probably one of the most unpopular subjects in our day- nevertheless, it is part of the Church’s ministry to deliver certain people to Satan. Our Lord taught us clearly in **Matthew 18** that those who are members of the Church and who continue in sin and who refuse multiple attempts to get them to repent are to be put out of the Church. Now before you get angry with me- those are Jesus’ words, dear friends- not mine. This deal that we love people too much to ever be that harsh on them is a cop out to our Biblical responsibility as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to obey what Jesus plainly taught

in Scripture. We have to remember, dear friends, that we don't love people near as much as Jesus loves them and He is the One who said that we are to put unrepentant sinners out of the Church.

Such people who are excommunicated out of the Christian Church because they refuse to repent and to serve God are delivered unto satan. Now understand when I talk about this- I am not talking about sinners who are not saved.

Those people who are excommunicated from the House of Faith are professed Christians; they are members of the Church; these are people who have been approached by someone and confronted with their sin and they have refused to repent. They have been confronted with two or more people about their clear violation of Scripture and they still refuse to repent. They have also been brought publicly before the Church and lovingly compelled to repent and yet they still refuse to change. So, Jesus says in **Matthew 18** that these people are to be cast forth out of the Church and to be treated as a tax collector and as an unbeliever.

And before we begin to think that this is not love- we must acknowledge that Jesus said to do this. Paul and John and Peter and James said to do this. And if that is true- then why do we not do this? If we are not going to obey what Jesus said to do- why is Matthew 18 in the Bible? What do we do with it- cut it out? Who among us has the right to overrule what Jesus said to do in the Church that belongs to Him?

But I believe that we don't discipline unruly members of our Churches for the same reason that we don't discipline our unruly children at home. It really has got nothing to do with how our discipline will affect them. We have simply lost our courage and we are more concerned about people liking us than we are about obeying the red letter words of Jesus Christ and we are bringing damnation upon our own heads for doing it.

The leadership of far too many Churches have become emasculated and have lost their godly strength and have become effeminate in our thinking and practice and we have left off serious and important things like the fear of God and a demand for respect and obedience to God and honor and order and to carry on responsibility.

But here's what you cannot do. You can't read **Matthew 18** and you can't read **1 Timothy 1:18-20** and you can't read scores of other verses of

Scripture and then deny that Church Discipline is required by the Head of the Church if we are to call ourselves faithful. 100 years ago, almost every Church of every denomination had an active and working written policy of Church Discipline in force among the members. Yet you probably don't know five Churches in your area where Church discipline is actually in force today. What happened? Did Jesus overrule what He told us to do? I don't think so. Why did the Church leave off the clear commands of her Head to turn some people over to satan?

Our lack of obedience in this area is but one more proof that we have replaced God's Wisdom for our own. We have replaced clear Biblical commands for human ideas and human agendas and human reasoning and human tactics that are all base and carnal and do not have the ability to bring honor and glory to God.

My Christian brothers and sisters we need to repent and to return to the authority of Scripture. We need to throw out our man-made philosophies and our man-made theologies and our man-made programs and institutions and religious trinkets and return to the God of our Fathers and bow before Him and honor and love and trust and obey and keep the Words that God has spoken through the revelation of his Book.

Jude tells us that the heretics are like hidden reefs- waiting for innocent souls to sail by so that they can be shipwrecked. The ministry of the Church needs to love the sheep enough to guard them from these evil people and to warn them about these people and to clearly identify these dangerous and troubled heretics so that those who have evil hearts can no longer harm the people of God.

And this is why we need to wake up and this is why we need Sound Doctrine, and this is why we need to obey God's Word, and this is why we all 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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