

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**

136 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 14

WOSM Wednesday 05/14/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of Jude and today we want to continue to look at what Jude taught about “The Characteristics of the Heretics.” So, let’s open our Bibles and 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 over the last thirteen broadcasts, I have been expounding on what Jude wrote in these two verses. Jude brought up five natural phenomenon which illustrate the characteristics of the false teachers whom the Apostles warned us would come into the Church. And in our study- we have already looked at the spots or the hidden reefs and we have looked at the clouds without water- and today I want to look at the *third* characteristic of the heretics- and that is that Jude says that the people who creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy are like trees without fruit. So, let’s read again the last part of verse 12. Jude said that the heretics are like:

... autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted...

Now the Greek word that Jude used here that was translated into English as “trees” is not just *any* tree- but the word actually means “*trees at the time of harvest*” or what was called back then, “*autumn*

trees". An autumn tree without fruit gives us the picture of a barren harvest. A barren fruit tree is a disappointing tree; a tree that has failed in its only purpose for existence. A barren fruit tree is an abomination to a fruit farmer. It is a waste of existence; it is a reproach to the farm. Farmers do not take kindly to trees that bear no fruit and neither does Jesus. Let's read **Matthew 21:17-22** and see how Jesus reacted to a fig tree that bore no fruit.

17 And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

18 Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry.

19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be *any* fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

20 Seeing *this*, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither *all* at once?"

21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

22 And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Jesus pronounced judgment on the fig tree because it had no fruit. Likewise, Jesus will pronounce judgment on us if we do not produce for Him. You see, after a person is saved- Jesus doesn't *ask* that person to serve Him- no, Jesus *demand*s that the person serve Him. Jesus doesn't *request* that we bear fruit- no, Jesus *expects* us to bear good fruit and He *expects* that good fruit to be in abundance and He *expects* that fruit to remain.

You see, dear friends, bearing godly fruit is not optional. Bearing godly and holy fruit is the unmistakable proof that you have received within yourself the new divine nature. If you bear no fruit- it is because you are not born again. If you bear fruit and then stop – it is because you are backslid. If you bear good fruit but then bear bad fruit, it is because you love your sin more than you love Jesus and you are like the dog that has returned to his vomit and like the sow that has returned to wallowing in the mire.

You see, beloved, when you are lost and you are dead in sins and trespasses, you live like that. You mind earthly things; you follow your lusts; and you obey your carnal cravings. But when you are saved; when you have been washed in pure Blood; when you have been born again- you are a brand new creature and old things have passed away and behold all things have become new and you bear fruit because it is your nature to do so. Look at **Ephesians 4:17-32**:

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.

26 **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN**; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put

away from you, along with all malice.

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

If this kind of radical, supernatural transformation has not occurred in your life and if this godly fruit is not popping out all over you- it is probably because you are not saved, and you need to go back and run that play until you get it right. I tell you that being saved means something.

Over the last fifty years or so, we have lowered the bar about what it means to be saved so that more people can be members of our Churches- even if they haven't been redeemed. In our mad rush to grow the Church at all costs, we have reduced the Biblical requirements for what it means to be a Christian so that now even unregenerated sinners can now qualify. But this humanistic philosophy is not helping the cause of Christ, brothers and sisters- it is hindering it.

It isn't easy to get saved and it isn't easy to live saved and it is wrong to portray Salvation as nothing more important than changing your socks. Our Salvation cost the sinless spotless Lamb His life. Jesus was beaten to a bloody pulp because that was payment that God required to pay for my sins and your sins. We need to honor that holy and glorious sacrifice by raising the bar back to where God put it in the beginning about the indescribable glory of Salvation.

We need to tell people the Truth about serving God. Serving Jesus Christ may well cost you everything that you own. It may require that you give everything that you own to the poor- go ask the rich young ruler. Salvation may require you to leave the comfort of your surroundings and serve God in a foreign field- go ask the millions of missionaries who heard that call. Serving Jesus Christ may cost you your reputation; your family connections; your business and even your life- go ask those millions of martyrs who are under the Mercy Seat right now crying out, *"How long Lord till you avenge our blood!"*

Beloved, it is wrong for us not to demand of people what Christ and Scripture demands of them. We are not doing anyone any favors by whitewashing the clear demands that Christ makes on everyone that will serve Him. It is a lie to tell people that Jesus loves them no matter what they do and that He would never require anything from them that might actually cost them something. It is in fact promoting a falsehood

to suggest that the straight and narrow path is anything but straight and narrow.

My Christian brothers and sisters, we have done to Salvation the very same thing that they did to public schools. Several decades ago- they lowered the requirements for what it means to graduate from public schools so they could have more graduations. Now more people graduate than ever before- but they can't even read the diploma that they get.

And the same thing is true about Salvation. We have been brainwashed into thinking that we can turn out conversions like General Motors turns out automobiles, so we talk about 1500 decisions here and 3500 decision here and one town said that they got more people saved than they even had people.

But what we have to understand, Christian friends, is that true Salvation is a supernatural miracle from a Sovereign God and while works and fruit cannot ever save you- they nevertheless are the proof that we are saved. So, it is true to say that while fruits and works are not the *root* of Salvation, they are indeed the unmistakable *fruit* of Salvation. You cannot be saved by human deeds- that is true- but it is also just as true to say that you cannot be saved without human works either.

Now here is an example that will help you to get this straight. The equation that best illustrates the role that fruit or good deeds or works play in the Salvation and life of a human being is this:

Grace + Faith = Salvation + works.

Now Roman Catholicism teaches:

Grace + Faith + Human Works = Salvation

... but that is a perversion of what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches

Grace + Faith = Salvation + works.

Listen- bearing godly fruit is very important to God. And the lack of fruit in the lives of the heretics was one of the characteristics that Jude mentions here. Jesus cursed the fig tree because it bore no fruit.

Jesus also had some very important things to say about us bearing fruit in **John 15:1-2**:

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

Beloved, Jesus expects every branch that it is Him to bear fruit. God will take away every branch that does not bear fruit and God will purge every branch that bears fruit so that it may bring forth more fruit. Are you bearing fruit for Jesus today?

But the heart of those who are genuinely saved and who belong to Jesus don't count the cost- because they didn't pay the price. They serve God with gladness of heart- they bear good fruit and are willing to suffer for Christ's sake without murmuring and complaining out of their great love for Jesus and the gratefulness that they have because of the magnificence of Salvation that God has given to them.

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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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.