

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

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

Chapter 3- The Common Salvation **Jude 3**

13. The Common Salvation- Part 5

WOSM Wednesday, 11/21/07; WPAS Wednesday 05/07/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse journey through the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue in our new section of study and look again at what Jude taught about, "The Common Salvation" so let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 3** again together:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Now we have been studying what Jude meant by using the term, "**common salvation**" here in verse 3 and to do that- we were looking at the four characteristics of the first Church that we found in **The Acts 2:42**:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

So, we can see that based upon this verse- what made the Church of Jesus Christ to be "common" or alike was that four characteristics were the same in all of the Churches:

1. They continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread
4. Prayers

Now on the last broadcast- we were looking at the third characteristic that made the Church in the Book of Acts to be common or alike- which is the Breaking of Bread or Holy Communion. Now as I told you last time- the term, “Breaking of bread” did not mean those times of fellowship where we sit down at the table and eat together- but it was referring to one of the two sacraments that Jesus gave to His Church- Holy Communion.

In the Bible, Jesus gave two ordinances to the Church- Baptism and Communion. And it was the breaking of bread- the Holy Communion that was common among those who made up the Church in the Book of the Acts. The Church had communion together and the Church had it often. Communion should not be looked upon as an interruption of the worship service- Communion is worship as is preaching and as is everything else that we do as unto God as believers.

And I also told you that that the Bible teaches that to partake of Communion is not to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ; it is not to celebrate His return as King of kings and Lord of lords to this earth. We do not eat of that bread and drink of that cup in order to celebrate his miracles or his teachings; but we are to partake of Communion in order to remember the death of Jesus Christ and we are to remember His death until He returns.

Now as we ended the last broadcast- I was teaching you the great importance that we have as believers to make sure that we take Communion properly, and I was going over how important it is that when we take Communion- that we do not take it with ought in our hearts toward another brother or sister.

Read with me what the Apostle John said about this in **1John 3:15** when he said:

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

So being at odds with another brother or sister in Christ is death to your soul. Hating another person who has been forgiven by God means that you hold yourself out to be more valuable than Christ. We were all lost and when we were lost sinners- Christ Mercifully and Graciously died to save us and to forgive us and to wash us. We were lost and we had offended God horribly and we were guilty, and we

deserved God's Wrath. But instead, of getting what we deserved- we were given Mercy and we were given forgiveness, and we are forgetting all of that; we are trampling all of that under our feet when we will not forgive those who sin against us.

Someone told me one time, "*Brother Blair, I have no problem forgiving anyone unless they do me wrong.*" But beloved, nobody needs your forgiveness unless they *have* done you wrong. Forgiveness is not optional. You are completely out of God's Will and you are completely separated from God and your sins are stacking up against you every minute that you refuse to forgive those that have wronged you.

Of course the power to forgive is a holy and a divine power that no man possess in and of himself. It takes the Power of God flowing and moving in your life to be able to forgive. But saved people have that power- so that we have no excuse.

So before anyone partakes of Communion- time should be given so that those who have ought in their heart may seek forgiveness and repent of harboring ill will toward another brother or sister. Now I realize that most Churches never even bring this up as they take Communion- but that is tragic mistake. We must do everything that we can to be sure that we are worshipping God correctly- and not just going through the motions. Taking Communion with unforgiveness in your heart or taking Communion with open and blatant unrepented sin in your life is an abomination to God and must not ever happen among true believers.

While it is true that Christ does not transubstantiate Himself onto the elements of the bread and the cup and while it is also true that some Churches have wrongly elevated the importance of the Communion Service to being part of what they call the "Salvation process"- we, who endeavor to follow Scripture must not overreact to their error.

Over the years, the Protestant Church has *minimized* the importance of the Lord's Supper in an effort to correct the errors that other religious groups put forth- and too often today this glorious time with God has been relegated as nothing more than a ritual or a ceremony or a memorial service. Beloved, we need to return to a Biblical view of Communion.

The Church in the Bible continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and they continued steadfastly in fellowship, and they

continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread, and this contributed to them having what Jude called the “common salvation”, and we need to repent and return to that which Christ established so that God may be glorified in us.

Now there is a fourth characteristic that made all the churches in **The Book of the Acts** to be common or alike- and that fourth characteristic is prayer.

Now prayer is the aroma of the Christian Church. It is the calling card of Christianity. Prayer is what makes the Church of Jesus different than any other institution and it is what distinguishes us from every other religion or moral movement in the history of man.

Prayer is the lifeblood of the Church. The first service of the Christian Church was a prayer meeting in the Upper Room. The fragrance of prayer should permeate the lives of God’s people; their labors; their dreams and desires; and the House of God itself.

In the Bible, the Church prayed. They prayed when they were confused; they prayed when they didn’t know what to do; they prayed when they were scared; they prayed when they were attacked; they prayed when they were threatened; they prayed when they were beaten; they prayed when they were thrown in jail; they prayed when they were excited; they prayed when they were happy. They prayed; they prayed; they prayed. O, how they prayed!

In Luke’s Gospel account of our Lord, he wrote in **Luke 11:1**:

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

Now Jesus performed many miracles in plain view of His disciples- but not one of them ever asked Jesus to teach them how to perform miracles. Jesus healed the sick and He opened blind eyes and caused the lame to walk, and raised the dead, but we have no record; no record at all of any of his disciples ever one time asking Jesus to teach them the secrets of miracles or the methods of healing; or the techniques of signs and wonders; or the way of supernatural manifestations.

But they *did* come to Jesus right after He got up off His knees and they asked Him to show them how to pray. They watched Jesus talk with His Father and then they saw Him rise up and go and do the

things that He did and say the things that He said and live the way that He lived, and they said within themselves- *“I want to be like this Man”*.

To be sure, the account in **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**, which is the diary of the Church, is filled with the men that God chose to set up His Church performing awesome miracles and gloriously healing the sick and raising the dead and thundering in prophecy and powerfully and with the anointing of God just dripping off them, they preached and they taught the Glorious Gospel with passion and conviction and they did indeed perform unbelievable signs and wonders.

But they didn't focus on the miracles like we do today. They didn't focus on healings like we do today. They didn't focus on signs and wonders like we do today. There is no record anywhere in the Bible where the Church held seminars on how to interpret dreams or how to engage in personal prophesy; or how to release the prophetic anointing, or any of the things that seem to capture the imagination of many in the modern Church.

They never asked Jesus to teach them how to do any of these things- but they wanted to know how to pray and I think that this is significant- not only as an insight into these particular men that God used- but to understand our own need to talk and communicate with God today.

The Church in the Bible held regular corporate prayer meetings. The people who had experienced the new birth had a craving in their hearts to be near to God. They desired the Presence of God. They sought after God. Prayer to those who were in the early Church was as natural as breathing; it was as common as talking; it was as genuine as believing; and it was as fundamental as preaching.

Prayer was an important part of the “Common Salvation”, and because the people of God had a correct view of God and correct view of Salvation and a correct view of man- they knew that an intricate part of Evangelism was prayer.

Today we place great importance on style and symbolism and fluff and the atmosphere in the Church. Churches spend thousands of dollars to make sure that we have the right sound system and the right light effects and the right electronic equipment- while many times prayer – simple heartfelt earnest prayer is never mentioned.

In the Bible, the Church prayed for God's Will to be done on earth to the same degree; and with the same urgency that the Will of God is done in heaven.

By definition, that means that those who prayed in the Bible understood and practiced and lived a life of self-denial and quite and peaceable and humble suffering so that their will and their minds would not be conformed to this world, but would be transformed so that they could visibly and tangibly prove without any doubt what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Beloved, the saints in the Bible knew that prayer was not about reading off a wish list of carnal and worldly items that we want God to do for us. They knew that prayer was a slow and that it was a tedious and a lifelong process that involved years of dedication and learning how to submit to His Will and how to fully yield to His Spirit and how to faithfully obey His Word; and that prayer required and prayer demanded lots and lots of dedicated and consecrated time.

These Blood bought, born again, Holy Ghost filled, regenerated, God loving, sin hating, heaven bound saints understood that prayer wasn't about them- it was all about God. They knew that prayer was not about them satisfying their fleshly desires, but it was about fulfilling God's Will. They knew that prayer was all about learning to Trust God; that it was learning how to submit to God; that it was learning how to rejoice when God says, "No". That it was learning how to be led and how to go and how to come and how to live and how to die and how to bring all glory and all honor and all praise to Christ and none for themselves.

The prayer meetings in the Bible didn't look like the prayer meetings that we have today. When these saved people gathered and began to pray- you could hear them two blocks down the road. They cried out to God in earnestness. They prayed until the heavens opened. They walked and they sat and kneeled down and stood and held hands and fell on the floor and cried out to God until He heard them and until the Power fell. They wept between the porch and the altar when they prayed. They didn't feel that they had been in a real prayer meeting unless they had worked up a sweat.

Their prayer meetings were all about repentance from their own wicked ways. Their prayer meetings were all about God's Will being done in the earth. Their prayer meetings were all about getting holy

Power and heavenly power that God gave that compelled them to be faithful and to live holy lives and to preach the Gospel without compromise.

Beloved, we need to repent, and we need prayer meetings like this today. Effectual and fervent prayer was common in the early church and I pray that it will become common again in ours. May God help us all.

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