

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**

143 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 21

WOSM Friday 05/23/08

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.

In these two verses, Jude says that the heretics are like five natural phenomenoms:

- Hidden Reefs
- Clouds Without Water
- Autumn Trees Without Fruit
- Raging Waves of the Sea
- Wandering Stars

Now in our study, we have already covered the first two characteristics and today we are continuing to examine the third characteristic that Jude describes in the last part of verse 12. Let’s read that verse again. Jude says that the heretics are like:

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

Jude says that those who creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy are like autumn trees who bear no godly fruit. So, to understand just how important fruit is to Jesus Christ- we have been looking at the four attributes of fruit. We have seen that if we want to bear good fruit, we have to be planted with the right seed; we have to have a Wise Vinedresser; we have to actually bear fruit and not just grow and have leaves; and today I want to look at the fourth attribute of fruit bearing and that is that fruit is always for the Owner and never for the tree or the branch itself.

As we bear godly fruit we do so for the glory of the Lord- and not for our own glory. Look at what Jesus said about this in **John 15:8**:

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

And let's look at what the Apostle Paul said about this same subject in **Philippians 1:11**:

having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

So, we can see that God receives Glory from us bearing fruit. So, since that is true- it is also true that God is *not* glorified and is in fact dishonored when we do *not* bear godly fruit.

We must always remember, dear friends, that genuine spiritual life begins *in* God and must always stay rooted in Him. God must receive all Glory from the fruit of our Salvation- and no glory goes to us at all. We will be comforted and fulfilled as God receives the Glory – so we must be careful to see that all credit for us bearing fruit never goes to us. Paul says in **Romans 6:22** that the benefit that we reap from our fruit is that our fruit leads us to holiness which in turn leads us to eternal life- and that is where we receive joy.

One of the most insidious lies that false teachers bring to God's people is that bearing godly fruit brings glory to Man. Our reward for bearing godly fruit is not a new car or a new boat or a nicer home- no, teaching like that cheapens and marginalizes what bearing fruit is all about. Our reward for bearing godly fruit is that godly fruit leads us to living more holy lives and this holiness brings to us the honor and privilege of giving God the Glory that He is entitled to receive from

us. That is our rewards for bearing fruit and that reward should be enough.

Now I want you to also notice that in the last part of verse 12, Jude writes to us under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the ungodly people that bring in false teaching into the Church are what Jude calls, “**doubly dead**” and “**uprooted**”.

Jude likens the false teacher’s empty profession and utter lack of spiritual life to a barren harvest. First, they are fruitless because there is no life in them and second, they are uprooted – they are dead at their very core. One of the Puritans scholars of the 17th Century, Thomas Manton, wrote this about this part of verse 12 of Jude:

“People who fall away from professing the Truth are twice dead through the habit of sin and by rebelling against God after professing to give themselves to Him. Habitual sin hardens their hearts.”¹

You see, beloved, Jude is telling us that these heretics are more than just wrong about a few fine points of Doctrine. Jude is telling us that not only do they not bear any good fruit- but they are incapable of bearing any fruit at all because they are dead at the very core of their being, and they have been plucked up by the roots. **Proverbs 2:21&22** says:

21 For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it;
22 But the wicked will be cut off from the land And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

In our modern culture of ungodly tolerance- we have diminished the value and the importance of being faithful to Scripture and we have marginalized and minimized Doctrine in the Church to the point that as long as someone is sincere- we count that as being as good as being correct in what he believes. This is not a good thing- but is the direct result of the modern Church being overrun with bad teaching and false Doctrine- just like Jude warned us about.

¹ Tomas Manton, *The Crossway Classic Commentary of Jude* (Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1999) page 171

It is common today to tell someone that they are saved simply because they have prayed a prayer or walked an aisle or because they shook the preacher's hand or because they were baptized- regardless of whether they bear any fruit or not. To actually expect people who say they are saved to bear godly fruit is looked at as being legalistic or hard- but it isn't- it is being faithful to Scripture.

It is a tragic mistake for those in leadership in the Church to expect anything less of people than Scripture and Jesus demands. And when we do not teach that saved people are to bear godly fruit and that their fruit is supposed to remain after they are saved- we are not loving those people- and we are not even being merciful to them- we are, in fact, misleading them and we are dooming them to a life of failure and despair and more importantly- a life of disobedience.

For Pastors not to preach and teach their flocks that fruit bearing among believers is not optional- but is a requirement of Salvation is to teach and preach "another" gospel that is not the Gospel of God.

Yet that is precisely what is happening today, and it is wrong. Beloved, we do not need to *lower* the bar about what it means to be a Christian; we do not need to *minimize* Jesus' requirement for saved people to bear godly fruit; we do not need to *marginalize* what Scripture clearly teaches about fruit bearing- no, we need to do just the opposite.

We need to *raise* the bar about what it means to be saved back to its Scriptural and proper place. We need to teach exactly what the Apostles taught about fruit bearing and we need to expect nothing less of the people of our Church than Jesus expects of them.

It is precisely because so many in the modern Church have been fooled by the very people that Jude called, "Autumn trees whose fruit is withered and non-existent" that we have made fruit bearing among the saved to be so unimportant.

It is precisely because we have swapped the Gospel of God for a kinder, gentler "gospel" that makes no demands on people's lives and never requires anything from them that has caused this perversion of Christian fruit bearing to be at an all time high.

And it is our utter lack of willingness to expect more of people who say they have been born again that has allowed predatory men who prey on children and weak souls to occupy the pulpits and places

of leadership in far too many Churches today.

Jude is showing us in very powerful words the “deadness” of such thinking. Beloved, we have a real need to return to Biblical Christianity and to research and study and learn again about just how important fruit bearing is to Jesus- the Head of the Church.

Now even though many of us who lead in the modern Church have lowered the importance of fruit bearing in the life of a believer- Jesus didn't. And neither did those who came before us. Our lack of expecting saved people to actually walk with God is a relatively new phenomenon that has crept in because of real bad teaching.

Now I want to show you that what I am saying about this has always been taught- way before I was ever born. The greatest Christian thinker of at least the first thousand years of the Church and perhaps the greatest Christian mind of all time, Augustine, taught in the fourth century that without fruit being born visibly in the life and character and nature of a person that there was reason to believe that a person was actually saved.

Augustine taught eloquently in his massive theological work, *The City of God* that bearing godly fruit was the unmistakable proof; the unarguable testimony that Jesus had converted the soul of that person. Augustine argued that since Jesus had said in **John 15:4** that no one can bear fruit of his own power and ability and since Jesus also said in **John 15:6** that if a man does not bear godly fruit- he is cast forth and burned- that when a person actually *does* bear godly fruit that his fruit bearing in and of itself is proof that he is saved.

And it was the Puritans who taught in the 16th Century that without good fruit being powerfully visible in the life of a person- there is no reason to think that that person has been saved. And this was the same position that was held by Jonathan Edwards and by Charles Spurgeon and William Law and Matthew Henry and AW Pink and the overwhelming majority of the men whom God used to lead the Church over the last 2,000 years. So why would we hold any different position on fruit bearing than they did?

Today we have people from the pulpit calling Bono- the lead singer of the rock group, U2- who frequently uses profanity and who lives a tragic and ungodly life; and who writes songs which glamorizing sin- many call this man a “modern day prophet” simply because this man drums up support to feed third world people- which

is a noble and good thing. So now weak and undiscerning Christian ministers equate this effort with godly fruit bearing and they invite this lost man to speak in their pulpits and some pastors have recently had this man as their keynote speaker at a pastor's conference that I was invited to attend.

But the bad fruit that this man bears proves that he is not even saved- much less a "prophet."

Leaders in the modern Church can engage in the most abhorrent behavior and we cast it aside because they are so famous or they sing so good or they write so many good books or because they do something "noble" or "good" as Man calls good- but if we did what Jesus told us to do- these unsaved people would never be able to step into places of authority in the House of God- because we would do what so many have forgotten about that is recorded for us in **Matthew 7:13-23**:

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they?

17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; *DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.*'

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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