

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

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

### Chapter 15- How to Combat Heresy **Jude 17-21**

### 183 How to Combat Heresy Part 19

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WOSM Friday 07/18/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are continuing to go over what Jude taught about "How to Combat Heresy." So, let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 17-21** again together:

**17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."**  
**19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.**  
**20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**  
**21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.**

Now we are continuing to go over the way that Jude gave us to combat heresy when it comes to our Church. And the best defense that we have against the long and protracted "War on Error" is found in verses 20&21. And so, we are continuing to explore the first thing that Jude teaches will help us to combat heresy when it comes and that is:

### **Build Yourselves Up on Your Most Holy Faith**

And as we have discovered- there are 10 Biblical keys for every believer to utilize that when combined will build himself up in his most holy faith. So, let's go over the list again:

1. Prayer

2. Bible Study
3. Godly Fellowship
4. Obedience
5. Being Filled With the Spirit
6. Confession
7. Love
8. Hope
9. Witnessing
10. Discernment

Now on the last broadcast, we were continuing to look at the ninth key to becoming spiritual strong- Witnessing- and I want to continue to explore this key today.

As we have already gone over, witnessing has two components- corporate and individual. We seldom think about the corporate aspects of Witnessing today, but it is a major aspect of this ninth key. As I said earlier, witnessing is not optional. All believers are told to share their faith with other people. We are being disobedient when we do not tell others about how wonderful Jesus is.

But we must remember that our effectiveness as a witness for Jesus is affected not only by the corporate testimony of your Church, but by the credibility of your own life. If your behavior doesn't back up what you say, people will notice, and your testimony will not be believable.

Look at what Jesus said about this in **Matthew 23:2&3:**

**2 ... The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;**

**3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things* and do not do *them*.**

Jesus was saying here that the Pharisees were hypocrites. They said one thing, but did another. Christian brothers and sisters, we must never be like that. People need to see in our lives the reality of what we profess. If you live contrary to what you say- you really don't believe what you say- but because you say and don't live- you cause harm to the cause of Jesus Christ. That is a terrible witness and a reproach to Jesus Christ.

One day I was preaching in the local jail and one inmate came over to me and said, *“That was a really good sermon, pastor, I am so glad to see someone else in the service of the Lord.”* I looked at him sort of puzzled, and asked him what he meant by that statement. I asked him, *“If you are in the service of the Lord, why are you in jail?”* He then told me that he had been caught dealing drugs, but that he was a Christian and he believed that the Lord had him sent to jail so that he could preach to those around him.

I reminded this man that in the Bible, when people were sent to jail- they were sent to jail for preaching the Gospel or for publishing the Bible in English or some other persecution like that- *not* because they were dealing drugs.

*“You were sent here because you broke the Law,”* I told this man, *“You didn’t live what you say you love, and if you say that you were saved before you broke the Law- you must acknowledge now that you were a horrible testimony for Jesus back then. Now God can certainly forgive you, but please serve Jesus when you get out- because the Lord Christ deserves a good and faithful witness- not a hypocritical witness.”*

He assured me that as soon as he got out, he was coming to the Church to begin to rebuild his life. Well, I saw that very man walking down Highway 49 about three weeks later and I stopped the car in the middle of traffic and got out and waved at him and tried to give him a ride to Church- but as I approached him- he looked at me and smiled and said that he was on his way to a party and didn’t have time to go to Church. He was visibly drunk or high. I understand that he is back in jail now.

Beloved, we all know stories like that. But we need to stop and take this seriously and see how much damage this kind of hypocrisy is doing to the Cause of Jesus Christ. Great testimonies of powerful miracles and great events that God has done are diminished in the mind of those who are lost if our daily lives don’t glorify the Lord. Lost sinners stay lost if saved people don’t live right. Skeptics are emboldened and those who point their finger and falsely proclaim that all Christians are liars and hypocrites are encouraged in their thinking when self- centered people refuse to carry the burden of their own cross and walk with God.

Christian brothers and sisters, we live in an age of Church scandal like never before in history. The people of God are rocked by

blow after blow as renown leaders are caught in horrible sins- on an almost weekly basis. And this has served to damage the corporate witness of the Church. It has only been a few years ago that the largest child molestation scandal in the history of the world was exposed and the Name of Christ was slandered again and again.

So here- Jude warns us that false teaching leads to more and more sin. The Bible is clear, my beloved, that heretics don't just bring in false words- they bring in false *living* and a complete dismantling of Biblical morality and virtue. And the historical reality is that, almost universally, when apostasy is allowed to come in and stay- sexual and financial scandals always follow.

Now I look at these scandals differently from many of you. I realize that satan is very busy attacking God's people. And I realize that he is very happy when he can tempt the leaders of the Church to engage in horrific sins. But that has *always* been true. But we need to realize that it is during the "temptation phase" that satan is moving. Satan is very busy when our souls are lean and when we are worldly and when our prayer life is weak- and he gets us off to ourselves to tempt us. That is when satan is moving. But we must understand that it is God- not the devil- when our sins are exposed and brought to light.

The only one who wants to keep our sins hidden is satan. And as long as you are willing to fellowship with the devil- then you will work very hard to hide your sins rather than turn away from your sins. But rest assured that your sins will find you out.

You see, unlike many leaders of the modern Church- God is very serious about what Jesus died to pay for. And so, God the Spirit is faithful to bring conviction to the sinning saint. But if you persist in *ignoring* the conviction of the Holy Spirit and continue on in your rebellious ways- rest assured God will expose your sins publicly.

So satan is moving when the person is actually engaging in the ongoing sin and then trying to hide it- rather than repent. But it is God- Who does the final exposing of that sin to the world. So, when you see where a Church leader or Church member is publicly exposed for committing horrible sins- you should tremble. Because what you are actually witnessing is that the Head of the Church- Jesus Christ- cleaning house. We must understand that what is truly valuable is the souls of men- not our ministries. Please remember that God doesn't *need* our ministries. We are the ones who think that our ministries are

irreplaceable. God doesn't value our ministries nearly as much as we do- what God values is our soul. Now God wants ministries, to be sure- but He wants ministries that are godly and not hypocritical.

The self importance of man and his enterprises is not what impresses God. God wants a ministry to be a true and a faithful witness for Him and if the people in that ministry are false- then while it may *appear* that God is receiving glory from it- God is really not receiving any glory from it at all.

But if God can salvage a soul by tearing down the ministry- then praise be to God for that. Better to win the soul then to perpetuate a ministry that is living a lie anyway.

If a person is actively and continuing dwelling in sin, *that* is when the devil is at work. The devil is moving then- when the sin is going on- not when the spotlights come on.

And if that sinning saint can be confronted with his sin and brought to a place of genuine repentance- then his soul is salvaged and that is a glorious Work of God and that is Mercy.

It is interesting that because this problem is getting more pronounced- the January 2007 issue of *Ministries Today* magazine calls for Churches to adopt a three pronged attack to ward off these kinds of devastating blows before they happen- so that the Church of Jesus Christ may once again regain her corporate witness. Listen to their proposal:

1. Every single Church needs to have a detailed written Doctrinal Statement. They said that unless we know *what* we believe and *why* we believe it- we cannot assure that the leaders of the Church are actually teaching Truth.
2. That a written policy of Church Discipline needs to be implemented so that unrepentant Church members can be confronted. Until the Church returns to the duty of confronting wayward members- the corporate witness of the Church in the Community will continue to diminish.
3. That intense training of prospective leaders be ongoing- which "culls out" those who are not Biblically qualified to lead. The men who lead in the House of God should be the best that we have to offer- not merely people with outgoing personalities. They should be above reproach and live lives that glorify the Lord. Secret sins

and, gambling or financial or sexual or marital or personal problems must be lovingly and thoroughly dealt with *before* the man is allowed to step into a position of leadership and entrusted with the souls of the sheep.

Just by doing these three things, this magazine says that the corporate witness of the Church of Jesus Christ would rise and be set on high again in our communities.

I agree. And so did Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude. So did Jesus. It is out of zeal to see the corporate witness of the Church of Jesus Christ restored to its once great place that I have engaged in this Study and why I am continuing to say to all of us- that it matters *what* you believe, and it matters *why* you believe it and it matters *how* we, who say we are saved, live our lives.

So, take heart, my beloved and make sure that you are living what you say you believe, and May God help us all as we serve Him and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Well, I have 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.