

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**

186 How to Combat Heresy Part 22

WOSM Wednesday 07/23/08

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 discuss how to obey verse 20 of Jude which tells us to "**build yourselves up on your most holy faith**".

Now we have been journeying through the Book of Jude for well over nine months now and we have come to a place that is so vital that we need to spend time with it. For 19 verse, Jude has been telling us about heretics who come into the Church bringing in false doctrine and apostasy in order to deceive the simple. Now here in verse 20, Jude gives us the best defense against that false teaching and that is for us to "**build ourselves up on our most holy faith**".

This passage is the key to the whole Book of Jude. And we are living in a day when most people who attend Church today are weaker than at

any time in Christian history. We are less prepared; less aware; and less able to defend against false teaching now than the Church was 2,000 years ago- and that is directly attributed to us not doing what the Bible teaches so that we may **“build ourselves up on our moist holy faith”**.

Now on the last broadcast, we were discussing the path that Jesus laid down for us in **Mark 8:34**, which gives us the key to obeying what Jude tells us here in verse 20. Let’s review what Jesus said in **Mark 8:34-38**:

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Now in this Passage, Jesus said that there were three keys to becoming strong in the Lord and in the Power of His Might and those three keys which will cause us to build up ourselves on our most holy faith are that whosoever will come after Jesus must:

1. Deny Himself
2. Take Up His Cross
3. Follow Me

And on the last broadcast, we were looking at what it means to deny yourself. To deny yourself means that you refrain from doing what you want to do in order to do what you are supposed to do. Denying yourself involves self control- one of the fruit of the Spirit. This shows us that only saved people can truly deny themselves- because lost people do not have the Holy Spirit and thus they do not possess the fruit of self control.

It is impossible to deny yourself at the same time that you are fulfilling the lusts of your flesh. The internal cravings and desires that our flesh manifests always fights against this denying of ourselves. So beloved, we have to be able to look at ourselves honestly and see whether or not we are being driven by our own lusts or if we are being led by God's Spirit.

And when I say that- I must make mention that the term, "being led by God's Spirit" has been so misused in our day that I need to clarify what that term means. Being led by God's Spirit does not mean that God is going to give you whatever your heart craves. Being led by God's Spirit does not mean that you will always do great and mighty things and always have good things happen to you as the result of you being led by God's Spirit.

Jesus Christ was led by God's Spirit. But it is interesting how the Bible describes just how Jesus was led by God's Spirit. For example- let's look at **Matthew 4:1**:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The Bible says that Jesus was led by God's Spirit to go into the wilderness; to fast forty days; and to be tempted of the devil. Most of the time when we talk about being led by God's Spirit- we usually don't think about things like this- but we should because the Bible says that Jesus' fast; His walking in the wilderness; and His being tempted of satan was all due to Him being led by the Spirit.

Now keep in mind that God, the Holy Spirit didn't tempt Jesus- and I want to make that clear. The Bible says that God doesn't tempt any man. But it was God's perfect will that Jesus walk for a time in the wilderness; it was God's perfect will that Jesus fast forty days; it was God's perfect will that satan tempt Jesus and because the Holy Spirit will never do or say or reveal anything that is not God's perfect Will- The Spirit led Jesus to all of these things.

Many times, God's Spirit will lead you into a wilderness and will not lead you into great and wonderful things. Many times, God's Spirit will lead you to fast and cause you to be terribly disturbed and deeply troubled over issues. God's people have prayed and sought God with agony over lots of things through the centuries.

The point that I am making here is that it is wrong to think that just because it is hard or difficult or just because it costs you something doesn't mean that it isn't God's Will.

Ultimately, God is infinitely more concerned about the condition of your soul than He is the condition of your bank account. God is more interested in whether you are being faithful to Scripture than He is that your body is healed, and He is much more concerned that you are living a life of self denial than He is that you are prospering and accumulating more possessions.

I know that most preachers and teachers today are saying that God wants you to have the best and to possess more and be large and expand your territory- but the fact of the matter is that when we as frail human beings set our minds on all that God can do for us rather than what God wants us to do for Him 100% of the time, we become very self-centered and very discontented and unhappy and selfish and carnal and easily led astray.

God's Spirit will never lead you into becoming sinful. God's Spirit will never cause you to think that covetousness and greed and arrogance and pride are good and noble qualities. Gods' Spirit will never promote you to love money or set your eyes on things that are temporary and base and earthy and terrestrial.

We must remember that we have a home in Glory Land that outshines the sun, and this world is not our home, and we will never be able to make this earth to be Heaven. Listen, we do not want "Christendom"- we want Christianity. This earth is cursed, and it is, for the most part, corrupt and it is decaying every hour and it will soon vanish away and all of our possessions will pass away with it. So, we must take heed to ourselves that we do not change the Gospel of God so that it becomes the Gospel of America. I love this country and I support it and fight to keep it- but the Government of the United States does not have the ability to bring forth the Kingdom of God and never has had that kind of power.

I love what American free enterprise and prosperity has brought to us- I enjoy the luxuries and the nice things that money buys. I live here too, but we all must guard our hearts because this nation prospers only because God has blessed this nation and the God that gave it all can take it all away in a moment of time if we do not repent and serve Him.

Keeping all our stuff and maintaining our standard of living and keeping television safe for Andy Griffith is not the primary goal of the Church of Jesus Christ and it should not be our primary goal either. Our goal should be to figure out how to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature and that we serve Him with gladness of Heart regardless of the circumstances and that we give God the maximum amount of Glory in whatever situation that He has Sovereignly allowed us to be in. We must remember that our goal is not to be safe and prosperous and healthy at any cost- our goal is to remain faithful to Jesus Christ in whatever situation God has sovereignly brought into our lives.

My brothers and sisters, the life of a Christian is a life of self denial- not self- indulgence. Prayers and teachings and sermons and songs which promote self- centered and self- indulgent and covetous behavior are not godly- they are the enemy of the Lord Jesus, and they do great damage to our ability to grow strong in our Faith. It has only been in recent American history that selfishness ceased to be preached against as a horrible sin.

Jesus' words about denying ourselves should ring in our ears every morning and we must remember that the greatest hindrance that we face every day as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ in accomplishing the Will of God on this earth is not a lack of money; nor is it a lack of possessions and neither is it even a lack of good health- no, God has always used the weak and the unlikely and the poor. The greatest hindrance that we face today in accomplishing the Will of God in the earth is the ravages of sin in our own hearts and in our own lives.

One prayer- prayed out of covetousness- sets you back in your effort to build yourself up on your most holy faith. One action that is motivated by ungodly and carnal lusts does not glorify God nor does it make you spiritual- it makes you carnal and is a reproach to Jesus Christ.

The Bible doesn't teach that God loves us when we are operating in human pride- the Bible says that God resists us. We are not walking in humble obedience to God when we are rushing around madly trying to get ahead in this life- we are doing no different than those who don't even know the Lord. God's seal of approval on our lives is not fat bank accounts and large tracts of land- God's seal of approval on our lives is

our depth of faithfulness to His Word and our willingness to follow Him regardless of the personal costs to us.

So, I ask you. How long has it been since you sought God for Him to show you ways in which you could obey Him and deny yourself? How long has it been since you were taught or heard a sermon about the beauty of a life of self denial? In our age of materialistic greed and human pride and arrogance would we not all do well to return to the Biblical Truth about the power of humility and the glory of self- denial?

I realize that the reason that we are so encouraged by material possessions and by miracles and by fantastic prosperity is because we are human and as human beings those things impress us. We all have to fight envy in our hearts when we see others do well. We all have twinges of jealousy when we hear testimonies of great things. But it is precisely because we are human that we must abandon human schemes if we ever hope to be strong in the Spirit.

Carnal and earthly and fleshly tactics will *never* bring about spiritual strength. You just simply can't get there from here. In fact, the more our joy and peace and happiness is tied to earthly things- the less joyful we will be about spiritual things. This is not true because I say it- the Christian Church has taught this for over 2,000 years. It has only been in our generation that we started to believe the lie that the pathway to spiritual strength d the pathway to accomplish God's Will goes through base and carnal things like money or possessions or physical healing. Brothers and sisters, we have to go Gods' Way if we want to be spiritually strong and God's way is not like our way.

So, I encourage you today to honestly examine your hearts. See if you earnestly desire to seek after God on His terms and not on our own terms and see if you can seek after spiritual strength by denying yourself, picking up your Cross and following Jesus.

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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