

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

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

Chapter 16- Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy **Jude 22-23**

197 Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy Part 9

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Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are going to continue to examine what Jude taught about "How to Win Souls in an Age of Apostasy". So, let's read **Jude 22& 23** again together:

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;
23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Now over the last several broadcasts, we have been dealing with the issue of fear. Is fear from God? Is fear something that is useful and productive in the believer's life? And we learned that if by "fear", you mean timidity and cowardice- then no, it would *not* be useful or helpful- in fact it would be a hindrance. But if by "fear", you mean a reverential and holy respect- then yes, this kind of fear is very useful and very productive for the believer. In fact, a lack of *this* reverential and holy respect is very, very displeasing to the Lord and a great hindrance to the believer.

In 1713, Solomon Stoddard preached a sermon about this very subject. Stoddard was the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards- who is probably the greatest theologian that America has ever produced. Stoddard preached this sermon in Boston and the title of this sermon was "*The Fear of Hell Restrains Men From Sin*".

The premise of this sermon is that godly, reverential fear- the kind of fear that Jude is talking about here in verse 23, is one of the greatest attributes that God uses to keep us from sinning against God. And Stoddard went on to say that the lack of this fear is one of the main reasons why we engage in sin so easily and so often.

Now I realize when I say this- that in our modern culture- we would reject the notion that fear restrains men from sin, but please listen to this before you just push it aside.

We must realize, beloved, that the greatest problem that we face here on this earth is not a lack of money; nor is it a lack of material possessions. Our greatest problem is not a low self esteem; nor is it a lack of freeing the so-called “giant” that dwells within us. No, the greatest problem that we as human beings face here on earth is that we sin against God. And the very fact that most people today do not view this as being our biggest problem shows us just how far we have all fallen.

And we need to know that God is right to judge our sin and God is proper to judge us for our sin and God is correct when He refuses to bless our sin and reward our transgressions.

Because the modern Church has so minimized the need for Sound Biblical Doctrine- we have been taught wrongly about sin and just how bad sin really is. For example, many of us have been taught- incorrectly- that sin is bad simply because sin hurts us. Many of us- I was taught this- that sin is bad because sin costs us money or it makes us sick or it breaks our heart or it gives us that sick, empty feeling, or because it hurts those around us or because it puts us in jail or because it kills us or because it leads us into hell.

So, we have been taught that sin is bad because it negatively affects us and to a point that is right because sin *does* negatively affect us. Sin *does* cost us money and it *does* break our hearts and it *does* give us that sick empty feeling and it *does* make us sick, and it *does* ruin our marriages and it *does* hurt our children and it *does* kill us and it *does* lead us into hell. All of those things are true- but none of those things are what makes sin to be “wrong”.

Sin is bad; sin is horrible; sin is terrible; sin is wicked; sin is wrong because sin offends God- period- sin offends God. That is what makes sin to be wrong. And we also need to know that sin is not what *we* say that sin is- but sin is only rightfully defined by God through His Word. For example- many think that because something is legal that the legalization of that act made that act to no longer be sinful;- but that is not true. For example- it used to be against the law in Mississippi for a couple to shack up. When I first began to do tax returns in the late 1970's- a shack up couple could not file a tax return

as being married- they had to file as being single. Today shack ups are perfectly legal- Man has sanctioned them- and the result is that more and more people are shaking up because the visible and social sting of this wicked sin has been removed.

I personally know people who say they are Christians who got divorced and are now living together because they can get more money from the Government that way. These people have rationalized that sin is not really bad because there is more money in it. And these are the compromises that we make when we love money and do not look at sin the way God looks at it.

I can't tell you the young people who have sat in my office who were raised in Church and who looked me right in the eye and told me that they didn't think that shacking up was wrong because if it is love- they reason- it can't be sinful.

But what many people don't realize is that love in and of itself can be just as evil and deadly and black as any other sin because all loves are not good or holy loves. For example, let me show you the great contrast between one kind of good love and another kind of bad love. Please read with me a very fascinating passage found in **Mark 12:28-31:**

28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?"

29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, '*HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD;*

30 *AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.*

31 "The second is this, '*YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.*' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Here Jesus said that the *highest* love; the most *important* love; the *truest* love is that we love God; and that we love God with all of our heart; and with all of our souls; and with all of our minds; and with all of our strength. Now talk is cheap and most everybody says that they love God like this. But we need to take heed to ourselves, dear friends, to realize that if we loved God like this what we read; and what we watched; and how we live; and where we go; and what we accept; and

what we do; and what we laugh at; and what we agree with; and what we reject; and what we hate would all be quite different. Because you cannot live in contradiction with what you love.

So, it is not just generic love that is good- but the kind of love that loves God that is good. And then Jesus tied our love with our behavior in **John 14:15** when He said:

If ye love me, you will keep my Commandments.

And then the Apostle John said in **1John 5:3**:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

So now we know that the good kind of love is to love God and to love God is to obey God. We cannot separate our love for God and our obedience to God. Now read about a bad kind of love in **1John 2:15-17**:

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

John says here that all loves are not created equally and to love this present evil world system that exists and operates in hostile opposition to God is to prove beyond any doubt that the love of the Father is not in you. And what is a love for the world? To love the world is to love the lusts of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the pride of life. And those things are all passing away and are not permanent. So, to love the world is to love those things that are passing away.

So, we can see that simply because we love something does not necessarily mean that the object of our love is good or even acceptable to God. So, we must temper our loves, dear friends; and we must guard our loves and we must analyze our loves to verify that what we love and who we love is also loved by God.

Another example of how sin can be made to be sanctioned in our

mind and hearts is over the war that is going on in this nation right now concerning homosexuality. There is no doubt that any honest examination of God's Word will quickly and easily reveal that God Himself considers homosexuality to be an abomination. And so evil people are now engaged in a campaign against those of us who believe the Bible and who believe that it is God- not Man- who has the right to determine what sin is- and cause us to either be fined, sued, or even imprisoned for standing on Biblical Morality or to frighten us into silence.

And I personally believe that we are going to lose this war and that not only is homosexuality going to be accepted- but I believe that it is going to be sanctioned and protected by law and taught to our children in grade schools as being nothing different than being left handed.

Now I pray that I am wrong about this, and I pray that we don't lose this war- but regardless of what our Government does or does not do about this- God hasn't changed His Mind about homosexuality being an abomination and therefore we shouldn't either. All sexual perversity from pornography to adultery to shacking up to homosexuality must be taught as being evil and wicked and terrible offenses to God and if we love people we will warn them with tears that those who engage in such activity will not see the Kingdome of Heaven.

And we must be faithful to warn them even if warning them brings us trouble or even if warning them brings us jail time or even if warning them brings us death. Jesus Christ is going to build His Church and regardless of which direction the United States goes- the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church of Jesus. We may very well serve God in the future under very hard circumstances- we could live to see the day when it becomes against the law to be a practicing Christian in the United States- but true believers will serve God no matter what the cost and their view about what is and what is not sin will not be altered by anyone.

Over the years, we have successfully pushed God from the center of our Theology and pushed Him from our worship and our music and our sermons and replaced Him with ourselves. We are now the focus of our much of our music and our sermons and our study. Listen to the words of the song. If a song talks more about what we are going to do than what God through Jesus Christ had done for us- or if a song talks

about how much we love God rather than how holy God is how much God loves us- that song is part of the problem, and I really don't care how popular it might be.

A sermon is thought to be good today if it makes us feel better or if it gives us information on how we can improve our lives- rather than it giving us information about God and what Christ has done for us.

In many areas today, Christianity is nothing more than moralistic therapy- teaching lost and sinful human beings how to improve their own lives through their own human effort and by utilizing human techniques that we can buy for \$39.95, and today more and more ministers are changing their titles to be called "life coaches" as they abandon the Gospel for Gnosticism.

But God will not be moved, dear friends, and Jesus Christ rightly belongs in the center of our Theology and in the center of our music and in the center of our sermons and in the center of our worship. And so, we must repent of our wicked ways and return to the Biblical Gospel that elevates Jesus above Man.

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.