

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

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

Chapter 4- Enduring Sound Doctrine **Jude 3**

23. Enduring Sound Doctrine- Part 2

WOSM Wednesday 12/05/07; WPAS Wednesday 05/21/08

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue in our new section of study which will deal with the importance of Sound Doctrine. So, let's read **Jude 3** 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 on the last broadcast- we saw that unlike many today- those in the early Church did not throw Sound, Biblical Doctrine aside, but they saw the importance of it.

And we saw that Paul wrote a frightening prophecy that the day was coming to the Church when inspired Truth that made their Salvation to be alike or common would no longer be viewed as being important. Let's look again at **2 Timothy 4:3-5**

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

We saw last time what the word, "endure" meant and how that Paul was saying that at some point after he wrote these things- the Church would not be able to tolerate or to bear or to endure Correct, Solid Biblical teaching, but would bring in teachers who would tell

them what they wanted to hear; what was popular; and that which satisfied their own fallen selfish natures- but not what God has spoken.

They would do this- not because they didn't need Sound Doctrine- because *everyone* in every Church needs solid, expositional Biblical preaching and teaching- it was not because they had become so enlightened by their spiritual advancements that they had grown above needing Solid Doctrine- no, Paul said that they would no longer be able to endure Sound Doctrine and they would be turned over to fables and fantasies and childish and irrelevant foolishness and they would bring in these false teachers precisely because they have an ear problem.

Paul used a curious phrase in verse 3 to denote a very serious spiritual problem. He said these Church members have "itching ears". The New American Standard version translated this as **"wanting to have their ears tickled"**.

This illustrates for us the danger of approaching God in a shallow and frivolous way. Wanting your ears "tickled", means that you do not desire depth; that you have no interest in deep, penetrating reality. Having your ears tickled means that serious, probing, life changing information isn't important or necessary to you. This phrase denotes what we would call today, "entertainment".

We have today in the modern Church, a plague that runs deep and wide. It is the cancer of what is commonly called, "spiritual entertainment". Entertainment comes from the root word that means to provide light; unserious humor or pleasure. The purpose of entertainment is not to inform; it is not to enlighten or to provoke thought or change. Entertainment does not possess the ability to convict on a serious and deep spiritual level. Things that go with entertainment are words and concepts like laughter, relaxation, lightness, frivolousness, irrelevance, soothing, simple, and carefree.

I suppose that to some degree and at some level, we as humans have a need for some entertainment. I am not convinced that this is true, I mean that- I really am not convinced that this is true- because I think that we are the most entertained people on earth- but I make an allowance for it to some degree.

What I am sure about however, is that there is absolutely no Scriptural mandate or permission; absolutely no Scriptural precedent

or acceptance; nor is there any Scriptural authorization for any entertainment at all in any form at any time to be done in the House of God for any reason whatsoever. Perhaps you may think that statement is harsh, but I challenge you to find any Biblical reference for entertainment in the Church.

Beloved, the Church is different from everything else on earth. The Church is the House of God- the pillar and ground of the Truth and by definition that means that it isn't to be treated or looked at as being the same thing as your living room. The main purpose of saved people assembling themselves together in the Church is to glorify, magnify, adore, and worship Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church. Jesus owns the Church because He paid for it with His very Own Blood. The Church does not belong to me and it does not belong to you- the Church belongs to Christ and since that is true- then Jesus should be the focus and Jesus should have the preeminence and since it is His Church- we should only do those things in the Church that He authorized us to do.

The second reason that saved people assemble themselves together in Church is to be edified and to edify one another. The word edify means: *the act of building up*.

We are built up in our most holy faith by spiritual things- not natural things. Heavenly things edify us- not earthly things. Holy things have the ability to edify- not carnal things. It is impossible for anyone to be spiritually edified by using carnal, earthly, or worldly methods, because only spiritual things have the ability to edify.

You see, lost, unsaved, unregenerate souls have no desire and have no love for spiritual things because they don't understand them. The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 2:14**

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

And this would explain why lost, unsaved people need to be entertained instead of being edified- but in the Church- in the House of God- we are talking about *saved* people gathering together- and saved, born again, redeemed, Holy Ghost filled saints of God do not desire to be entertained- they crave to be edified. They don't want

their ears tickled- they want to be molded and shaped and formed into the very image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

So in order for what Paul said to come to pass- entertainment- not edification has to become a larger and larger part of the Church. And the more that entertainment is done in the Church- the less tolerance the people have for anything that will edify them. It isn't a case of having both- because oil and water do not mix. That which is holy cannot be mixed with that which is earthly. It is a simple fact that the heart and mind and soul that feeds off entertainment has no toleration for godly, holy, spiritual edification.

Beloved, I realize that this may sound harsh- but this is really not complicated. The more time that we spend on light and simple and frivolous and humorous and irrelevant, and shallow things in the Church- the less desire we will have for serious and deep and penetrating and meaningful and life changing and important things. The more carnal activities that we offer- the less spiritual activities we will want. The more earthly enterprises that are given in Church- the less heavenly enterprises we will pursue.

As we pile on the comedians and the circus acts and the dance routines and the games- we will see a corresponding decrease in old and forgotten things like fasting and fervent and earnest prayer and serious, in depth, line upon line; precept upon precept studies of God's Word and expositional preaching and personal examination and confession of sin and repentance and the power to overcome temptation.

It may be worthwhile for you to learn how to quilt or to how to plant a garden or how to lose weight or how to become wealthy, beloved- but it is inconceivable that we would trade serious Bible Studies and fervent Prayer Meetings and Communion and times of Godly Fellowship for any of this.

For example- those who desire to be entertained would never invite a teacher into their Church to teach them the about the Sovereignty of God or the Total and Complete Depravity of Man or the need to confess serious sin and these entertained people would not be able to endure any teaching on the need for lost souls to sorrow to repentance. They would consider subjects like that to be barbaric and out dated and even unchristian.

Those who are used to being light and frivolous and foolish in Church would simply not be able to endure to sit and listen to a sermon from people like Jonathon Edwards who preached for three hours in a high pitched monotone voice in a Church without any air conditioning, a sermon entitled, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”.

God used that sermon, by the way, to ignite what we call today, The First Great Awakening, where over a million souls were saved as people were seen running down the aisle in the Church screaming that this sermon made the reality of hell for lost souls so vivid that they could literally smell the brimstone.

People who want more entertainment and less edification in the Church would never be able to endure a prayer meeting like the Moravians had on a normal Saturday afternoon as these holy saints gathered to pray and God Almighty showed up and the Glory fell and as a result of this one single service- they started a prayer meeting that went on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for a hundred years. These Moravians were so edified through long extended times of prayer that they sold themselves into slavery just for an opportunity to preach the Gospel to the slaves and the slave owners. Many years later a young man, named William Carey read about how the Moravians were edified in prayer and he was so moved and he was so edified just from reading about them that God ignited a fire for evangelism in his heart that today, William Carey is known as the Father of Missions.

I imagine that all those people who are in Heaven today because Jonathon Edwards was faithful to give no hope at all to unrepentant lost souls are glad that he didn't use that time to crack jokes. I can just imagine that the Moravians who at this moment are crying under the Mercy seat and all of those people who are in Heaven today because these people faithfully served God are mighty glad that the Moravian Church scheduled a prayer meeting that Saturday and not a quilting class.

Paul said that the day was coming when the people of the Church would want to be entertained more than they want to be edified. And I tell you clearly that we are living in that day. Paul also said that these same people who would not be able to endure Sound Doctrine would also be turned unto myths and fables and that they

would do this because they are lovers of pleasure more than they are lovers of God.

But let's quickly look at verse 5:

5But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul tells those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church that we are not to sleep in this time of spiritual darkness. We are told not to slumber as do so many. But Paul is telling us to watch. When the word, "watch" was used as a command, it meant that we are to stay awake; stay alert; be aware; do not get lulled into spiritual slumber and apathy but to remain faithful.

So what Paul is telling us is that when we see that the people of the Church cannot endure Sound, Biblical Doctrine; When we see that the people in the Church are turning their ear from the Truth and turning them unto fables; when we see that those in the Church are desiring teachers to entertain them rather than edify them- when we see all these things- Paul's apostolic command to us is to not go to sleep; do not slumber; do not become comatose; do not become apathetic; do not get mesmerized by the bright lights and the flash and the popularity of all these things- but to stay alert, stay awake and stay aware and stay faithful to that which God has said.

Well, I'm out of time for today- 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.