

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

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

Chapter 5- Loving the Truth **Jude 3** 30. The Real War

WOSM Friday 12/14/07; WPAS Friday 05/30/08

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 Loving the Truth. 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 over the last 29 broadcasts, we have seen just how important Sound Biblical Doctrine is to the Church. We have seen that Sound Doctrine was one of the four things that made the Church of Jesus Christ to be alike or to make the Faith that the Christian Church had to be what was called, "common" in The Book of the Acts.

Recently, we learned that unless we love or value the Truth and unless we see that the long war against the Truth is a real and a serious threat to the Church of Jesus Christ- we simply will not be willing to defend it or we will not defend it very long. Beloved, this is the Real War.

And the Real War that the Church needs to be involved in is much more than a social war; or a political war- the Real War that the Church of Jesus should be engaged in is a war over Divine Truth. And our responsibility in this war is to know and believe and obey and love and teach and proclaim that which God has said.

My Christian Brothers and sisters, we who are washed and who have been bought and paid for by the precious Blood of Jesus are to say, "**Thus says the Lord**" with power and anointing and conviction and

not simply go along with the latest spiritual fad or hobby horse that everybody is riding on today.

Like anyone else, I want my country to be guided by Biblical holiness. I love America very deeply and I too desire to see godly people in positions of power in this country. I want a Supreme Court that holds to a strict Constructionist position. I do not want to see the institution of marriage destroyed on my watch. I want the Christian ethic to permeate our culture and I want children to be able to pray- but all of these social and political issues are secondary to people hearing the glorious Gospel preached unashamedly and being saved.

We can have all the good laws in the world. We can outlaw gambling- which would be great. We can put the porn industry out of business- and that would be wonderful. We can make abortion illegal again- and that would be a glorious day. But if we are successful in getting all of these legislative accomplishments put together and still have not led people to Christ and if men's hearts are still not converted- and if people still have not fallen in love with Jesus- then all we have done is to rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic; All we have done is to make up the beds right before the ship sinks.

I am in favour of all of these social things- but not at the expense of neglecting our ordained calling- and that is to preach the Gospel to every creature. Ultimately a person can be on the right side of all of these social and legislative and political issues and still be lost; he can still be unconverted; he can still be deceived and he can still go to hell. All I am saying is that as the Church- we must be careful that we don't spend all of our time trying to win the culture war at the expense of winning the Real War.

Boycotting an American Corporation may very well affect a change in that Corporation's sponsorship of gay marriage- and that is fine- to a point. But unless and until we who are saved love the people who work at that corporation and yea and until we love the homosexual enough to preach the Gospel to them and lead them to Christ- we are not doing our job and we must not feel as though we have won anything.

It is true that we are empowered by God to call the nation to repentance- and so it is correct to be against abortion and the social evils of our day- but full repentance will mean Salvation and that should be our ultimate goal- not to simply change laws.

Paul warned us not to use carnal and worldly means to accomplish our goals. We are not like the world and we do not have to resort to using the same tactics of the world. Look what he said about this in **2 Corinthians 10:4-6**:

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

The Church has been commissioned by the Lord Christ to be the Pillar and the Ground of the Truth. We are to be salt and light. We are to be a city set on a hill. We carry the torch of the only means by which God saves souls- the everlasting Gospel. And we are empowered and inspired and enabled and infused and commanded to preach that Gospel to every creature. We are commanded to pray and to fast and to work real hard so that lost souls can hear the Good News of Jesus' life, and death and resurrection and whatever else we do- we must not neglect that. The Church Triumphant and the Church Victorious must not become simply the Church Militant and the Church Radical.

Our job is not to help make America safer for television programming. Our job is to make sure that Jesus Christ is exalted; God's people are edified; and the Gospel is maintained and defended and protected and proclaimed to every creature without fear and without fail. God did not call His elect to be safe and prosperous and fat and dumb and happy in a fallen culture- God specifically told us not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life. God has called you and I to be faithful; and to go and tell; and to proclaim that great name of Jesus- even when it is not popular or even legal.

Christian brothers and sisters, we are in a real war. And this war against the Truth is real and it is serious. This is a long war that is raging against the Truth. Jude knew that we were in this war and that is why he wrote this Epistle. And I am sad to tell you that many

in the Church today do not know that we are in this war and they do not understand the consequences of it.

A secular philosopher- George Santiana once said, *“They who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”* And unless we learn from our past- we will have no future.

The Church has a 2,000 year old history that is rich with both glorious victories and horrible mistakes. As the men of God throughout Church history gave themselves to lifetimes of serious, devout consecrated studies of the Word of God- they hammered out difficult Doctrines and correct interpretations of deep and complex theological issues. They loved the Lord enough to love the Truth- because the two things are related. And it was inevitable that heresy and false understanding and misunderstandings and confusion and contradiction ensued.

But these brave souls faced those dangers and they confronted the heretics, and they held faithful to the Scriptures and God’s Church was not over run. Indeed, there were some dark moments. There were some horrific battles. But God raised up men who loved the Truth enough to stand against every thought that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God and these gates from hell did not prevail against the Church.

And because much of this long history has been written down for us- we can learn from the past- if we would just bother to study it. So, we really only have two choices. We can learn from the past or we can re-invent the wheel and make up our own doctrine as we go along and we can make the same mistakes and fall into the same errors and reach the same false conclusions and fight the same battles that others did before us. The choice is ours.

What is not a choice is whether or not the devil is going to fight. Since the day that God cast satan out of heaven and Jesus said that he saw satan fall as lightning to the earth- since that day- the devil is angry because he knows that he has but a short time. So, he works his evil in men who are evil and he attacks the Church of the First Born.

And he attacks men with ideas. He attacks men with thoughts- noble thoughts; lofty lights; grand thoughts. The devil brings in ideas and thoughts and plans that are almost right- but not quite. They

sound so good- but they are poison. They seem so logical- but they bring death. They appear to be so lovely- but they are hate incarnate.

The very nature of Heresy is that it is almost true- but it is a whole lie. The nature of false doctrine is that it sounds right- but it always violates Scripture. The nature of apostasy is that it is so close to being true- but is in fact the enemy of Christ and the Gospel.

Heresy doesn't feel bad- it feels good. Heresy makes people comfortable; it makes them laugh; it gives them courage and it emboldens them. But it is a cancer that eats at their soul, and it destroys their walk with God and it causes them to believe a lie.

Some heresy is obvious. Some is subtle. Some involve elaborate schemes that even lost souls know is wrong. But in some cases, it involves just changing one letter of one word.

You could walk up, and slap Paul and he would turn the other cheek. They took John and tried to boil him in oil and then they banished him to the isle of Patmos and he never even resisted. All throughout time saints of God were burned at the stake, flawed alive; beheaded and stabbed. They were eaten by wild beasts; torn asunder with chariots and thrown into dungeons. When they tied them to the stakes to burn them to death- these holy people simply thanked God for the privileged of being persecuted for Christ's sake- and they sang praises as they died. They were meek and mild and humble even when persecuted.

But if you tried to bring in false doctrine; if you tried to teach heresy; if anyone tried to lead anyone astray with their latest and greatest revelation- these same meek and mild and humble people turned into pit bulls. Their retaliation against anyone who tried to teach lies was both brutal and instant. The men whom God used to start the Church knew that unless pure doctrine was maintained- all was lost. They believed that the Gospel was not to be tampered with. The Lord had ascended into Heaven. All they had on this earth was the Word- His Word- Holy Ghost inspired Word- and they guarded this Word with their lives. Now we can criticize them today for this- but we cannot say that they didn't do it- because they did.

Today we call the Apostle John- The Disciple of Love. Michaelangelo painted John as an effeminate looking man with doe eyes. But that wasn't the real John. John would work all day to counsel a troubled soul. John would spend time with the worst people

in the community- even as Jesus had. But John had absolutely no patience at all for anyone who sought to corrupt the Gospel. John's disdain and righteous indignation against heretics was unreal. Listen to what the Holy Ghost inspired John to write in **2 John 8-11**:

8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Paul was equally aware of the danger of even listening to false doctrine and God moved upon him to write in **Galatians 1:8**:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

The "we" in verse 8 that Paul wrote was referring to any of the other Apostles. So what Paul was saying is that if John, or Peter, or James, or Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or the writer of Hebrews or even himself- and then he went to the angels- "If Gabriel or Michael"- if *anyone* preached any other gospel other than that single common Doctrine that Christ had delivered to the Church in the beginning- if any of these men for any reason changed one word or one letter, or one aspect of the glorious Gospel that is the Power of God to save souls- Paul said let them be accursed, or let them be eternally damned without any hope of repentance. And just in case you might have misunderstood him- he wrote again in **Galatians 1:9**:

As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Now whatever you want to make out of passages like this is fine with me- but we all must agree that those whom God used to start the church; those whom God trusted to pen down inspired Scripture; those

who actually and literally walked and talked with Jesus thought that the Truth really mattered didn't they?

We can rightly see that none of the Apostles had the cavalier attitude about Sound Doctrine that we see so often today in far too many of our churches and with far too many pastors and with far too many people and on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble Television Network. No, those with whom God entrusted His Church thought that people who came into the Church to teach false Doctrine were the worst of the worst- And so should we.

I tell you that we need to repent and we need to return to our first love and we need to do our first works over and we need to begin to love this Word enough to spend time with it in serious and deep and consistent times of study and we need to love this Word enough to defend it against false teachers. And we need to love the Truth of God's Word enough to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Well, I have to stop right here- but please join me again on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of Jude. May God help us all.

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