

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**

25. Enduring Sound Doctrine- Part 4

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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.

In this verse, Jude gives a solemn warning to the Church around the year A.D. 70; and under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, Jude cries out that unless those in the Church begin to earnestly contend for the Faith; unless they begin to earnestly fight and struggle and put forth a serious effort to maintain the four things that we have studied thus far that the Church had in the **Book of Acts**; that unless those in the Church see to it that the Apostle's Doctrine is maintained; unless those in the Church fight so that godly times of fellowship is maintained among believers; Jude said that unless the saved people in the Church began to struggle to be sure that Communion is done correctly and that it is done often; and Jude was telling us that unless the redeemed in the Church begin a serious effort to make sure that effectual and fervent prayer is conducted in the Church - Jude said that unless the Church earnestly contends for the Christian Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints- that the Salvation that the Church had rejoiced in ever since the Resurrection would be lost and would no longer be common or alike.

Jude said that a war against the Truth; Biblical Truth; Sound doctrine; the Apostle's Doctrine was being waged in the Church and

that if we did not contend for the Faith- False Doctrine would take over the Church.

I have had many people say to me over the years that I am an alarmist and that things are really not as bad as I say that they are and that it really doesn't matter what we believe as long as we are sincere, and it really doesn't matter to God whether we pray or not or how we pray; and that it really doesn't matter to God how we conduct Communion and whether we have godly times of fellowship or not.

Many people today seem to believe that we don't need to trouble ourselves over Doctrinal issues. These people don't look at Doctrine as the *source* of Truth- they see solid, sound, Biblical Truth as the source of contention and the source of division- and in one sense- they are correct.

Doctrine does divide. Objective, Biblical Truth does bring forth contention. But the only reason that what God says causes division and the only reason that what God has declared in His Book causes contention is because men are in their hearts rebellious and men are in their natures corrupt and depraved because of the Fall of Adam, and we simply don't want anyone telling us how to live our lives- not even God.

So, it really isn't Sound Doctrine that causes the division after all- it is our own unwillingness to bow our knees to the authority of Scripture and it is our own unwillingness to humbly submit ourselves as bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ that causes the contention. These people who say that Doctrine divides are really saying that God divides. Their argument is not with the Doctrine; their argument is not with those who faithfully proclaim Sound doctrine- no, their real argument is with God. Therefore, for the Church to stop proclaiming Sound Doctrine because some men rebel against God would be to betray the very calling that Christ gave to His Church.

The answer to division and contention is not to cease the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel- the answer to division and contention is to make all men to know that anytime anyone; any group; any Church; any organization is at odds with Holy Scripture- then that person; that group; that organization; and that Church is wrong and God is still right. The answer is not to change what God has said. The answer is not for us to cease to proclaim what God said. No, the answer is for us to repent and for us to bow our knees and for

us to humbly submit ourselves and for us to acknowledge that God's Word is True and everything that disagrees with Him or His Word is a lie and a liar.

Jude and the other Apostles never said for us to cease proclaiming the Truth. We are told over and over in Scripture that we are to be faithful to proclaim Truth. God says that those who are His are to proclaim that which God has said boldly and faithfully if everybody agrees with it and we are to proclaim that which God says boldly and faithfully if nobody agrees with it. We are to be faithful if what God says is popular and we are to be faithful if what God says is very unpopular. We do not serve Man and the Church does not belong to Man. We serve the Lord Christ, and the Church belongs to Christ and He is the Head of the Church and what we do in the Church should be to His pleasure and for His Glory and about His Honor and His Praise- not ours. And we are told by our Lord not to fear what Man may do to us- but to fear God who has the power to cast both body and soul into hell fire.

So because we know the terror of the Lord- we persuade men. And that has always been true, but here in verse 3, Jude said that when we see heresy and false teaching and false prophets come into the Church- that is certainly not the time to grow quiet; that is not the time to seek after peace and compromise and the so-called "common ground". Jude tells us here in verse 3 that when we see apostasy coming into the Church- we are to earnestly contend; we are to fervently fight; we are to energetically struggle; we are to faithfully hold on to that which God has said and to combat the invasion and defeat it- so that the Faith; the common Salvation that was once and for all delivered to the saints may be what the Church of Jesus is about and what it believes and what it proclaims.

For some reason, we feel today that compromising is a noble effort. And on certain human levels, I would agree. We are to compromise on political events. Men are to compromise with their wives about issues of marriage and issues of finances and issues of child rearing. Compromise can be good in our relationships with other people, too. Our entire system of a Democratic Republic was founded on a slow mechanism firmly based on deliberation and compromise. But no where in Scripture does God ever even suggest that anyone is ever to compromise about serious Doctrinal Issues that define who we

are as God's people and Who Christ is and How a Man is to be saved, and any effort to compromise on these issues is not noble, beloved— it is sin.

Again, let me clarify what I mean by this. I am not saying, and I do not believe that I am right about everything and that anyone who disagrees with me is wrong. I have never said that, and I do not believe that. This isn't about me, and it isn't about you. What I am saying is that God is always right and what God said is always correct and therefore it is not our job to form opinions- it is our job to study and read and struggle and strain and seek God and to correctly, and rightly, and to fully interpret that which God has actually said and then when we arrive at the correct, historical, grammatical, and propositional Truth of what God put in this holy Book, our job is then to bow our knees to that Truth and begin to proclaim it faithfully and to begin to apply it into our own personal lives.

And beloved, it doesn't really matter if what God has said agrees with what you were taught as a child or whether it tears up everything that you were taught as a child. It doesn't matter if what God says is in agreement with what your Church teaches or is the opposite of what your Church teaches. Whatever God says is the way that it is and that's pretty much that. So, it isn't about me trying to get you to agree with me and it isn't about you to try to get me to agree with you- it is about all of us working very hard to agree with Him.

Neither is it about trying to find a middle ground in between two opposing positions. It is about a relentless and serious search for Truth and then faithfully standing on that Truth.

Some seek Peace and Harmony and Unity today at the expense of Sound Biblical Truth. But the question that I ask is this, *“Exactly what is the basis of our Peace and our Harmony and our Unity if we have no Truth?”* As we hold hands and sing and rejoice that we are all now one- what exactly are we one about? I mean, what precisely have we agreed that we are in unity about?

I too seek unity. I myself seek after God's people coming together as one Body. I have been on the forefront of that effort on this Coast for several years now. But I seek unity in that we all come into proper alignment with that which God said- not at the expense of what God has said. I seek unity around all of us dropping any

teaching and repenting of any Doctrine and turning away from any belief that is contradictory to Scripture or which doesn't exist in Scripture. Because that is the only way to have real, lasting, and eternal unity. Any attempt at having unity among the people of God without including that is nothing more than a fantasy.

It is precisely because the Church did *not* listen to Jude's warning, and they allowed people to come into the Church and teach things that God did not say that created the disunity and the divisions to begin with.

So only by earnestly contending for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints can we ever have any hope at all of being one Body again. If you haven't heard anything that I have said today- please hear this. Doctrine did not divide the Church. Sound Biblical Doctrine does not keep the Church from coming together. That is a lie. Error divided the church. Heresy divided the Church. False doctrine; false teachers; apostates divided the Church and only by a genuine repentance and a serious return to the Apostle's Doctrine can we ever see unity. Therefore, any effort to reunite the Church - however well meaning and however noble it may appear to be- that does not have at its' core a return to the authority of Scripture and Sound Biblical Doctrine- is not of God.

Some say that I am making much too much about this and that I need to just chill out and relax and don't be so serious about these things. They say that as long as we love Jesus, we are fine. But is that true?

I say to you that because false teaching has invaded the Church- we don't even agree on Who Jesus is. Is Jesus merely a Teacher or a Prophet or is He a fraud? Was Jesus the first created being or an Old Testament angel? Was Jesus a real live human being or was Jesus merely a spiritual concept? Is there a definable difference between Jesus, the son of Mary and the Christ of God? Did Jesus and Buddha and Krishna and Muhammad and Confucius all point the way to the same path? Are Islam and Christianity really sister faiths as President Bush has declared? Is that true? Did Jesus marry Mary Magdalene and have a daughter and move to France? Was Jesus really born of a virgin or was it just a young girl? Did Jesus live an absolutely sinless life, or did He commit adultery? Did Jesus actually not ascend into heaven as the Bible declares, but did Jesus actually

come over here to America and teach a Jewish community who had migrated over here thousands of years ago? In 1857 did Jesus actually go into the file room of Heaven and start examining all the lives of the redeemed to see if they were keeping up with the Sabbath and the dietary laws of Moses? Did that really happen? Did Jesus actually build His Church upon Peter?

And I could go on and on with many more things that people all throughout time have wrongly said and incorrectly taught and believed about Jesus. You need to know that all of the things that I have just read to you about Jesus are all wrong, but all of them are official written doctrines of organizations who say that they love Jesus- but who have all created “another” Jesus who is not the Jesus of Scripture. So, if the only requirement that we have to come together is that we love Jesus, then we are going to have to first define precisely who Jesus is. And that defining is called Doctrine.

The point that I am making is that Doctrine matters. And it matters where we get our Doctrine. It has always mattered, and it will always matter. Jesus said that it mattered. Paul and John and Peter and Jude said that it mattered. So rather than argue about whether or not we need Sound Biblical Doctrine today, let us resign ourselves to the fact that everything that we need today for life and godliness has been revealed by God in the Bible and everything that He wanted us to know about Himself in this Book and in this Book alone.

So, you and I need to gird up the loins of our minds and we need to return to Biblical Christianity and we need to we need to study this Book and we need to know what this Book says and we need to live it and obey it and proclaim it and believe it and love it and we need 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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