

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**

179 How to Combat Heresy Part 15

WOSM Monday 07/14/08

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 go over the way that Jude gave us to combat heresy when it comes to our Church. This way is based upon the inspired words that Jude wrote to us in verse 20:

Build Up Yourself on Your Most Holy Faith

In our study, we are going over the 10 Biblical keys for every believer to build himself up in his most holy faith. So, let's go over the list:

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Godly Fellowship

4. Obedience
5. Being Filled With the Spirit
6. Confession
7. Love
8. Trust
9. Witnessing
10. Discernment

Now on the last broadcast, I began to discuss the seventh key- which is Love- and I want to continue with that theme today. As we saw last time, all love is not held in equal value by God. There is a love which is far greater than any other kind of love and one which is able to make you strong. This love is not a basic generic love, but a special *exclusive* love that is reserved solely and only for God.

Let's look again at what Jesus said about this in **Matthew 22:37-40:**

37 ... YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Here, Jesus said that the highest, most valuable love that we as humans can aspire to on earth is not the love that we have for our spouse or our children or our country or our possessions or even each other- but the greatest, most spiritual love that any human can exercise is his love for God- and that love should be manifested in the following way:

- With all our hearts
- All our souls
- All our mind
- All our strength

No one or no thing should even come close in our love for and toward God- and rightly so- because nothing else or no one else on earth *deserves* our love the way that God deserves our love; no one else is

entitled to our love the way that God is entitled to our love and no one else on earth has *earned* the right to our love the way that God has properly earned ownership of our love.

Now those people called, the Puritans were great about meditating about things like this and if you really want to read some very deep and profound writings about this kind of love for God, I suggest that you read books by men like Jeremiah Burroughs, John Owen, Richard Baxter or Richard Sibbes or any of the other Puritans. We who serve in ministry today may spend a few hours talking about this kind of exclusive love for God- but the Puritans wrote volumes and volumes about the type of exclusionary love that Jesus said that rightly belongs only to God.

I suppose one of the greatest examples of this exclusive love is found in an exchange between Jesus and Peter as recorded for us in **John 21:15-17:**

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

Now right after Jesus was crucified- Peter came to a place of backsliding and said in **John 21:3, "I am going fishing!"**

Peter labored all night long but never caught anything. So, Jesus performed a miracle right in front of him and Peter's reaction was that he dove into the water crying, **"It is the Lord!"**

When he came to shore, Jesus already had bread and fish prepared for them to eat. Peter was no doubt becoming more and more aware of how greatly he had failed Jesus and the impact of his own unworthiness was settling in on him.

Suddenly Jesus spoke to him, and said,

John 21:15

Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?"

Love me more than *these*? These what? The boat? the fish? the nets?; fishing in general?; the other disciples?; what or who was Jesus referring to?

Jesus was asking Peter, "*Do you love me? Do you genuinely love me more than anyone or anything? Do you love me with the exclusionary love that is reserved only for God?*"

Now I have no idea how long it took Peter to reply- but I *do* know that the question that Jesus asked him took him completely off guard.

And you have to understand just how disillusioned Peter was with Jesus at this point. Peter, like many of the disciples, felt entirely let down by the whole Crucifixion process. You see, they had believed that Jesus was God. They had truly believed that Jesus was the chosen Messiah who was prophesied that should come. They had bought into the idea that Jesus was going to deliver them from their enemies- and when they saw Him beaten and when they saw Him die- it shattered them totally.

How do you kill God? Why did Jesus allow pagan Gentiles to beat Him and nail Him up and kill Him? Why didn't Jesus show His authority and Power and come off that Cross and destroy them all? What possible good could ever come out of Jesus' weakness and public humiliation? They didn't understand why Jesus had done what He did.

You see, brothers and sisters, Peter and the bunch who walked with Jesus for 3-1/2 years still at this point had absolutely no concept that Christ wanted to save them from their own sins. They didn't understand that the Kingdom that Christ wanted to build was not the real estate of Israel- but a Kingdom that was in their hearts. They looked at Jesus as their ticket out of Roman occupation. They saw Jesus and His claim as being the Messiah as being the way that God was going to vanquish the Roman army and the land of Israel was going to be restored back to the Jews.

And it hadn't worked out that way and beside all this- Peter knew that he was still as wishy washy as ever. Why he couldn't even stand faithful for one night? And he had never quite gotten over that moment when he had just denied the Lord the third time and the cock crew and

Jesus turned and looked him right in the eyes. That moment haunted Peter day and night.

Now this Resurrected Lord was asking Peter if he loved Him more than these. When Jesus asked that question, He used the Greek word, “agapao”- which is the exclusive kind of love that is reserved only for God.

So, Peter responded with this statement,

John 21:15

... Yes, Lord; You know that I love You...

But when Peter responded, he used the Greek word, “*phileo*,” which is to say, “*Yes, Lord, I really like and admire You a lot.*”

Jesus had asked Peter if he loved Him to the exclusion of everything and everyone else and Peter had responded with a reply that you might give an acquaintance- but not even a close friend.

I believe with all my heart that Peter knew what Jesus had asked him, but he also knew a cardinal rule about God. Peter knew that no one has the right to say that they truly love God unless and until they obeyed God. And Peter had just denied the Lord, and then just walked away like he never knew Jesus. How could Peter possibly answer Jesus’ question with an answer that meant that he loved Jesus to the exclusion of everything in this life?

So, he did not make that claim. He replied, “*Yes, I like you a lot.*” Now some would applaud Peter for being honest right here, but Jesus was not about to leave this alone. He knew that God had chosen Peter and Jesus also knew that unless He confronted Peter head on- Peter would never rise up out of his backsliding. So, Jesus pursued after Peter two more times with the very same question.

And this troubled Peter greatly, but many times, beloved, God has to trouble us greatly in order to bring us to where He wants us to be. The notion that great things for God come out of simple and easy things is not reality. Most of the people who were used by God throughout history are those who have suffered unbelievable agony and turmoil over their own sinfulness and their own weaknesses and their own disillusionment with God over what they thought God was going to do only to find out that God doesn’t operate on our timetable.

So, Jesus asked Peter the very same question the second time,

“Peter, do you love me with an exclusionary type of love that is reserved solely and only for God? Do you love me enough to follow me when it is hard? Do you love me enough to obey me even when you don’t get what you think you deserve? Do you love me even when things don’t work out the way you thought they would?”

Again, Peter responded with the same answer,

“Yeh Lord, I really like you a lot” (cf. John 21:16)

But Jesus then asked Peter the very same question the third time, but this third time, Jesus asked Peter the question using the same words that Peter had been using, and Jesus asked him,

“Simon, do you even like me a lot?” (cf. John 21:16)

The Bible says that Peter was grieved. Why was Peter grieved? Because Jesus asked him the third time? No. Peter was grieved because Jesus was challenging Peter’s testimony and questioning the level of Peter’s love for Him.

And this time it broke through with this fisherman and Peter’s answer was different,

John 21:17

... Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You...

Peter was saying, *“Lord don’t just hear my words, but look at my heart. I know that I failed you; I know that I betrayed you- but I really do love you and I really want to love and serve you exclusively”*

Now Peter eventually found that love through his failure and through his disappointments and through his grief. But will you find this kind of love, dear friends?

I tell you that this is the kind of love that God is looking for- a love that will endure the disappointments; a love that will go on through the trials and disillusionment; a love that will put God above everything else and above anyone else; a love that will last into eternity. This is the kind of love that we need, beloved- so pray for this love ; seek God

for this love because this kind of love is a gift from God and this kind of love will make you strong.

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.