

## Absolute Truth – Fight or Flight Part 2

By David Harrell

**Preached on:** Sunday, July 7, 2013

Will you join me this morning by taking your Bibles and turning to the little Epistle of Jude, the little book right before Revelation. This is the second and last discourse on the issue of Absolute Truth and certainly in our quest for spiritual maturity and divine blessing, this is a crucial topic. In a moment, we will look at what Jude has to say about truth.

Every genuine believer not only knows the truth, but he loves the truth. Our hearts are filled with endless gratitude for the saving and sanctifying truth of Scripture, knowing that according to 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “God has chosen us from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” We can rejoice knowing that our immutable God, our unchanging God who is the source of all truth, who is himself truth, is a never, ever changing God of truth. So, truth never changes. It is constant. It is reliable. It is an eternal reality. Ask yourself, Where would you be without the truth of Scripture? Where would you be? The Word of God tells us: we would be walking in darkness like the unsaved who according to Ephesians 4:17, “walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”

My friends, the unchanging truth of the Word of God is to us spiritually what is unchanging physical order is to us physically. I’m intrigued by the combined power of the fallen nature, as well as Satan’s capacity to deceive. For example: fallen man manifests what you might call an intellectual schizophrenia. He acknowledges the absolute, inviolable, fixed laws in the physical order of the universe yet denies them in the moral order of the universe. He rightly acknowledges the laws of physics: the law of gravity, the speed of light, the speed of sound, laws pertaining to matter and motion, the laws of thermodynamics, the laws of chemistry, the laws of energy. He will acknowledge that all of these things are constant, they are fixed, they are absolute. We could not live unless they were that way. If they were in a constant state of flux, we would all be destroyed.

How can all of this be? Well, the answer is: just random chance. Absolutely absurd. To hear complexity of design and stability make that supposition irrational. Think about it, when we look around our world we see an orderly system, not a chaotic one. We see inviolable, fixed laws of physics in the material universe that maintain the unity of complex systems. This kind of certainty is absolutely necessary for our survival. For example: the slightest change in the rate of the earth’s rotation around the sun or the most minute change of the angle of its axis would cause us to either freeze or burn. Physicists tells us that the slightest change in the mass of the proton would result in the dissolution of hydrogen atoms which would cause the entire universe to dissolve into oblivion. Physicists are still utterly baffled in trying to understand why the nucleus of an atom holds together; they can’t figure that out. But God, the Creator, has revealed to us absolute truth to even explain that. And the truth is that the Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ

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whom the world hates, is the one that has created all things and holds them together. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ “upholds all things by the word of His power.” Paul tells us in Colossians 1:17 “in Him all things hold together.” Literally, they continue to cohere. An amazing thought.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ is both the unifying principle and personal sustainer of all that he has created. So, it should be no surprise that even as our Creator/God has established it and maintains the laws of physics in the physical order of his universe so, too, he has established and maintains his law in the moral order of his universe. My friends, these things are absolutely true. Divine truth helps us navigate life. God’s truth not only helps us understand how we are to relate to him as his creatures, but ultimately, shall we say, it helps us find true north spiritually.

Perhaps you’re like me, I have used a compass on many occasions. In fact, the compass has saved my life on a number of occasions. And the reason why a compass works is because of the constant force of the earth’s magnetic field which has a horizontal component in the direction of north. Therefore, a magnetized compass needle, freely suspended, will be pulled to that horizontal force and direct us to magnetic north. This is an absolute inviolable, fixed law. Likewise, because of the reliable orbit of the sun which rises in the east and sets in the west, navigators have always been able to find true north. Even without the sun which sets in the night, as we all know, we can still find true north by using the moon and the stars.

Dear friend, please hear this: even as the sun is a reliable solar guide, so too is the Word of God. The Psalmist tells us in Psalm 119:105, his Word is “is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.” And sadly, those without Christ have no moral compass. They have no spiritual guide because they end up making up their own truth with, in essence, ends up being mere lies that satisfy the lusts of their flesh and do not bring glory to God. So, they walk in darkness, they stumble.

We were all once like that. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:8 that “you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.” In verse 10, he goes on to say “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” In Proverbs 4:18 we read that “the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.”

The Holy Spirit has warned us repeatedly that Satan is the deceiver who opposes the work of God. He is the father of lies. In fact, the Gospel, according to 2 Corinthians 4, “is veiled to those who are perishing in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” When people believe lies, do you realize that they ultimately serve Satan? Jesus declared to the unbelieving Jews in John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does

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not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

This week we saw a chilling example of Satan’s murderous deception; it caught my eye when I was reading The Washington Times. The headline was this “Texas abortion battle heats up as activists ‘Hail Satan!’” Maybe you saw it on youtube. The article said this,

“Activists on both sides of the abortion issue squared off at the Capitol in Austin for a somewhat odd religious-themed shout-down. Gov. Rick Perry has called for a second special session to pass an abortion law that would prohibit the procedure past the 20th week of pregnancy. Pro-choice protesters shouted, ‘Hail Satan!’ as an attempt to drown out pro-lifers’ rendition of ‘Amazing Grace.’”

My friends, don’t be naïve. There is a war that is going on. It is a bloody battle for the truth. Christians are being persecuted. They’re being killed all over the world because they believe the truth. The question is, Are you engaged in the battle for the truth? Or do you cower in fear? Do you let others do the fighting?

Charles Spurgeon said this,

“The church of Christ is continually represented under the figure of an army yet it’s captain is the Prince of Peace. Its object is the establishment of peace and its soldiers are men of peaceable disposition. The spirit of war is at the extremely opposite point of the Spirit of the Gospel, yet nevertheless the church on earth has and, until the Second Advent, must be the church militant, the church armed, the church warring, the church conquering. And how is this? It is in the very order of things that so it must be. Truth could not be truth in this world if it were not a warring thing and we should at once suspect that it were not true if error were friends with it. The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies.”

My friends, it is for this reason that Jude tells us in verse 3 that we are to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” As you may recall from last week, this means we are to continuously, constantly fight with all of our might to proclaim and protect the truth of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God that’s been revealed to us once and for all, rendering all other claims of special revelation to be nothing more than lies.

The question we want to answer this morning is practically how do we do this? How are we to contend earnestly for the faith? And as you might imagine, the Spirit of God gives us the answer here even in Jude as well as in many other places. And may I remind you once again, that this was Jude’s burden; there was a sense of urgency with what he wrote.

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So, this morning we are going to look at seven ways that we can practically contend earnestly for the faith. The first one: we must get serious about profiling apostates. Now, of course, profiling has become a bad word in our politically correct culture especially racial profiling but what we see in Scripture, especially here in Jude, is that we are commanded to do what I would call apostate profiling. I find it interesting, in Israel you can board airplanes at Ben Gurion International Airport with bottles and tubes of liquid that would be confiscated here in the United States and the reason why? Because they use racial profiling. They will quickly tell you, “We look for people not explosives.” And that’s why they have the safest airlines in the world and yet, they are the number one target of jihadists.

In one of their papers, in Haaretz, I read this,

“In Israel racial profiling doesn’t warrant debate or apologies. While other democracies hesitate to resort to racial profiling, Israel takes the practice for granted.”

It went on to say,

“To Israelis, the practice of picking people out based on racial stereotypes is so self-evident, there isn’t even a Hebrew term for it.”

I’ve been in the line there in that airport and they look at me and they know my background, they know where I’m from and they will ask me questions, but I see in other lines, if there is someone that has a name or has a look about them that might warrant some concern, you see that person being taken out of the line and taken into a back room.

My point here is we must learn to do the same thing in order to guard ourselves against false teachers, in order to guard ourselves against false professors, against apostates that may be sitting in the very pew next to you. We must learn to do as Jesus said and examine their fruits. Jesus said in Matthew 7:16, “You will know them by their fruits.” And here Jude adds a more detailed specific list that I want to survey with you just in general.

But before we look at that, may I remind you that because of the urgency here in Jude’s Epistle, it is obvious that believers in that day as well as in this day tend to be naïve about this. They have a hard time spotting these kinds of people and thus the stern warning. He says in verse 4, “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed.” In other words, they slipped into the church and you don’t see them. They blend in. If I can use the analogy of a parasite, they enter into your body, so to speak, and they begin to feed upon it. That’s what they do in the church; they make it sick and weak.

They’re not always false teachers. Many times we think of these people as the Benny Hinn’s and Joel Osteen’s of the world but more often than not, they are lay people who claim to believe the truth but in their heart they reject it. And often they are so deceived

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as Jesus says in Matthew 7 that “not everyone who calls him Lord will enter the kingdom.” Remember, there are the few and there are the many and they all claim to be believers.

An apostate is one who has received the light of the truth of the Gospel but refuses to walk in it. He has “no love for the truth,” 2 Thessalonians 2:10. Some eventually abandon the faith altogether which proves that they were never saved to begin with, as we are reminded in 1 John 2:19. But most fall away from the faith in their heart and you don’t see this. Many times they don’t even acknowledge it themselves but sadly they do not fall away from the church. Therein is the great danger. Some are very outspoken heretics that are easy to spot. They would’ve been like the Judaizers in the New Testament or like the Nicolaitans or like the Gnostics that the Apostles had to deal with. But other times, it’s far more subtle. It’s like the Judas believers. And, again, most are like those that Jesus described in Matthew 7, merely the tares amongst the wheat.

At the heart of apostasy is rebellion against the Word of God and, therefore, rebellion against the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Again, as Jesus said in Luke 6:46, many will call me Lord but they will refuse to do what I ask them to do. Of course, that will betray a spurious faith, a faith that cannot save because what validates genuine saving faith is not some profession but the fruit of repentance in a person’s life.

So, Jude tells us they creep in unnoticed. I want you to jump to verse 12, “These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.” In other words, they’re self-willed; they’re self-absorbed; they’re self-centered; they are like hidden reefs. In other words, they pose an unseen danger to a church. And their lives can rip the hull of your ship apart and cause you to sink into the depths of deception and despair.

Unfortunately, he says, they do this “without fear.” You see, it doesn’t bother them. For the most part, they don’t even see it themselves and in many cases they are like what Paul described in 1 Timothy 4:2. They are “liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.” In other words, they have no capacity anymore to even tune into their conscience and see the depths of their apostasy.

The point here is that the character of their heart will be so well disguised by their outward religiosity they will be hard to spot. And so, Jude offers us a list and I want to give you that list. I believe I have 21. I won’t go into detail but it’s what I would call a profile of an apostate. These are primarily heart attitudes cleverly concealed under a cloak of hypocrisy and eventually their true colors will shine and you will see who they really are because truth and time walk hand-in-hand, but for the most part, this will be hard to see.

1. They are ungodly, he says (v 4).
2. They use grace as a license for sexual sin (v 4).
3. They deny Christ (v 4).

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4. They are false dreamers (v 8).
5. They defile the flesh (v 8).
6. They reject authority (v 8).
7. They are irreverent (v 8).
8. They attack with insults (v 10).
9. They claim spiritual superiority (v 10).
10. They are unable to reason truthfully (v 10).
11. They are fearless (v 12).
12. They care only for themselves (v 12).
13. They grumble against the truth (v 16).
14. They are discontented fault-finders (v 16).
15. They are self-absorbed (v 16).
16. They are arrogant (v 16).
17. They are manipulative flatterers (v 16).
18. They mock those committed to the truth (v 18).
19. They are divisive (v 19).
20. They are worldly-minded (v 19).
21. They are devoid of the Spirit (v 19).

Again, this is hard to see but this is the character and conduct of an apostate.

Now, I'm sure some of you are asking right now, "Well, what do I do because I know people in my life who fit this category? These are people that I am in relationship with, peoples that fit this description. How am I supposed to better protect myself and my family from this ever-present danger? And what am I supposed to do with these people?" Well, certainly Jude answers these questions by giving us six more very clear and practical exhortations beyond the obvious need to profile the apostates who have crept into the life of the church.

So, the second thing he tells us can be summarized this way: remember the warning. Notice, verses 17-18, "But you, beloved," you believers, "you ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, 'In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.'" Here we see an urgent command of warning. By the way, here Jude is citing Peter's exhortation in 2 Peter 3:3 where Peter says, "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts." In other words, these will be people that make fun of judgment; they will make fun of those who long for it even though they might not do it outwardly, in their heart that's what they're thinking. But their mocking will not be limited to that specific doctrine. Mockers will despise anyone who is serious about obeying Christ. In fact, their life will be one of practical atheism. They will live their life as if God doesn't even exist, much less judge. And privately they will laugh at anyone who differs with them, yet unfortunately, most of these people attach themselves to a church. And because they are well camouflaged we have to look closely and you'll see that they do not bear any spiritual fruit in their life. You will see that they have no appetite for the Word of God; they have no love for the

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truth. They do not hunger and thirst for righteousness. They really have no love for God, no love for his people, no desire to serve Christ. They have no burden for the lost.

Verse 19, he says, “These are the ones who cause,” three things, “divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.” When he says they cause divisions, what he’s referring to here is because these people exalt themselves and their self-promoting agendas, they create factions within the church. They do not unite the body of Christ, that is not their concern. So, they draw lines of distinction between their way of thinking and the way others think and, of course, their way is always superior and yet it is not biblical. And what you will ultimately see in these kinds of people is that conflict and strife will follow them like a shadow.

1 Corinthians 11 beginning in verse 18, Paul says, “I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may become evident among you.” In other words, God uses the fuel of divisiveness as a refiner’s fire to separate the worthless dross from the pure gold. It exposes the true from the false. It exposes the mature from the immature. It exposes the humble from the proud. But they cannot go unchallenged or they will pollute the purity of the church. To use another analogy, they will be the wolves that will devour unsuspecting, undiscerning sheep.

It has been my observation over the years that whenever a divisive person rises up within the church and tries to advance his or her agenda, perhaps some erroneous doctrinal position, the first thing they will do is inevitably garner some support and this will begin to expose their true character and provide an opportunity for genuine humility and love and patience and spiritual discernment and biblical shepherding to surface which is a way of contending earnestly for the faith. And when this happens, you are to confront them privately; you call them to repentance; you long to see them restored. The Lord Jesus gives us a way of doing this very specifically in Matthew 18 and you continue to warn them and if they do not repent and they reject the warning, then according to Titus 3:10, Paul says, “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.”

I’ve discovered that inevitably these people they don’t repent. They will get mad. They will leave the church and I find that the church is always better for it. It’s God’s way of purifying a church. And then typically they hop from one church to the next, to the next.

So, they cause division. Secondly he says, they’re worldly minded. It means their spirituality is a sham. They live for themselves; they live for this life; they love this world and the things of this world, though they will claim otherwise. He even says they are devoid of the spirit which means they’re unregenerate. They are spiritually dead; they’ve never been born-again. We read about this in Titus 1:16, “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”

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And so, Jude is warning us here. He is saying to us, “People, do not forget to be on guard for these savage wolves who disguise themselves and co-exist within the flock.” We see this warning repeatedly over and over in the New Testament. This is a call for discernment, a virtue that is obviously lacking in the church. Thus, the urgency and the strong exhortation. You will recall that Paul exhorted the elders in Acts 20:28 to “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock.” He went on to say that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert.”

Sometimes these people will be Pastors, sometimes they will be Sunday School teachers, sometimes they are seminary professors, sometimes they are musicians, sometimes they are Deacons. Almost always, they are faithful attenders. And then there are others that just hang around the periphery of the church and lob grenades of criticism and slander and false doctrine into the church. But most will be ordinary folks who have no public platform but within the sphere of their influence, their lips and their lives will deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthian 11:3, “I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” And the way this happens, dear friends, is through false professors within the church. They are the ones that live in rebellion against the truth and so we are to be warned and we are to watch. I know, many times, believers read books that deny and distort the truth. Some of you follow counsel from others whose lives deny the truth. In fact, some of you are in close relationships with those who know nothing of the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. What are you to do? Well, you are to contend earnestly for the faith.

And what that looks like is you have to confront these things and do some of the things that we’re talking about here. In fact, Paul tells us in Romans 16:17, “keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” My friends, to associate with an apostate is to condone his apostasy. You must be careful with the friends that you choose. I cannot count the times in my ministry over the years where an ungodly husband or an ungodly wife or an ungodly friend has led an entire family into deception. Even whole churches have been led astray.

Again, a little leaven...what? Leavens the whole lump. It must be dealt with. How foolish for you young people to date a person who doesn’t know Christ. Or, worse yet, to marry that person thinking that somehow I will lead them to Christ. 2 Corinthians 6:14, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

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How foolish for a person to attend a church that does not have a high view of Scripture. The truth. Or one that does not teach Bible doctrine. Or, worse yet, a church that loves to mimic the secular culture thinking that somehow this will draw people to Christ, that they're going to reach out to the unchurched. A concept you will not find anywhere in Scripture. When you do that, you compromise the truth, you forfeit the power of Scripture. And what I see over and over again is you end up unchurching the church.

James 4:4, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Do you really want to do that in your Christian life? In your church? Are you kidding me? It's absolutely absurd. You see friends, it is our difference from the world that attracts sinners to Christ, not our similarity with it.

So, if we're going to contend for the faith we've got to be serious about profiling apostates; we've got to remember the warning to be on guard. Thirdly, we are to build ourselves up doctrinally. Notice, verse 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." My friends, this is a call for personal edification so that you can grow strong spiritually, so that you can become mature. We have to learn to get serious about strengthening our ability to discern and fortify our defenses against deception.

I've noticed that like school-yard bullies, apostates prey upon weaklings in the faith, those that are doctrinally illiterate; those that are undiscerning; those that lack spiritual discipline; those that have no grasp of systematic theology; those that have no appetite for expository preaching; those who have no accountability to godly shepherds; those who do not desire discipleship. They have no desire to change. They do not labor to know the wickedness in their own heart. They do not battle against the flesh. They know nothing of warring against the demonic strongholds of deception. And as you look at their life, they really have not measurable spiritual growth. They just play church. Their life is like a stagnant pond that is filled with the algae of apathy. They crave personal peace and comfort but they never take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and go to battle. They are wimps, not warriors. They are workman that need to be ashamed. They are unable to rightly divide the Word of Truth. They are spiritually obese, if you will. They are so out of shape due to years of couch potato Christianity because they have just dined upon the benefits of the church but they have never exercised their faith. They've never gotten into the battle.

Many times, I see these people, they love self-help and recovery groups where they can all sit around and gaze at their navel but they have absolutely no desire for the deeper things of the Word of God. They are like the "weak women weighed down with sins" that Paul talked about in 2 Timothy 3:6. "Led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." These will be the people that many times will quietly criticize and complain against their brothers but never break a sweat to do anything about reconciling and restoring those people that they resent. They love themselves more than Christ. They love themselves more than the brethren and they have

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no burden for the lost. These are the apostates within the church. Sadly, I've just described the vast majority of professing Evangelical Christians. Beloved, get serious about building yourself up doctrinally.

Also, if you're going to contend for the faith, #4, he says we need to pray in the Holy Spirit there in verse 20. It means pray in union with. It doesn't mean some special speaking in tongues type of thing. It means pray on the basis of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we are to pray consistent with the will and the desires of the Holy Spirit as they have been revealed in the Word that he has authored. And he is the one who intercedes with us before the Father. Isn't that an amazing thought? He is the one that aligns our prayers with his will, Romans 8:26-27. In some inscrutable way the Spirit writes the desires of God upon the renewed mind. Christians who have no habit of passionate, persistent, fervent prayer have no power to wage war against deception and eventually they will be a casualty in the battle for the truth. Beloved, you will never be able to contend earnestly for the faith on your own. You must be empowered by the Spirit of God. And that power comes through the Word and prayer.

Number 5, he says, we need to keep ourselves in the love of God. Grammatically, this an urgent, life-long imperative. The idea here is we are to persevere to remain in the sphere of divine blessing by being obedient. Who among us would fail to come close to a warm fire on a cold winter night? So, too, we must keep ourselves close to the warmth of divine blessing by staying close to the Lord through our obedience. The fires of fellowship and the blazing heat of solid in-depth Bible teaching maintain our zeal for the truth and it keeps the wolves at bay. I know what that feels like. I've been in the mountains before where the wolves are all around and believe me, when you hear them howling and you see them in the distance and you've got a carcass hanging in a tree waiting to be hauled out by the horses the next day, you build a big fire and you stay close to it.

As we read earlier in John 15 beginning in verse 9, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." How sad to watch a prodigal strike out on his own and destroy himself. I've seen this a thousand times. It is heartbreaking. Men and women who gradually drift away from the sphere of God's influence. What happens is they miss a service here and there. Before you know it, you never see them in the special services we have; you'll never see them at a prayer meeting; you don't see them in any small groups. They just kind of isolate themselves. They don't take advantage of the teaching opportunities of discipleship, of shepherding and eventually they're gone.

Once they were safe; they were nourished within the fold of the church. God shepherds, cared for them, as well as the rest of the sheep cared for them. But they failed to keep themselves in the love of God in their heart and in the rebellion of their heart, they began to drift away privately, then eventually you begin to see it publicly. May I remind you that a man never falls unexpectedly off of some cliff into sin, he first wearies himself by

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## Absolute Truth – Fight or Flight Part 2

By David Harrell

**Preached on:** Sunday, July 7, 2013

climbing up to the edge. He fantasizes about his sin in his imagination. He feeds on his lusts and he feeds his lusts any way he can and eventually it turns into a monster that grows too big to conceal and it destroys him. The vast majority of casualties of the truth can be attributed to a foolish and rebellious sheep that failed to guard his heart, who left the protection of the shepherd and the flock. Proverbs 18:1, “He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.” He’s got all the answers as he destroys his life. Be sure, no one like this will ever be able to contend earnestly for the faith.

Beloved, keep yourselves in the love of God. That love that “has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit,” Romans 5:5. Abide in the enjoyment of his love for you. We need to meditate upon that love often. We need to avoid anything that might dampen our love, especially close relationships with those who clearly have no love for God, who have no love for his people, who have no love for the lost. My friends, there is no joy in this world that compares to the ineffable experience of the love of God. So, we need to stoke the fire of our affection with worship, with service, with communion, with private prayer until it rages into an all-consuming flame in our life. When that happens, our fervor for him will never leave us and we will never drift into a state of lukewarmness. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart.”

As I was meditating upon this, I was reminded of when I was a little boy. I used to love to take a magnifying glass and capture the rays of the sun and focus it on the kindling of a fire until it set it ablaze. I confess, I did it to a few grasshoppers as well. But, my friends, we must do the same thing with the love of God. We must focus the rays of his love through the glass of our mind until it ignites the fuel of our heart and sets it ablaze with sacred affections. And we only do that by coming to his Word and allowing its truths to penetrate our mind and set our hearts on fire. This is the kind of life that will give glory to God, one that will contend earnestly for the faith.

Number 6, we are to anticipate Christ’s return, Jude tells us. Notice there in verse 21, “waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” Waiting anxiously in the original language means “to welcome something with great expectancy.” My friends, do you long for heaven? Do you long to see Christ face-to-face? If so, you will live in light of that longing. You will live as though he could appear any moment. You might ask, “Well, how does this help us contend earnestly for the faith?” Well, the answer is simple. You see, when we anticipate the final expression of God’s mercy, when we long for that moment when we finally enter into the presence of his glory blameless with great joy, when we see our Creator and our Redeemer, when we meditate upon the unimaginable reality of being in a glorified body. I mean, it’s just astounding, isn’t it, when you think about it? When we imagine the day when we are forever free from the ravages of sin, we become so saturated with these blessed truths of our redemption that we become emboldened to fight against any damnable error that might corrupt the truth, that might dishonor the one we long to see, the lover of our souls. So, we are to wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. I’ve never seen an earnest contender of the faith who wasn’t also an earnest watcher for the Lord’s return.

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Finally, number 7, the final way we can contend earnestly is to evangelize the lost. This includes the apostates that he's talking about. He gives us three categories, notice verse 22, "And have mercy on some, who are doubting." This first category would be what I would call the "double-minded, unstable in all their ways," James 1:8. These are the ones who waver and hesitate, kind of confused. They are the children in Ephesians 4:14 that "are tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming." In verse 15, he says, "to whom we are to speak the truth in love."

So, we are to target those kinds of phony Christians that are confused, the double-minded; those that vacillate between truth and error; that have no ability to really discern the truth; those who have been influenced by false teachers or by apostates that might be parents, might be a spouse, might be a Sunday School teacher, a friend; those that deceive with their lips and their lives. We are to unleash the truth on them, humbly but forthrightly exhort them with great patience.

Then in verse 23, he says, "save others, snatching them out of the fire." Here now, the challenge you see even greater. These aren't the double-minded, these are what I would call the dogmatic. These are the ones that are just utterly convinced of some error. They are the ones that 2 Timothy 4:4 who "have turned away their ears from the truth and have turned aside to myths." They are caught up in it. He says, "snatch them out of the fire." Snatch is a term that implies some aggressive action here. It's the idea of just having to reach down and grabbing a hold of someone vigorously with all of your might because they're slipping into the eternal inferno of hell because of the damning doctrines that they are believing. Maybe they see it on television, maybe they read it in our Christian bookstores. Our stores are filled with this garbage. It may be a husband or a wife or a friend. It may even just be the corrupting influence of our world system. You know, each of us knows somebody in this category, don't we? Each of us do. We have a responsibility to snatch them from the fire before it's too late. Aren't you glad that somebody prayed for you and witnessed to you.

Verse 23, then he gives us the final category, "and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." This is the most challenging of all. This person is not the double-minded, it's not even the dogmatic. This is the determined. This is the resolute, unyielding, fully deceived heretic. Jude warns us to understand here that they are very dangerous. Of course, they're teaching doctrines of demons; they're believing doctrines of demons. Many of them will even be demonized themselves.

So, he warns us, he says, "hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." This is very graphic language. The term "garment" in the original language translate, chiton, and it speaks of an undergarment that's worn next the skin underneath a tunic. Literally, underwear. It's the inner garment that is worn next to the skin and therefore subject to bodily discharges. Very graphic, very gross. He says here, "that's polluted." The term "polluted" means "to stain or to soil." And in the participle form here, "to be polluted by

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the flesh” means “to be stained by the flesh or to be flesh-stained.” Grammatically, because it’s in the perfect tense, it implies a present state resulting from past corruption. So, all of that exegesis to simply say this, he’s describing this person here when he says “hating even the garment polluted by the flesh,” he’s speaking here of filthy underwear stained by bodily fluids that had never been cleaned. The point here is even as you would never want to touch someone’s rancid, stained underwear and be physically defiled, so too, you don’t want to get near the spiritual defilement of those who have been so thoroughly corrupted. So, be careful in getting too close to them lest you become defiled by the same errors that have polluted them.

Sometimes, my friends, heretics will know error better than you know truth. You’ve got to be very careful. They have been well-coached by a cunning enemy, by the father of lies who disguises himself as an angel of light. Jesus said in Matthew 10:16, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”

So, dear Christian, I’ll leave you with this summary: God has given us absolute truth that will both sanctify and save and from the beginning, God’s truth has been under siege by the father of lies but we are called to be warriors of that truth for the glory of God. I ask you today, Will you take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit and join the battle? A battle that’s already been won. Or will you cower in fear and forfeit blessing and even eternal reward? Well, if the answer is yes, here’s your marching orders: you have got to get serious about contending earnestly for the faith. Very simple, right?

And here are the seven things:

1. Get serious about profiling apostates;
2. remember the warning that they will creep in unnoticed;
3. build yourself up doctrinally;
4. pray in the Holy Spirit;
5. keep yourself in the love of God;
6. anticipate Christ’s return;
7. and evangelize the lost.

And God will be praised and you will be blessed and sinners will be converted. Amen?  
Amen.

Let’s pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they bear much fruit in our lives to the praise of your glory, I pray, in Jesus’ Name. Amen.*

We pray you’ve been edified by this presentation. You’ve been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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