



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 15:05:2013

Website: www.victoriouschristianministry.org

Studies in Jude

Study 11: Spiritual Damage To The Church from Spots And Blemishes

Text: Jude 1:12-13

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”.

I once read a phrase in a leaflet which said **“slightly soiled, greatly reduced”** implying that a slight stain on a garment or little defect in workmanship of any product can significantly reduce their value. A spot may be very tiny, but small things do matter. A microscopic virus can kill a man. A tiny worm can kill a giant tree. A small mistake can crash an airplane and a small error can damn a soul eternally in hell. Those who ignore small problems are actually endangering their future.

The church is made up of individual members. When members are spotless, the whole church becomes spotless, and vice versa. The ultimate goal of Christ is to raise up a spotless church that is fit for God’s glory **“... even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”** (Ephesians 5:25-27). Our text shows that tolerance of spots and blemishes in “members” resulted in significant spiritual damage to the church and her mission on earth. Poison is never so potent than when it is disguised as a beneficial remedy. Error is never so damaging as when it is believed as truth. The enemy is never so dangerous as when he is disguised as a friend – hence Jesus’ warning to beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15).

The spots may have come in through “feasts of charity” (verse 12), but they quickly spread to other aspects of life resulting in significant spiritual damage such as the ones listed below. It is pertinent to remind ourselves that spots act like leaven - **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”** (Galatians 5:9; I Corinthians 5:6).

1. Spots in your feast of charity...., feeding themselves without fear:

Love feast was practiced in the early church as a means of caring for those who do not have; and usually takes place before the Lord’s Supper (I Corinthians 11:17-22). It was abolished at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397 because of its abuse. False teachers and their followers abused it as a means of self-gratification to the neglect of the needy, and that, without qualms or fear of God’s judgment. They became like the cursed shepherds in Ezekiel 34:2-3 who fed themselves rather than the flock. By their deeds they became like (like hidden stumbling blocks) to others. Their actions reveals that they had lost shame for their sins and were presumptuous. This serves as a warning to us all that evil association ruin good morals (I Corinthians 15:33).

Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern

2. These are clouds ... without water, carried about of winds;

Clouds without water are not fit for purpose as they offer no refreshing to the soul nor support for life. Proverbs 25:14 interprets “**clouds and wind without rain**” as people who boast themselves of false gifts “**Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain**”. So, as false teachers they boast of spiritual gifts that they do not have; and make empty promises and false prophecies which give their followers false sense of confidence and hope. 2 Peter 2:18-19 describe them as people who “... **speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage**”. Note that they may label their preaching as anointed teachings, prophetic utterances, word of knowledge or divine revelations, hence their ability to allure souls – but they are all empty “words of vanity” with no substance to offer. The freedom they offer is a freedom to sin – a route back into bondage and destruction. Such people are unstable, without true spiritual life, and get easily blown around by every wind of doctrine, philosophies, deception and cunning craftiness.

3. Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

This probably implies that these “trees” were once alive but are now dead and their fruits withered. The term “twice dead” describes their hopeless and irrecoverable condition as they have been “plucked up by the roots”. It also probably talks of their “second death” in Hell (Revelations 20:14), because Jesus talked about taking away branches without fruit and casting them into fire (John 15:2,6).

4. These are Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame;

Wild waves are noisy, boisterous and out of control, and only serve the purpose of hindering progress of ships and their occupants in their life’s journeys as well as drifting them away from their planned destination (Matthew 14:23-34; John 6:18-21; Acts 27:1-44; 28:1). “Foaming out their own shame” implies that they have lost a sense of shame regarding their nature and activities.

5. Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”.

Real stars are useful in astronomy for providing reference points for guidance in the voyage of life. However, these false teachers are wandering stars in the sense that they do not hold on to Bible truth but follow their own exploitative ways; and therefore offer no reference point or direction for spiritual journey to heaven – hence have to be reserved for eternal darkness of hell (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; John 8:44).

Conclusions

These highlight that false teachers were unstable, deceptive, and full of empty words but no true spiritual life. “**In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God...**” (1 John 3:10). They were out of control, in a hopeless condition, had lost every sense of shame; and therefore of no help in spiritual pilgrimage. Blending in so well with true Christians enhances their influence. This should make every serious heavenly minded Christian to heed Christ’s warning “**Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves**” (Matthew 10:16; Acts 17:11).