

The Faith Once Delivered Unto the Saints

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston emphasizes the importance of returning to biblical definitions of faith, particularly as articulated in Jude and 1st John, amidst the confusion of modern Christianity.

Topics: "Apostolic Faith", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches on 'The Faith Once Delivered Unto The Saints' from the books of Jude and 1 John. He emphasizes the importance of focusing on the core elements of the faith that were established in the days of Christ and the apostles. Kenaston urges believers to earnestly contend for this faith amidst a world filled with deception, worldly influences, and a gray Christian culture. He highlights the central themes of the faith: Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, knowing and walking with Him, loving one another, separating from the world, obeying God's commandments, and being vigilant against deception.

Transcript

Greetings in Jesus' name, this afternoon.

It's been a blessing to have fellowship over the meal and after the meal, just to share with one another life's experiences, what God is doing among us and with us. We thank God for opportunities like that. We thank God for the opportunity to open His book again, and look into it's pages.

I'd like us to turn to the back of the Bible. The book of Jude and the book of 1st John is where we are going to be reading.

I will be preaching this afternoon on the subject, "The Faith Once Delivered Unto The Saints". There are a lot of interpretations of what that means, and of course, if we are wise, we won't go by interpretations, but we will go back to the Bible and see what the Bible says about "the faith that was once delivered unto the saints". That's a phrase we find in the book of Jude, and we want to read there. Jude verse 3 and verse 4 he says these words, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,". Of course, when he says it was "once delivered", he's speaking about in the days of Christ, I believe, and the days of the apostles. "For there are certain men, crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that's quite a mouthful. You look at that second verse there. These are ungodly men turning the grace of our God, the God of

heaven, the Holy God of all creation, that men would turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, which is totally opposite of what God is like, and in doing that, they are denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't want to do that, but people are doing it in these days that we live in.

"The faith once delivered unto the saints". These words shine as light on our path in the midst of a dark world, and a gray Christian world: "The faith". You trace that little phrase through the New Testament. You will find it over and over again, "the faith, the faith", and here he says, "The faith once delivered unto the saints". Though we live in 1998, we still pursue "the faith that was once delivered to the saints". Now, that's two thousand years ago, but yet still we pursue the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. If there was ever a day when that needs some definition, if there was ever a day when we need to be pursuing that faith which was delivered to the saints, it's that day that we live in. And the land that we live in! You can go to some parts of this world, and the faith that was delivered to the saints is alive and well, and it's beautiful, and it's clear, and it's distinct, and there is no gray, it's black and white. But we live in America, and it's not black and white, it is gray. We as the children of God have to come to grips with that.

Jude uses the little phrase "The faith". It seems like he is lifting that phrase up as something very precious, and he is. And we can see the apostles did. They used that as an expression to express what they found in Christ Jesus, and it was a precious little phrase. How we need to define this phrase in our day, desperately!

We live in a day with a very gray Christian world, where the divorce rate inside what is called the church is about thirty five to forty percent. That means within the walls of the Church buildings, where Jesus' name is used, where the Bible is lifted up, and people open it up and preach out of it, thirty five to forty percent of the people who are married in those walls get a divorce.

We live in a day where there is Christian rock, Christian night clubs, Christian movies, Christian stars, and Christian everything-else-that's-in-the-world-today. We put "Christian" on it, and sanctified it, and said that it was ok, but it's not okay. We live in a day where even the worldly "lifestyle" poll says that there is no difference between the worldly and the Christian. That's what the "lifestyle" poll says. That means if you go out on the street and you meet them, and you ask them, "Is there any difference between the Christian and the people in the world", most of the people will say, "No, there isn't any difference,".

Not too long ago, there was a Promise Keeper's meeting in California. My brother happened to go to it, and that's quite a step for him, to go to a Promise Keeper's meeting. I was glad that he was there. But he went to a Promise Keeper's meeting. There were fifty thousand men at this meeting (these were Christian men, most of them), and a sermon was preached against adultery, and an invitation was given, and ten thousand men went forward. Ten thousand men, Christian men, married men, men who vowed their lives to their wives, then thousand of them went forward. And that's Christianity today.

My heart goes out to many of you who are more closely related to this confusion than others. Some of us have waded our way through it all, suffered much oppression as we attempted to give a clearer definition of what "the faith" is all about.

So, how do we define "the faith" today? Because some have redefined it even as Jude has said here in the scriptures that we read, and in our day, yea, they have turned the grace of God, the grace of our God, into lasciviousness, and now, you can be a Christian, and love God, and live a fleshly, sinful life of sin. They have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

Others are redefining the faith simply by the way that they live. They may be at churches where they hold up the right doctrines. But on Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, when they get out in the regular world where they work and live, they are redefining faith by the way that they live. What a tragedy, "I am a Christian, and I live a fleshly life", "I am a Christian, and I am filled with anger", "I am a Christian, and I hate my wife", "I am a Christian, and I don't care about the world around me, but I am a Christian,". What a tragedy.

Some have gone the other way in an attempt to redefine the faith, in an attempt to hold on to something that was right and precious. They have gone in the other extreme, made a long system of rules and laws, and said, "THIS is the faith". Well, we don't want to go to little books to see what "the faith" is. We already have the Book where we get our definition from.

There are those in these days who have gone back to the ancient writings. The writings of the early Church fathers in an attempt to define what the faith is, they have gone back to the writings of those who lived in 200, 300, and 400 A.D., and said, "This is the way they live, this is how they interpreted the Bible, so this must be what 'the faith' is,". And there is some value in that, but some have gotten really mixed up and ended back in the Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church, and all kinds of things.

That's not "the faith"! We need an answer, we need a definition! There has to be a place where we can go to get a definition of what "the faith" is. That was, as it seems according to Jude's heart, precious, it was valuable, it was worth contending for, it was worth earnestly contending for!

Well, we know the answer. The answer is to come back to the Bible, to come back to the Bible with an open face, to come back to the Bible with a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, to come back to the Bible with a willingness to walk in the light, as he is in the light. If you want to see "the faith", you have to be in the faith. If you want a definition of what "the faith" is, you need to be in the reality of "the faith". If you go to this Book, and you look with a sincere heart, you'll get a clear definition of what the faith is that was once delivered to the saints. You come to the Bible with a sincere love for the truth and a seeking heart, and you will not go wrong.

There are many places where we could go this evening in the Bible to get these definitions, and I want to encourage you to go to the Bible. Spend time in this book.

"The faith" is in the Bible. It's there in simplicity, it is there clearly, to be obedient. It's not hard to see. My heart is reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus who said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," and I think those are precious words to us today. I believe it is our path of obedience that has brought us to the place where we are today, because our hearts said, "I want to do thy will, O God," and God began to show His will, and that's the way it goes. Our hearts must say, "I want thy will, O Lord, I want to do what is right, I love the truth, I desire righteousness, I love righteousness, I hate iniquity, and I want to go the right way," and a heart that wants to go the right way shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether it be of someone else.

As I said, there are many places where we can go to define "the faith". We can go to the gospel and read all of the things Jesus taught His disciples, because surely, that is "the faith". We could go to the book of Acts and see how they expressed what He taught, and I believe I've mentioned some of those things last time I was here. We could look through some of the Epistles, and see how Paul defined "the faith". But this evening, I would like to look at the Epistle of 1st John, and see how John defined the faith. I feel it gives such a clear definition, because it was written as a teaching in the context of reality. John was not just

writing a book on doctrine.

John was writing in a day and an age when this very subject was right out on the table, and people were beginning to wonder, "What is the faith that was once delivered unto the saints?", "What is right, and what is wrong?", "Who is a Christian, and Who is not a Christian". It was written in 90A.D., sixty years after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was written in the midst of much confusion. Evil men by then had crept in, and heresies were springing up here and there among the Churches, and John, out of a burden to clarify the truth and expose the fault, he wrote the book of 1st John. Why should we look to 1st John? Because it was written by John the Apostle. Ninety years old, who had been living out the faith for about sixty years. What an example of lifelong Christianity he is to us! He is an old man as he writes this book, and he has been walking with God for sixty years. What a precious testimony. I read in history books that they used to carry him to the Church services when he was an old man. He wasn't strong enough to walk, he couldn't get up and preach, but they carried him to the Church services, because the atmosphere of the meeting would change when the old man came into the room. I think if we had an old man around, we'd carry him in here too, wouldn't we? You could just smell the fragrance of Christ when they carried the old man in the room, and set him in the corner in the midst of the assembly. Oh, that God would raise up men like that again.

Another reason why we want to look at 1st John is because it was written to some troubled Churches. If you look at the Churches in Revelation Chapter 2, and 3 (the book of Revelation and the book of John were written very closely, about the same time), there was a lot of trouble in the Churches, and there was a lot of mixture there, and there was a lot of false teaching, and there were those where were saying that they were, who were not.

And lastly, we want to look at this definition of "the faith" in 1st John because it addresses some of the major problems that we still face today, and beloved, we are in the last days.

People are full of love for the world, yet they say, "I am a Christian". John was dealing with that in his day. We face that today: people who are in love with the world, [who think that] the world is a playground, not a battlefield, yet they say they love God; People saying that, "It doesn't matter how you live. It's just Jesus,"; People saying that you can live in sin and go to heaven. Don't believe it. "Let no man deceive you on this part". You cannot live in sin and go to heaven. People [are] refusing to obey half the commandments of God. People [are] tearing down the preeminence of Christ, and lifting up all other things. People [are] saying, "I know God, I have the Holy Spirit, I have special revelations," yet in works, they deny Him. These are they days that we live in. You know as well as I do. You've been there, you've been in some of those Churches. You understand what I'm saying.

I want to encourage you to study the book of 1st John. I cannot cover it all today. John wrote it as a summary of the faith, as a definition of the faith, and as the outflow of the faith that he had lived for sixty years. And so, a need arose to define the true and the false. What is Christian, and what is not. In John's day, they were there, claiming all of these same things: "I love God", but yet full of the world, "I love God", but yet living in sin, "I've had a supernatural experience", but yet their lives do not measure up to what the Bible says. And you see many of the same things that we face in our day, John faced in his day, and the burden came forth to write 1st John.

There are some major themes which I believe give definition to the faith. We want to look at some of them today. They are major themes, you can't miss them. In fact, I would encourage you, after you listen to this

sermon about this subject, that you sit down in one sitting, and read 1st John, and look for these seven or eight themes through the book of 1st John.

But the first one we want to look at as far as giving definition to what "the faith" is the theme of Jesus Christ. John starts with Jesus, and he finishes the book with Jesus, and he fills the pages of this little Epistle with thoughts about Jesus Christ. I know we live in a day and an age where that name is thrown around all of the time, but because it's being done, and it's being abused, that gives us no right to let the pendulum of our own hearts swing in another direction and stay away from Him upon whom our faith is built upon. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of "the faith that was delivered unto the saints,". Even though we live in a day when His name is being abused, when His name is being drug through the mud, when His name is being lifted up and mixed with all kinds of mixture, still the pure, the right, the solid, the foundation is laid, which is Jesus Christ, and we have to stay there. No matter what other people do, we have to stay there, or we will not come out right, I promise you. John starts out with Jesus, and finishes with Jesus, and we had better do the same thing.

Just a few verses to show you how Jesus Christ is the number one theme of this book. When you go through, and you study on your own, if you don't believe me, be a Berean, and search it out for yourself. I would be thrilled if you would go home with a scrutinizing ye and go to 1st John to see if what I am saying was right. I would be thrilled. This is what he says in Chapter 1, verse 1, "that which was from the beginning which we have heard, when we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life". "That which was from the beginning"... who is he speaking about there? He's speaking our Lord Jesus Christ. John was in love with Jesus. He was ninety years old, he hasn't lost the wonder of Him at all, he's still exited about Jesus, He's still the altogether lovely one to him, it's the first thing that comes out of his mouth when he sits down to write and give definition. He's the first one that he saw in his vision on the isle of Patmos. It's Jesus Christ, He is the center, He is the centrality of our Christian faith, and we never want to get away from Him. It's Jesus Christ.

He goes on to say in Verse 3, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. That's where John is, he's having fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Are we? Are we in love with Jesus? John was.

He goes on to say in Verse 7, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin," There again is our Lord Jesus, and His blood foundational to "the faith that was once delivered to the saints".

In Chapter 2 in Verse 1, he goes on to say, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father:....," (Who is it?) "...Jesus Christ the Righteous,".

Chapter 2 verse 22 he says, "Who is a liar but he that denyeth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denyeth the Father and the Son.

Chapter 3 in verse 23, "And this is His commandment, that we should believe of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment,". Look at those words. Now, I don't know about you, but when I begin to read these verses one after another, it seems to me that John is stuck on this. It's Jesus, it's Jesus Christ. He's the Son of The Father, and on and on he goes, all of the way through this book, and he never gets over the beauty, the wonder the stability of Jesus Christ. We don't either. We don't want to ever get over who Jesus Christ is.

Reading on in Chapter 4, verse 1 and 2, notice the words of discernment, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God..." (Why should we try them?) "...because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (How do you know that a spirit is of God?) "Hereby, know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, but every spirit that will not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God,".

They are interesting to me, working into deliverance ministry, you get somebody down on their knees who has been involved in witchcraft, and you tell them "Now I want you to call on the name of the Lord Jesus", they can't even say His name! I've seen them wrestle for an hour, trying to get His name out of their mouth, but they can't get His name out of their mouth. They can talk to you, but they can't say his name. They will tell you, "When I go to say his name, I can't say anything". Why? Because the evil spirits will not confess the name of Jesus Christ. Oh, that should put warning signs up in our own minds. When we are giving definition of "the faith", Jesus Christ must always have His place, He is the King of Kings, He is the Lord of Lords, He has been given a name which is above every name! Notice that, and therefore His name should be above every name to us. Put all other names aside! Men like to give men's names to movements. God, deliver us from such! It's Jesus Christ. It's Him, not other men, no matter how godly!

Chapter 4 in verse 15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God,". And by the way, that doesn't mean whosoever shall open his mouth and say that Jesus is the Son of God. That word "confess" means that you are out telling people "Jesus is The Son of God", on the street corner, in the grocery store. How is your evangelism?

Chapter 5, Verse 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus the Christ is born of God".

Chapter 5, Verse 5, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

Oh, there is so many verses here, and I have only picked out a few. You go through, and search the whole book.

This faith is about Jesus Christ first and foremost, and our faith better be also. Our faith better be about Jesus Christ first and foremost! You know, there is a tendency to react. We can look around, we can look at the Protestant world, and I know people use the name of Jesus, and Protestant Churches, and there are lots of Churches who will talk about Jesus and all of that, and we have been there, we have looked at their lives, and we said, "Their lives don't back it up", and so we kind of back away from it all, but the danger is that we would overreact, and move away from this precious name, which is the name above every name. We have a danger of doing that. This faith is about Jesus Christ first and foremost.

Look at verse 20. These are awesome words, and these are the words that John finishes with. Remember, I told you he started with Jesus Christ, and he ends with Jesus Christ, but look at what he says in his last closing words, as he's defining the faith: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is The True God, and eternal life. Little Children, keep yourselves from idols,". Now, I want us to notice that the context there. You know, a lot of times, people quote verse 21 all by itself, and that's not wrong to just quote that and say, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," but if you read the context, you have God, and you have idols, and that looks a lot different, doesn't it? Jesus Christ is The True God and eternal life, keep yourself from anything but that. That's what John is saying: Keep yourself from anything but Him, who is The True God and eternal life.

This faith is about Jesus Christ. It is not a lifestyle first. There is nothing wrong with lifestyle, but "the faith" is not lifestyle first. It's Jesus first, and lifestyle second, and we need to keep the horse and the cart in their rightful place. And that, sometimes, is hard to do, because we can easily change our focus. We can look around us and see that people have lost a Christian lifestyle, and thus begin to focus on the life we are supposed to live, and all of the servants talk about the life we are supposed to live, but the life we are supposed to live is a life in Christ, not just a life we are supposed to live. There is a big difference. We can be a Christian Pharisee. just as much as the Pharisees were Jewish Pharisees, we can be a Christian Pharisee, and have everything right, and all of the jots, and all of the tittles of the New Testament, but not have Him right! It happens all of the time. We can change our focus, and begin to make laws, and lose sight of Him, and if you will study in the New Testament, you will see that laws without Christ put a veil over your eyes. And soon, you do not see Him, for you see Him vaguely, dimly. There is a danger in that.

One dear brother recently said these words to me, "I know I got born again twenty years ago, but where have I been for the last twenty years? Where have I been?". You know, it's possible for you to lose your way for twenty years and wonder where you went. Do you know where he was? His focus was on lifestyle, and not on Him. That's all. He was a good man, with a nice family, but his focus was on lifestyle, and doctrines, and all of those are good, and right, and I believe in them all, but his focus was off of Christ, and twenty years later, He came around the circle, and he could see it, and he wondered, "Where have I been for twenty years?".

We can do that, you know. We can make our own laws, we can make home schooling the way to do it, we can do that, we can create our own, with living in the country, jumpers, coverings, we can do that. We can make those the number one issues, and you may not know it, but all of the sudden you will not be seeing Him. I see it all the time. I speak these words out of concern because I see it happening all of the time. I hear things like this (first time a sister meets another sister): "So, when did you start wearing the covering?". What? No! It should have been "When did you have a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus?". But it easily happens, and it happens because we are standing for something. It happens because we are standing alone at times. It happens because we want to hold on to some things that are dear and precious, but I tell you, the best way you'll hold on to the things that are dear and precious, if their teachings are out of this book, is to keep your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, looking onto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. We can also wake up in twenty years and say, "Where have I been?". I Do believe that some will do that in twenty years, but it's not going to be my fault, because I'm warning them, it's Jesus Christ. Even though He's been muffled, even though He is muddy, even though we are repulsed about the people who talk about Jesus, but don't live for him, it's still Jesus Christ, and He's got to be the central focus. He's got to be our all in all, and we need to be careful what we do with him. That's the first major theme. You look through 1st John and you'll know it.

Theme number two.

Please, don't think this is a broken record, If this is a broken record, it's God's record, not mine.

[The] Second major theme [is] knowing Jesus Christ. In no less than thirty references, you will find words like this: "Fellowship", "Abiding", "Knowing Him", "Walking in the light", [and] "The life of Him". All of these little phrases you find coming over and over in 1st John. These words speak about relationship. It's not enough to have the doctrine of Christ in it's place, as important as it is. It's not enough to have it in it's place. We can't do that and say, "I'm safe,". That's not enough. It must go deeper than that. It must be a known a of Jesus Christ. John was all wrapped up in a relationship with the Living God, who is Jesus

Christ our Lord. that's where John was at, that's where he lived, that's the way that he walked. For sixty years upon this Earth, that's what made his Christianity lifelong. He had a knowing relationship with the Son of God. That is what also make our Christianity will make our Christianity lifelong. Nothing else, nothing more, and nothing less will make our Christianity a lifelong Christianity. There must be a relationship with Jesus Christ. That's got to be number one. It's got to be a priority to us.

Many times, we have lots of decisions to make. I was counseling with someone recently, and they are trying to find a way, and they were not sure what to do about this, or what about that. I told them, and it sounds so simplistic, but it's true, "You keep your relationship with God number one, and if that is I it's rightful place, you will know what to do about all other things. But if you lose sight of that sweet relationship, and then you have decisions to make, I can not promise you that you will make the right decisions if He is not the altogether Lovely One in your heart and life. We lose sight, and we won't make right decisions.

What was John saying? The faith that was once delivered unto the saints was the faith of faiths that cause a man or a woman to be able to know God, and walk with God, and to be able to love God with all of their heart, through Jesus Christ. That is the faith. Oh, let us put it way up there where it belongs! A man can know his God, a man can have an intimate fellowship. We are to walk with him.

Someone said to me not long ago, "How do you witness to a religious person? How do you tell a religious person about Jesus Christ? Because, they have so much right. They do things right, their morals are right. How can you tell them about Jesus Christ,". This is what I said to him: "Your point of witness is relationship. Whether you're talking to a Catholic, an Amish man, a Muslim, or a good Baptist, your point of contact is relationship. That's the difference between religious and Christian relationship. So, that's your point of contact,". A vibrant, ongoing, knowing relationship with God will speak to that man or that woman's heart. No one can gainsay that.

Oh, some of the opportunities we've had to witness to the Muslims over in Northern Africa! How do you witness to them? They do everything right, they believe in morals, they believe in modesty, they believe in coverings, they believe in being honest, they believe in all kinds of things, they even believe in the Old Testament. What can you do? Talk to them about God. They don't believe that you can know this God that they are talking to. They pray five times a day to him, but they will tell you, "We are not allowed to know this God that we pray to,". Oh, if you can go to them, and not just giving them the doctrine of knowing God, but if you can come to them out of a vital reality yourself, and tell them that you can know God, and tell them that you know God, you have a point of contact where you can reach them. And I tell you, if you speak to them in that way, they don't have anything to say. That's when they start listening. Before that, they want to argue about who Jesus is, about who Mohammed was, about the New Testament, about whether it's good or bad, or whether it was right. They have all kinds of arguments, but when you begin to speak to them about a relationship with the living God, they have nothing to say, because they have not, and they know they have not, and you are saying that you have one. That puts a big question mark in their mind, and they are ready to listen, and you can tell them about Jesus, and how precious He is to you, and you can win them by your life.

Number three, the next major theme in the book of John (and I truly believe the fact that these are major themes validate that these are the major definitions of the faith), is "love one another". Forty references to this in the book for 1st John, and first John is not a big book, only five little Chapters! You can memorize it in a month! Forty references for love. You see how it unfolds? First it's Christ, who He is, His place, His

name, the honor of His name, and then it's knowing Christ, loving Him with all of your heart, and walking with Him. Then from there it's loving one another. Here we are again, "Love God, and love your neighbor,". This is half of the faith, isn't it? This is one half of the faith: loving one another. Loving your neighbor is one half of the faith. But why is it that so often it just gets a little corner, and we have another big long list of other things, when it's half of the faith?

This is a major part of the faith. If your life is not being given away to others, something major is wrong. Not a little thing, it's a big thing. If you've never led a soul to Christ, and you're not even concerned about it, that is major stuff, not minor, major. Because, we've been left here to preach the gospel to every creature in the world. That's all we've been left here for, nothing else.

1st John 3, Verses 16 through 19, and there are many, many verses that we could read about this third point of love, loving one another, but let's read Chapter 3, Verse 16 through 19: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelled in love, dwelled in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath tormented. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

The true faith directs you away from yourself, your own interests, your own plans,

and directs you to others, to your neighbors, and to your children. But note this: The true faith will direct you away from yourself. A major part of your life should be involved with other people if you are living in the faith that was once delivered to the saints. And we don't need to go read there in the book of Acts today to know, but you go look there sometime and see what the activity was in the book of Acts. It was others, Lord, yes, others. Let this my motto be." Because the true faith will direct you away from yourself and to others around you. I don't know what that should be. You could get involved in some Children together, whether you gather the neighbor children together, and pour your life into them, whether you get out on the streets, whether you get involved in missions, I don't know [but] there are many ways to express this third point in the faith. The point is, it's away from you, it's out there, it's to others, not to me, that we live. This is part of the true faith.

So what do we do? I'll tell you what the tendency had been for people like us: To go off in disgust of the world and the Church, go off by myself, raise my family, and forget about the world. The tendency is there to overreact and just forget about the whole thing, but brothers and sisters, that is not the faith. Do you know what that is? That is putting your light under a bushel. "Off to the mountains I'm going, far away from everyone else is where I'm going, off to the monastery is where I'm going, and that is putting your light under a bushel. Do you know what happens to a light when you put it under a bushel? You leave it there for a while, and you will see, it goes out.

Why did God give you a light? "Let your light so shine before men that they may see you good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven,". We can get wrapped up in business, houses, gardens, and have no time and no interest for anybody else, and we do that, and it's not the faith. No matter how god the lifestyle might be, if that is our center focus, and not other people, that is not the faith. Maybe these sound like strong words, but I think we need to consider them.

You may be sitting here right now, and thinking in your heart, "Come on, brother Denny. I didn't expect this now, you got up there, and you said 'the faith once delivered unto the saints' and get right down to some things, and lift up a standard, and here you are talking about Jesus, and you're talking about love!". May I

remind you, that's the order that John gives us, and that's the priority that John gave, and we are on dangerous ground if our hearts are wanting some phase to lift up. As soon as we hear something about the faith, we are on dangerous ground already. Many a group have done that, only to lose the very thing they thought they were defending

Consider the Moravians just a little bit. This faith unfolded to them in just this way. Do you know the Moravians? They lived in the seventeen hundreds. This is exactly how live unfolded for the Moravians. First, it was Christ. They had an outpouring of God's spirit, and a baptism of the revelation of Christ. They sought Him in a communion service. Secondly, they began to walk with them, and after two years a burden for mission fell upon their heart that it transformed the whole community, and everybody's heart beat for the lost. Some went, and some stayed, but everybody's heart beat for the lost. That was the order of the Moravians, that is the order of the faith. Mark it down.

Let's go on to number four. In this definition of the faith, John speaks about the world twenty two times in this little book. John saw the world under judgment already. If you see something under judgment, you are not going to play in it, you are not going to love it. He saw the world passing away with the lust thereof, and the things thereof. He saw the world under judgment, and when he began to give definition to this faith, the world came forth, and he said, "If many man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,". If we love the world, we are not in the faith. If the world is a playground, we are not in the faith. If the world is a good place where we can do lots good things, and we like it out there, then we are not in the faith. John was giving definition to his faith, and there were those in his day who were all wrapped up in the world, claiming supernatural experiences. John gave the definition, "If you love the world, you are not in the faith," twenty two times.

John was set apart from the world without a doubt, but I think it's good for us to notice he was set apart from the world because he was set apart to God. He was in love with God, and he was set apart in God, and because he was set apart in God, his view of the world was nothing. "The things on Earth were strangely dim in the light of His glory and His grace, and that's the way it will be with us.

Our love for Jesus will affect how we view that world out there. And when our love grows cold, the world looks pretty good. But when our love is hot, we look at this world, and we see it under judgment. We see the futility of all that is going on, and all that they are doing, and how fast they go after the things they are after, we can look at it and know it's all gong to burn up, every bit of it. John saw the world under judgment and said these words, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of love is not love of the Father, but is of the world. And the love passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. These are powerful words that John speaks to us today. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Is there such a thing as a worldly Christian? John says, "No". America says, "Yes", but John says "no". You've heard the term, maybe you've even used it (i.e. "They're kind of worldly Christians"). A Christian who's heart is in the world? Not according to John. He draws the line real clear. You see, now John is giving definition to these other major themes. How do you know Jesus Christ is in His right place? How do you know somebody is loving God? How do you know when someone says that he knows God? How do you know that he tells the truth? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him,". Is there such a thing as a worldly Christian? I tell you, it's a dangerous place to be.

Sometime back I was reading a little bit of brother Andrews', the man who smuggled Bibles into Russia. He wrote a book called, "God's Smuggler". Since he wrote the book, "God's Smuggler", it shut all of the doors for him to get into Russia. He quit smuggling Bibles after that book came out, so his interest went to other places where persecuted Christians are, and brother Andrews goes where persecution breaks out. Everybody else runs, all of the missionaries jump on the airplanes and fly [away], but brother Andrews goes there when persecution breaks out. This is what he observed: In those countries where there was no persecution, and then persecution suddenly broke out, two thirds of the Christians give up the faith. Two thirds give up the faith. Why? Because there is no such thing as a worldly Christian, and the proof is in the pudding, and when the fire starts burning, and the sword starts flashing, two thirds of them give up. They are not ready to lose their head for their faith, and the reason is that there is no such thing as a worldly Christian. There may be people who are worldly who claim to be Christians, but if the day ever comes when they are to lose their head, most of them can't. The true faith is defined with clear distinction between the world and a Christian. Know this.

Number five: Sin. Sin is a major theme in the book of first John. John says in Chapter 3, Verse 1, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not". Chapter 3, Verse 4 through 10, he says these words, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law, and ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins. Hallelujah! "In Him is no sin,"! "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that comiteth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil,".

Now, John is speaking about sin. We live in a day when it's ok to sin. You know that! (i.e. "You can sin and go to heaven! You can live in adultery and go to heaven! You just won't get your rewards. You can be and evil man and go to heaven, you can be bitter, you can be angry, and go to heaven") But the Bible says, "Let no man deceive you on these things,". Paul said that. Paul said it this way, "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,". Don't let any man deceive you with vain words, empty words (i.e. "It's ok! We're all sinners." You know the phrases). And I'm not talking sinless perfection, here, but our hearts should say, "I am NOT going to sin!", but our theology says, "If I'm going to sin, and if I'm going to sin, then I will sin [anyway],". I believe we should change our theology, and our theology should say, "I am NOT going to sin!". "There is grace enough,"! "There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you be tempted above that which ye were able, but wherewith the temptation provide a way of escape,"! That's the way our hearts should be. John has a major theme in this definition of "the faith that was once delivered to the saints". John speaks about the faith: Jesus came to deliver us from sin. That is one of the major tenants of the faith. Jesus came to take away our sins. The Bible says, "He shall save His people from their sins,". This is a major tenant of "the faith that was once delivered unto the saints".

Dietrich Vonhoffer, do you know who he is? He was a German. He was martyred for his faith in 1945, two weeks before Germany fell. Dietrich Vonhoffer was hung by the neck until death because of his faith. But in 1932, he looked at the theology of the Christian community, and he prophesied. He looked down the road and said, "There is a coming to the Church a doctrine called 'cheap grace' which will turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, which will allow the children of God to live fleshly, sinful lives, and still have the assurance in their heart that they are going to heave," and Dietrich Vonhoffer called it "Cheap Grace", and

wrote it I 1932, and died in 1945, and I tell you, he's a prophet. We see ["Cheap Grace] today. People can have the Holy Ghost today and live in defeat.

If you thought that sin would separate you from God, would you do something about it. But if you think that sin won't separate you from God, you might live in it for thirty years before you realize it

Number Six, another major theme: Truth and God's Commandments. Forty references are made in 1st John about truth and God's Commandments. Let us read in Chapter 2, Verse 3 and 6, "And hereby do we know that we know Him if we keep his commandments,". You see, some were wondering, "How do I know if I know Him? These men are coming along and saying 'I'm having a supernatural experience with God which is much better and greater than anything which you had. I know God in a way that you don't know him!'. John came back and said, "Hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith 'I know him' and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know ye that we are in Him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked,".

People say today, "I have the Holy Ghost,". If you have the Holy Ghost, and He hasn't made you Holy, you don't have the Holy Ghost. You have another ghost, but you don't have the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost makes you holy. He that sayeth, "I know God, He is Holy, but keepeth not His commandments, he is a liar,". That's what John says. That would be an awesome thing, wouldn't it? To stand in many congregations in this land of ours, and say what I just said. I tell you, that would make tremors go through that congregation. But it should, because he that sayeth, "I know God," and keepeth not His commandments is a liar.

So, [John is] bringing these things in here, but we have to keep in the right, proper order. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. No other foundation has been laid but that which is laid in Christ Jesus. This is eternal life, that you may know the only true God, and His Son Jesus Christ, but the knowing Him, and walking with Him will produce a life which is separated from that world, and a life of obedience to these commandments. It will!

Number seven: Warning of deception. The whole book is a warning of deception, and we need to note that. John wrote this book because he was warning the people of the deception that already working in their day, and how much more so in our day. Chapter 2 Verse 18 and 19: "Little Children, it is the last times, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists. Whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be manifest that they were not all of us,". In Chapter 4, we read the first two verses about trying the spirits. Now let's read from Verse 3 through 6, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. This is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it shall come, and even now already is in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth is. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know ye the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error,". [These are] warnings of deception.

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples in Matthew Chapter 24, and He was speaking about the future, and He was speaking about His return, and He was speaking about all of these things. His disciples began to ask him questions, saying "When shall thee things be?", and, "When shall be the coming of the Son of

Man?". You know what the first words that came out of Jesus' mouth were? "Let no man deceive you,". I do believe it is one of the marks of the last of the last days when there is deception on every hand, and there are many who are false that say they are true. So, one of the clear definitions of "the faith delivered unto the saints" was a good, clear, strong warning: Be alert for deception all of our days.

Thank you, [God], for this hour You have given us. God, I thank You that You are not limited by anything. Thank You for meeting with us here, this morning, for talking to us. Thank you for these men, these brothers and sisters. God, I know what their desires are. I pray, take this message, don't let it be a discouragement, but rather, an inspiration. God, I pray, cause them to rise up by the grace of God, and Go forward. Lord, I pray, give us a holy dissatisfaction for where we are. Though we thank You for where we are in our lives, give us a holy dissatisfaction, Lord, and a longing desire to go forward in our Christian life, no games. God, I pray for this little fellowship. Deliver us from those who are just playing games, Father. We commit the rest of this meeting into Your hands, and I pray, have Your way, Lord, in each and every heart, bless Your Word, have it's way upon every one of us. In Jesus Christ's name, Amen.

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