

Restoring Christianity
Jude 3-4

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

When things are broken, we want to _____ them. What happens when what is broken is what we _____ and practice? God gave us His Words; He gave them to Jesus, who gave those Words to us for _____ time. His Words contain instructions, encouragements, warnings, and promises. The Lord Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My _____ will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). They are here once, for all time. Peter echoes that promise, declaring that "the word of the Lord endures _____. And this is the word that was _____ to you" (1 Peter 1:25). If the Word of God is eternal, then it speaks authoritatively to us _____ just as it always has. We must listen and follow it.

The Lord Jesus is in the saving and the restoring _____. He purifies broken and sinful _____. He said, "It is not those who are _____ who need a physician, but those who are _____. I have not come to call the righteous but _____ to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). Jesus walked the earth and He died on the cross. He said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was _____" (Luke 19:10). When people go astray, the Lord, like a shepherd, seeks them so He can _____ them from the dangers of sin.

He also corrects those that are headed in the _____ way and leads them to everlasting life. The Lord grants to all the _____ of repentance and reconciliation, which restores a right relationship. The Lord warns and corrects by His Word, the Bible, those who _____ false beliefs or practices so that they can leave the error and come to the truth. The concept of restoration is neither impossible nor misguided, for the Lord is in the restoring business.

Our scripture reading today comes from the Epistle of Jude, verses 3 and 4.

The faith was _____ for all time delivered to the saints. In fact, John 16:12-13 points out that the Holy Spirit was to _____ the apostles into all the truth. Peter makes it clear to us that we have all things that pertain to life and godliness through a _____ of Him who called us to His own glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3). Faith was once for all time delivered to the saints.

The New Testament teaches that Christians are to hold to the traditions, forms and patterns that were delivered to them by the _____. These traditions, unlike human traditions, come from God and they _____ what He wills for Christians. Paul praised the Corinthians for following the traditions that he taught them. He said, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of _____. Now I _____ you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you" (1 Corinthians 11:1-2). Paul encouraged the church at Thessalonica to "stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were _____, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

These inspired instructions, traditions, gave the early Christians forms or patterns to follow. Whether in the matter of salvation or in worship, they were encouraged to _____ from their

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hearts. Romans 6:17-18 says, “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the _____ to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” When the Romans “became obedient from the heart to that form (or pattern) of teaching to which they were committed,” God freed them from sin and made them His _____.

Again, Paul spoke broadly to Timothy of many things. He said, “Follow the _____ of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13) To suggest that there are no patterns to follow is to _____ what the Lord commands and what faithful Christians did. If the sun, the planets, and the moon in our universe follow a pattern, if every cell in our body has a DNA pattern, and if every leaf on every tree follows a pattern, why would we suppose that the Lord’s _____ has no pattern?

The restoration movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America believed in the need to _____ those who follow Christ. They saw the fighting and discord among Christians in the early days of this country and they wanted _____. They wanted to follow the _____ of Jesus. **Read the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-23.**

There can be no doubt that weak and fallible men have often allowed misguided zeal and wrongheaded attitudes to get in the way of _____ obedience and unity; but this doesn’t mean that we ought to stop following the Lord’s teaching. The apostle Peter frequently blundered, but he was serious about his devotion to the Lord and he _____ of any evil. He put away his blunders and continued serving faithfully. Peter knew false teaching would come along, so he said, “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your _____ so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but _____ in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:17-18).

Unity comes from the things that unify. Before Jesus prayed for unity, he prayed that His disciples would be “sanctified (that is, set apart) in the _____” (John 17:17). The idea that people should discard the Lord’s teaching about salvation and the church in order to be united with others who believe differently will never bring the kind of unity for which Jesus prayed. Instead, it settles for a _____ with error. Instead of teaching one faith and one gospel, compromise corrupts the church and the truth by blending it with modern _____. To hold to the truth, we cannot compromise but must _____ from those who are in error.

Someone has correctly said, “It is better to be divided by _____ than to be united in error. It is better to speak the truth that hurts and then heals than falsehood that comforts and then kills. It is not love and it is not friendship if we _____ to declare the whole counsel of God. It is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie.” Though we live in a time that demands political correctness, God expects us to be _____ to His Word. God’s Word says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the _____ of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Restoring is not the _____ as reforming. Reforming suggests a makeover that _____ the existing system. Restoring, however, suggests the idea of bringing something _____ to an

earlier and better condition. Much of what passes for Christianity today has little likeness to the ideals that are found in the New Testament that Jesus expected of the _____ in all ages. Some churches have become social organizations; and others have become enterprises, while still others have become an entertainment venue. Many churches have forgotten the way of the Lord and they have pursued whatever _____ dictates. Some have so divorced themselves from the truth found in Scripture, found in the Bible, that they _____ almost anything. I can understand why many find religion distasteful these days.

When we suggest a need for restoring the church, we're saying something is wrong and needs to be _____. The restoration principle points to the inspired and desired will of God for all congregations, found in the _____ of the New Testament. Even when the New Testament honestly criticizes a congregation, one can _____ from the criticism what God does not approve. God speaks to real life and real problems in the New Testament in order that Christians and congregations in later days may not repeat the same _____.

Jesus walks among His churches and will _____ them on the last day by His teaching. His Word is that teaching (John 12:48). Since the Word of the Lord is authoritative to the very last day, the same _____ will be applied to all. He doesn't have one Bible for one group and a different Bible for other groups. God expects those who follow Him in every age to do His will, not to _____ their own churches. When a group strays from the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, and establishes their own religious group that is unlike what you read about, and they do it after their own _____, they're not following the will of God. Religious people can easily _____ that their practices are biblical, when they're not. Jack Lewis noted in his book Basic Beliefs, that, "Every generation will either be _____ by cultural pressures or directed by God's word. It does no good to be admired by our _____ only to be rejected by God."

What should a church do if it _____ from the will of God? The answer is simple – _____! That is what Jesus said to the seven churches of Asia when they got away from it. Repentance is a turning _____ from the worldly, the evil, and the human, and turning _____ the way of the Lord. Some sins are moral matters; but others are doctrinal, that is, what _____ teach. To be restored, people should turn away from doctrinal _____ to the will of God. Restoration takes place when people repent, and this is necessary to _____ God. To argue against restoration is to argue against repentance.

No one can _____ in error and still please God. In the early church, false teachers said that Jesus didn't come in the _____. John said, "Anyone who goes too far and does not _____ in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9-11). God expects us to give up false teaching and abide in the teaching of Christ in order to "have God." These false teachers were _____ about Jesus and guilty of evil deeds. What do you do when you find out that you've been deceived, or are in error? You _____ the situation. You abandon the false doctrine or the false practice and you come back to God's will and God's _____ of doing things. This is what one does to _____ his relationship with God—he repents. **Read the remark of Jack Lewis in the text.**

King Hezekiah led Judah to _____ of evil. Hezekiah followed an evil king who led Judah into _____. He wanted to bring Israel _____ to the way of God. **Read 2 Kings 18:3-7.**

Likewise, King Josiah led Judah to repent at a later time. “Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, ‘Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan _____ it in the presence of the king. When the king _____ the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.” Josiah said, “great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not _____ to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us” (2 Kings 22:10-11, 13). Josiah called all Judah together and “read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to _____ after the LORD, and to _____ His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant” (2 Kings 23:2-3). Josiah destroyed everything idolatrous and evil. Josiah’s example of repentance restored Judah to God’s teaching. If we find that we’re in error, let’s do the same thing!

The Bible is the _____ and _____ authority. Just as a seed will produce only after its own kind, so the seed of God’s Word will produce the _____ Christianity today that it did in the first century (Luke 8:11). The Word of God works today the same way it did when the Lord gave it in the first century. So, the work of restoration is actually soul-winning, since it leads a _____ soul out of sinful error into God’s saving grace.

Imagine you’re driving and come upon an automobile accident. You find a man there who is injured; his leg is grievously broken. He’s in great agony and he’s crying for help. So, you immediately call 9-1-1, and an Emergency Medical Team arrives soon. The man tells the technician, “Give me something to deaden the pain! Just knock me out!” Surely he’ll give him something to ease the pain; but he won’t stop there. He will also set the leg so that it can heal. If the leg is not set back into place, the man’s leg will not heal. That may require surgery. The problem must be corrected if the man is to be whole and healthy.

As the great physician, Jesus brings healing to our lives by _____ the morally broken doctrinal places in our lives and in our churches. He eases the pain through forgiveness, but _____ the life through repentance. Repentance means getting our hearts and lives right. God’s gracious forgiveness is abundant, but it works _____ repentance, not apart from it. It takes _____ grace and repentance for people to transform and to be like Christ.

Becoming a Christian includes both our salvation and our commitment to follow Christ and be united with Him. Being united with Christ takes place when we _____ that form of the death, burial, and resurrection. When we have _____ and confessed our _____ in Christ Jesus, we need to be _____. “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4-7). When we’re baptized into Christ, we’re united with Him in His death and resurrection. God washes away our _____ and makes us His child. Don’t wait to be united with Christ!