

## **A Faith Worth Fighting For: Glory to Him Who Is Able**

**Jude 1:24-25**

**By [David Strain](#)**

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In the racks in front of you in the pews you'll find copies of the Holy Scriptures. Let me invite you to take one in your hand and turn in it to the book of Jude, page 1027. You will find it useful once you've opened the Scriptures to keep them open as we study them together. Before we read them, however, would you bow your heads with me as we pray?

Lord Jesus, we pray that You would come and by Your Word read and preached speak to our hearts. Show us our weakness and frailty and inability and proneness to sin. Show us Your own marvelous sufficiency, the abundance of Your grace to forgive and cleanse and change and transform us from glory to glory by Your Spirit till we look like You, till we reflect Your character. Draw us in renewed faith and dependence to cling to You and rest on You. And use Your Word in our hearts to strengthen us as we continue in the good fight of faith. For we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

The book of Jude reading from verse 1. This is the Word of Almighty God:

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who

did not believe. And angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day - just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for who the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, 'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

We praise God that He has spoken to us in His holy and inerrant Word.

## The Message of Jude

As Kevin said, we've been working our way through the book of Jude and we've seen Jude is occupied with the task of equipping the church to deal with false teachers and false teaching. There were, verse 4, some who had crept into the ranks of the congregations who had been perverting the grace of our God into sensuality. That is, Jude says they were distorting grace and using it as an excuse for immorality. And more than that, they were denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, they were twisting Christian doctrine, particularly touching the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ to lend theological plausibility to their sin. And so Jude has called the church in verse 3 to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." We are engaged in spiritual combat. We're called to war to fight for holiness in our lives and faithfulness in our doctrine. And in verses 1 to 16, Jude really was sounding the alarm, summoning us to wake up to the real nature of the spiritual conflict. He showed us the errors and the dangers of the false teachers and the dreadful consequences of believing their message.

Then last time in 17 to 23 we saw that having given us the intelligence we need to understand the character and tactics of the enemy, Jude now gives us three tools to help us combat their mistakes. He told us in verses 17 to 19 to look back to the apostolic Word, to be people of Scripture. Then in 20 and 21, to look up, to cling to the triune God, and to use the means of grace - the Word of God and prayer. And then in verses 22 and 23, to look out to the backslidden and the morally compromised and the wayward and to show them mercy and to seek to save them and to restore them. Look back to the Word, look up to the triune God, and look out to those around you in need of mercy and help and deliverance. That was the strategy we saw Jude prescribing for waging a successful warfare. He's given us intelligence about the enemy and strategies for effective combat, and now tonight as we think about the last two verses of the letter Jude offers profound encouragement to us as we march into the fight.

Would you look at them with me? Verses 24 and 25. Jude is a wise pastor. He doesn't end his letter with a call to arms or a warning about the enemy or a list of instructions on how best to fight a good warfare. He knows that's no way to motivate the troops to face a terrible opponent in a deadly conflict. No, if we are going to march confidently into the spiritual battle we need to know about the secret weapon that Christians have that the enemy does not. We need to know that the war we fight is a war we cannot lose because the one who fights with us has already triumphed. Verses 1 to 23, you might say, have been basic training. They have been boot camp for combatants in the fight for Christian holiness and faithfulness and truth. But now we need more than good instruction on the enemy's methods and our own best strategies. Now we need deep encouragement that the final success of the war will rest not upon the strength of our own arm or the courage of our own hearts but elsewhere entirely. Jude

directs our gaze, doesn't he, away from ourselves and away from our enemy to fix it upon Almighty God Himself.

## **I. Praise**

You see that in the passage. We're going to be thinking about three themes in Jude's doxology tonight and the first of them I think makes this point very clearly. It is the theme of praise. You see that in the text? "Now to him," Jude begins, and completes the thought in verse 25, "Now to him...the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time now and forevermore. Amen." Jude's conclusion isn't a warning. It's not a bully sergeant's challenge to a soldier in training. It is a song of praise. It is a doxology.

### **Doxology and Benediction**

And just as an aside, do notice a doxology is not the same thing as a benediction. Benedictions are declarations of God's blessing upon His people. A benediction is not addressed to God. It is spoken by God's ministers to God's people on God's behalf. A doxology on the other hand is quite different. It is spoken by God's people, to God, giving Him all the glory and all the praise. Really any song that focuses on giving God the glory due His name is a kind of doxology and that's what this is. It is a doxology. It is a song of praise utterly captivated by the greatness and glory of God. "Now to him, the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time now and forever." He's bursting into song. We're being helped to face the conflict with joy. We're being taught to sing while the battle rages.

Look at it. God's uniqueness is adored. Do you see that? "The only God" - there is no other; transcendent, unique, independent above all creatures, the only God. His role as our Savior is celebrated - "The only God, our Savior." He has rescued us and forgiven us and made us His children. Our salvation belongs to Him and comes from Him and we offer all our worship, notice, "through Jesus Christ our Lord" by whom we have been reconciled to God. And look at the text - "glory and majesty" - that is the greatness of His character. And "dominion and authority" - the greatness of His rule are being affirmed and confessed and rejoiced in. And all of this belongs to God from eternity to eternity - "before all time, now and forever." Jude is reveling in God - His uniqueness, His otherness, His transcendence, His condescension and mercy and grace in saving us, His glory, His sovereignty, His splendor.

### **Be Thou My Vision**

Jude has been looking down into the muck and mire and filth of the false teachers' moral failure and he has been looking down into the brutal battle in the

trenches as God's people fight for purity and fidelity and righteousness. It's been a sobering letter. I'm sure you got a sense of that afresh as we read it through together - confronting us with hard realities as we seek to live the Christian life. But now Jude looks up from the fray and he sees the Lord Himself, the true and final victor. He looks away from wicked men and struggling believers to a holy and gracious and loving God. And for all the hardship of life on the front lines, Jude breaks into song. As the bullets fly, as temptation rages, as errors abound, as we contend for the faith and fight for the truth, as Satan assails us and unbelievers mock us, Jude calls us to lift up our eyes to the hills. From whence does our help come? Our safety comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Jude wants us to become the strangest army waging the strangest warfare. We meet the enemy singing. We face the devil singing. We confront temptation singing. Jude wants us to fight singing praises to the only God our Savior.

Fill your whole vision with Him. Study Him - His attributes, His uniqueness, His independence, His simplicity, His omnipotence, His wisdom, His loving-kindness. Study Him in the unity of His being and the fellowship of the three persons - the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Study Him perfect in holiness and explore how perfect holiness might nevertheless make you an object of unending eternal love. Study Him, Jude is saying. Look longest at Him and something will happen in your heart. Like an open bottle when you hold it at just the right angle and the wind blows over it and it sounds a clear note, the human heart when it sees with clarity the glory and greatness and grace of God sounds a note of praise. It responds, it answers to the God who has made us for Himself with adoration and doxology and worship. Praise.

## **II. Preservation**

### **The Good News of Gospel Change**

But then Jude goes further. Not only are we to praise God for who He is, we are to praise Him for what He does. And so the second great theme in this doxology has to do with God's mighty work in the lives of His people as we struggle to be faithful. It is the theme of preservation. First praise, now preservation. Verse 24 - "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling." Those are words that should make our hearts leap with praise and hope and encouragement. He is able to keep you from stumbling. Some of you have been caught in a pattern of sin for years. You wonder if there's any hope that you will ever get the better of it. Will you ever break this cycle and put this sin to death? God is able to keep you from stumbling! God is able to keep you from stumbling! You're not able. Of course you're not. You found that out over and over and over again, haven't you? But God is able. There is hope for you, grace for you, change for you believer in Jesus Christ. Stumbling into sin and error is not an inevitability to which any of us that trust in Christ need ever be resigned. We may know that the Gospel means

that sin can be forgiven. Praise God that it does. But that's not all the Gospel means. The Gospel is good news not just because we can be forgiven. It's good news because we will be changed having been forgiven. He is able to keep you from stumbling. You don't need to stumble. There is grace to help you walk in faithful obedience. The Jesus who forgives us changes us too. The cross that won our pardon won our holiness too.

Now sin will always dog our steps. We will sin again and again before the end. Only in heaven will the work be finally finished and our struggle with temptation and sin at last be won. And yet the truth is, if you are a believer sin no longer has the mastery in your life. Our God reigns in our hearts and holiness, imperfect but growing and real, will be yours because He is able to keep you from stumbling. That was how Jude began the letter, remember back in verse 1. These are like bookends on either side of Jude's letter ensuring that as we descend with Him into the battle of spiritual conflict with the temptation and assaults of the evil one, we remember that surrounding all of it, surrounding the Christian life is the keeping grace of God. Jude was writing, verse 1, "to those who are called, beloved in God the Father, kept for Jesus Christ." No matter the strategy or the danger the false teachers might pose, we are kept for Christ and kept from stumbling by the God who is able. As we contend for the truth, here is the safest ground of our assurance and the basis of faith that we will not be swept away by temptation and by error. It is not that we are wise or better or smarter or stronger. It is that God is able to keep us from stumbling. Here are, if you like, the everlasting arms that will bear us up. Here is the strong tower into which the righteous may run and be safe. Here is a rock of refuge and a mighty fortress. Our God is able. "I'm puny and small and foolish and prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love" - right? Isn't that your confession? But He is able. Praise God that He is able to keep your feet from stumbling.

### **III. Presentation**

Praise Him for who He is, praise Him for preserving grace - praise, preservation - and then thirdly, presentation. Verse 24 again. "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, be glory" and so on. He is able not just to keep you from stumbling, negatively; He is able to present you blameless, positively. A wooden translation of verse 24 brings out the contrast that Jude is trying to make. "To him who is able to keep you from falling and stand you blameless before the presence of his glory." The word, "present," can mean to stand something or someone upright. He will keep you from falling over and he will stand you up before his glory. He won't let you fall. He will make you stand and present you blameless. Do you have a conscience that stings with guilt? You need to know first that Jesus Christ bled and died and is able to wash your guilt away and forgive you now and forever. And if you have not already done so, tonight, now, you need to run to Jesus Christ and have Him make you

clean.

## **The Beauty of Blamelessness**

But Jude is telling us even more than that. He is telling us that one day if we are trusting in Jesus a stinging conscience will be an experience of the past, never again to feel shame, never again know the bite of guilt. If you repent and trust in Jesus Christ, one day when you stand before the presence of His glory you will do so blameless, blameless. That is a stunning statement, isn't it, if you think about that language - "the presence of His glory." God's glory. You remember the seraphim back in Isaiah chapter 6? These angelic figures who blaze with a glory of their own. They have to hide their faces before the glory of the uncreated God. Or remember Moses praying, "Lord, who me Your glory." God says, "No one can see My face and live." The glory of God is for creatures like us beyond comprehension and calculation. We just don't have the bandwidth for it. We don't have space on our hard drives for it. We have no categories for it. It is the radiance and the brilliance of His character and His perfections shining out toward all that He has made, the display of the God-ness of God. But one day while the seraphs hide their faces and all creation reverberates with wonder at the effulgence of His glory, one day you, believer in Jesus, little you, will stand before that glory unashamed and blameless. You'll be measured against the purity of His glory and you will not be shut out. You will not be excluded. You will be welcomed in before the presence of His glory blameless. What a day that will be. However will you get there? He is able to keep your feet from stumbling so that you will travel along the steep road of the Christian life all the way to the finish line, able to keep you so that you will enter into that glory at last. He's able so to work in you that however slight you might feel your progress in holiness now, however pernicious and engrained your sin may be now, when it comes time at last to stand before the presence of His glory, if you do so clinging to Christ, even you will be found blameless in His sight.

We've had a string of tragedy and death over the last, really over the last couple of years here. It's been a barrage of beloved church members taken from us in tragic circumstances. Barb Currie and Martha Wilson and Oza Chennault are just the last in a series of heartbreaking losses, beloved saints gone to their reward. But this is what has happened to them, do you see? This is what's happened to them. It's as though Jude is picturing God the Father turning to Christ. Jesus is the one in whom the knowledge of the glory of God shines, in whom the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth resides. Jesus is the embodiment of the Father's glory. He is the presence of His glory. The Father will turn to Jesus with Barb Currie and Denny Terry and Martha Wilson and Oza Chennault and all those whom we have lost, whom we love and who love Jesus. One day He's going to turn to the Son with you in tow and He's going to say, "Look here. Look what Your blood bought and paid for. Look at the work, finished now at last. Look what My hands have done, what My Spirit has wrought. Look what Your love, Jesus, look what Your love has procured. I present My child to

you, blameless at last.” What a day that will be.

You see now why Jude sings, don't you? How could you not? He sings because he looks up from the fight to the God who reigns and he sees His power and all the might of omnipotence marshaled in service of your preservation and the final presentation of your life before the presence of His glory, blameless at last. And he can't help it. He sings praise. O how we need to lift up our eyes from our hard fought spiritual battle with sin and temptation. How we need to raise our heads, so often cast down by our own persistent failures, and look here to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom belongs glory and majesty, dominion, and authority forever and ever, and to see Him turn all His power to keep you and preserve you and secure you no matter what, to look ahead, look ahead to the great day fast approaching when He will bring you home and the work will be done and you will look like a perfect reflection of the character of Jesus Christ - blameless in the presence of His glory, home. Look there, dear believer in Jesus, and you will find strength and encouragement when the battle gets hot, to fight on. And more than that actually - to sing praise as you march with new energy and zeal and wage a good warfare. Praise and preservation and presentation. May the Lord indeed receive all the glory and all the honor. Let's pray together.

O how we long for that day, gracious God, when our wearisome toil and our day by day, hour by hour fight with sin and the flesh and the devil will be done and we will stand in the presence of Your glory with all whom we love who have gone before, blameless. As we look and long for the day and as we cry, “Come, Lord Jesus,” would You strengthen our hearts and ignite within them joy in the knowledge that though we are weak, He is able. Teach us to rest there and labor on. For we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

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