

Jude

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[0:00] When I think of this book of the Bible, my mind immediately goes to the last two verses here. To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with joy.

To the only God, our Savior, be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ, our Lord, before all ages and now forevermore. Amen.

That'll do, isn't it? That's what we're about, isn't it? It's the verses of the Bible I've used most often myself whenever I've had the opportunity to preach as my benediction, so to speak.

And we are going to end with that in a few minutes. But let's start, first of all, with the first two verses of the book. So if your Bibles are open.

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

[1:14] This is a deeply relevant book for us. It speaks about how God keeps and protects and cares for his people, you guys and me, even when we face and live among heresy.

And it exhorts us to earnestly contend for our faith, especially in the face of false teaching in a culture when many have lost their bearings.

We're no longer sure sometimes of what is right. And it invites us to learn from history and who to give glory to.

Some of us may be here because we have seen the drift away from biblical truth. A watering down of the gospel in our culture, in our society, and in our churches that we were brought up in.

So let me explain what I plan to do this morning to cover the book. First of all, who the book is addressed to and a greeting in it.

[2:22] Secondly, the state of the culture that is described here and what to do about it. Thirdly, the call to persevere. Build yourself up in your most holy faith.

And finally, a glory hallelujah, these last verses. So, who the book is addressed to and a greeting. It's said the author may well be the younger brother of Jesus. Now, that makes our ears prick up, doesn't it? We have four gospels written by his disciples.

But here's a book written by a wee brother, Jesus' half-brother. My oldest brother died in 2014. Roderick was a lively Christian.

Gracious and patient with a sometimes argumentative wee brother. Sometimes wee brothers are like that, aren't we? We think we know it all compared to these old folks.

[3:21] But I can tell you a lot of stories about Roderick. And I also knew his heart. And Jude likely knew something of Jesus' heart. And importantly, Jude is on the same mission as Jesus.

So he wrote the book. And of course, the book is important not because he was Jesus' half-brother. But because it's inspired by the Holy Spirit. Like the other 65 books in the Bible.

And Jude was speaking to the church. And this wee brother is speaking to this church. And the Lord, through his spirit, is speaking to the church.

And what's he saying? Well, it's to those who have been called. It's a special word.

It expresses the close relationship we have with God. And God's desire to call us from darkness to light.

[4:25] To save us. We can probably all remember our mothers calling us in from the garden for our tea. Lots of places where there is calling.

But here it refers to the holy and effectual call of the Lord. We get brought into a covenant of love by the effectual work of this call.

To those who have been called. Called. And when you come to church. And in many circumstances. You are being called.

I've spoken in the evening services about the shorter catechism that I was brought up with. There weren't too many people in the evening services that had done the shorter catechism. How many of you in the morning service have done the shorter catechism? One, two, three. There's about eight, six or eight of us. Question number 31.

[5:29] What is effectual calling? Effectual calling is the work of God's Holy Spirit. Whereby convincing us of our sin and misery.

Enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ. Renewing our wills. He does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. This is the call that brought you into that relationship with the Lord, which is the essence of your being.

If you were called. Because it possesses you, doesn't it? If you had this call, this is all it's about. I just want to do your stuff, Lord.

Isaiah 42, 6. I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness. I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.

So this book is for those who are called. And it's a book for those who are loved in God the Father. We love him because he first loved us.

[6:31] God so loved the world, he gave his only son that whosoever believes doesn't perish but have everlasting life. A love that required our Savior to die for us. It's this love that is the root of the call.

Do you want to be loved? By God? Have you asked him? Have you asked him? Yep.

Are there any of you here who haven't asked him? Or are we 100% Christians? Do you want to be loved? In a lonely world, do you want to be loved?

Remember John 17, 11 and 12. I will remain in the world no longer. But they're still in the world. I'm coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name. And the name you give me so they may be one.

That is real love when we're one. That's what you are with your husband and wife. That they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.

[7:42] It's a book for those who are kept for Christ Jesus, for Jesus Christ. Kept because the eternal Trinitarian God is at work.

Binding and covenanting us into the family of God. That they may be one as we are one. Kept. Do you like to be kept? Children like to be safe in a family.

We're kept by God. He's the one who's protected us. Taken care of us. And now the greeting to the called, loved and kept ones.

Hear the message that Jude brings to this people he is writing to in the Holy Spirit. And it brings to us as a church today. And listen to this folks and let it soak into you.

Take a bath full of this. Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

[8:48] Isn't that glorious? Do we have a good gospel? Is it worth coming to church? Is it worth getting to know Jesus? If you can have mercy, peace and love poured out for you.

Not the order of the words. It's the order in which we have each of us experienced God's blessing on us. First, we need God's mercy. Which leads to peace with God and in turn leads to a deeper love for God.

Apparently in Jewish greetings, the word translated mercy, hesed. And peace with God's grace. Denoted God's steadfast covenant love. His kindness and faithfulness to his people.

Peace was another covenant word. Shalom. The blessed state of those who received this covenant love. Hesed and shalom.

Mercy and peace to you. Isaiah 54.10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.

[10:01] Nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you. Isn't it great? That keeps us going, isn't it? And love be yours in abundance.

Glorious. What an opening to the book. Dwell on that. Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. Now let's go on to the second.

So that's the backdrop. Is everybody here got that stuff? Is there anyone here who doesn't understand this?

Because you can ask for it. It's available to us. We're invited. The call is actually around us. This eternal effectual call.

God is at work calling. But let's go on to consider the society in which we live. It kind of sounds like Sterling or Scotland or the UK or the West.

[11:06] And what to do in the light of it. Verse 3. Dear friends, though I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

He was keen to write about the salvation we share, but I feel compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith. That was once for all entrusted to all the saints.

Contend. Apologetics. There's an apologetics thing on on Thursday night or an online thing on Saturday. Contend.

Why? Because there are dodgy folks around. There's godlessness around. Who turn grace into immorality. Verse 4.

For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They're ungodly people. They pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality.

[12:07] Deny Jesus our only sovereign and Lord. Lord. And verse 5 to 7. It's gone on for millennia. My people were delivered out of Egypt. Angels let me down and see what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Remember the men asking Lot to send out the male visitors so they could have sex with them. And Lot offers his own daughters. It was an awful place.

Three judgments in verses 5 to 7. I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt but later destroyed those who didn't believe.

Judgment. And then the angels who didn't keep their positions of authority abandoned their proper dwelling. He kept in darkness. Judgment. And then Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns and the punishment of eternal fire.

The brimstone. Judgment. Judgment. And then in verses 8 to 11. These dreamers as he calls them. The folks that pollute their own bodies. Crittle that size celestial beings.

[13:16] Michael the archangel. They speak against what they don't understand. And some things they know intuitively. Are the very things they destroy. That destroy them. Verse 8.

In the very same way on the strength of their dreams. These ungodly people pollute their own bodies. Verse 10. These people slander whatever they don't understand.

And the very things they do understand by instinct as irrational animals do will destroy them. It's not reality. They don't understand the gospel and they criticize the gospel.

They criticize God and they don't believe that God exists. They get all foaming in the mouth about God. And because there is no God. Because we're just a bunch of atoms.

But you don't believe. Why are you annoyed with them then? Because he does exist of course. And you're in trouble. Confusion reigns. They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

[14:24] They follow the bad actors of the Old Testament. Of Cain the murderer. Balaam a non-Israelite prophet hired to curse Israel. And Revelation 2.14 tells us about the church in Pargamon.

Had the same teaching as Balaam. Enticed the Israelites to sin by eating food offered to idols. And committing sexual immorality. And Korah who rebelled against Moses and Aaron.

And the earth swallowed them up. And then verse 12 and 13. These people are blemishes at your love feasts. Eating with you without the slightest qualm.

Shepherds who feed only themselves. Their clouds without rain. Blown along by the wind. Autumn trees without food and uprooted. Twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea.

Foaming up their shame. Wandering stars for whom black as darkness has been reserved for men. Forever. Keep away from them. Shepherds who only feed themselves.

[15:26] Blemishes at your love feasts. And this was all prophesied. Enoch said it would happen. Both the kind of folk that are around you Israel.

Verse 16. These people are grumblers and fault finders. They follow their own evil desires. They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

It's the stuff that are around us, isn't it? You'll get that in student life. You'll get that in business life. It's all around us, isn't it? And what will happen to them?

See, the Lord is coming to end. Verse 15. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them. See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone.

And to convict all of them of the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness. And of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against them.

[16 : 32] Yes, people of God. We and they live in challenging times. We need to be rooted in the Bible and the ways of God. We've heard in these verses 4 to 16 the mess of the society and that judgment is coming.

But remember, for us who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ, mercy, peace and love is ours in abundance.

And Paul says, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith. That was once for all entrusted to God's people.

So thirdly, the call to persevere. Verse 17, 18 and 19. Build yourself up in your most holy faith.

But dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. So we've had the Old Testament and all the stuff that's going on there.

[17 : 42] But now Judas saying, The apostles in the last 50 or 100 years foretold, they said to you, In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.

These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and don't have the spirit. This can be reality for many of us too, our times.

But you, dear friends, verse 20, By building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Now I was preparing this, first of all, on the second weekend after New Year. And I hadn't done any New Year resolutions.

I don't usually bother doing New Year resolutions. I'm not sufficiently disciplined to follow them, even if I did. And I maybe tried it once when I was younger, but no longer.

[18 : 56] But here's six. Life resolutions. One. Build yourself up in your most holy faith.

For me, that means come to church. For me, that means come to church more than once a Sunday.

All of you who chill out on Sunday night and don't bother about going to church.

I like to go to church twice. Maybe you're more holy than me and can do with once. And probably I'm less holy than you and I need to go twice.

But I like to be with the people of God to get fed. The church is God's building. It's people.

It's built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. With a belief in Christ that is life-changing. A call to us all as the church to work together and live together.

[19 : 59] Luther said, Faith is the foundation on which one should build. But to build up means to increase from day to day in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.

This is done through the Holy Spirit. First resolution. Build yourself up in your most holy faith. Do some practical things.

And that. Read the Bible regularly. Pray regularly. Go to church regularly. Be committed to this.

Don't just drift. Secondly, pray in the Holy Spirit.

Last time I spoke at Cornerstone was in the evening service. And it was in Romans 8. And actually I brought the sermon notes here. I probably do have the time to go through them. Well, do you want a second sermon?

But in the middle of Romans 8, there's this bit about how do you pray in the Spirit? And I'm sure all of us have prayed and sometimes we don't get the answers to prayer.

[21 : 07] And we prayed and we don't get the answer to prayer. And we prayed and we don't. I'm praying with groanings that cannot be uttered. Our prayers being aligned to the Holy Spirit and the eternal will of God.

In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Do you ever think the Spirit intercedes with God's people?

Christianity isn't some interesting, technical, historical way of life.

A code. It's humankind created in his image intertwined into eternal purposes.

[22 : 20] Subject to what God is doing. where he brings us in to the covenant to be his children.

So we're united with him. Keep yourselves the third resolution in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

He's asking for us for our love in response to all that he has done for us. Keep yourselves in God's love.

I recall a story of Mr. Kellogg I think of Cornflake's frame. This story may not be true but I remember some family members telling me it and I have said it to Angela and I don't know that it went down too well but I'll tell you it anyway.

I think it was this that he had been married for a while and his wife was asking him do you love me? Do you love me? Have you had that chap's match over the last weekend?

[23 : 28] Your wife's saying do you love me? Valentine's thing you know when we haven't been quick enough to do it boys. Or maybe you're all perfect with that too.

He turned to his wife and said darling I love you. I have always loved you. And let that be an end to it. It's not the best move gentlemen.

Especially this weekend. Maybe you should go to the marriage course if you think it is. But keep yourself in God's love. Remind yourself of his love and verbalize may I suggest if I didn't tell Angela other than once a year I love you I don't think she'd be too impressed.

Isn't that part of marriage? I love you. When did you last say to God oh I love you. Oh I was going through some of those notes yesterday I'm always afraid I'll end up getting emotional and Angela was shopping but I was loving her.

I was loving her. It was Valentine's Day. I was doing my best and I was reading some of these notes and when she came out I was in tears because he's done this for us folks.

[24 : 59] and as part of developing your love have you said to him I love you Jesus? Is that part of your praying or if you're communicating?

I love you. You love me and I love you. How thankful we are. Tell him I love you. Holy Spirit I love you. Father I love you.

and do that as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

While we wait here while we fit and well and then as we ease into our old age and awaiting heaven and then in great weakness always saying Father I love you.

I long to be with you. to see you Jesus come take me Holy Spirit. Do any of you think about what it's going to be like when you die at the end?

[26 : 09] I sometimes do. Do you wonder if you've gone through an operation or something serious you know what do we do?

Come Lord Jesus come take me Holy Spirit what a what a comfort for us. Fourth resolution way of life be merciful to those who doubt sometimes believers have fears be merciful to them my father had doubts he was a believer but he was fearful he lacked assurance be kind Christian Kenneth I think when I look back at my life I'm saying to myself Kenneth be nice sometimes when you're in the kind of roles I'm in you just get straight to the heart of it go and do it that way but be nice be kind Alistair Finley's smiling at me because he's a CEO be kind to those who had doubt not harsh but be encouragers the fifth resolution snatch others from the fire and save them sometimes believers are foolish snatch them pull them back sometimes the friends that we're with are not believers at all and they're in danger of the fire pull them back it's a great reason for apologetics it's a great reason for evangelists to understand and be able to answer the questions of the world and snatch them have you got somebody who's in your community or area or in your work or in your student life who are going to the fire snatch others from the fire and save them in the sixth resolution to others show mercy mixed with fear hating even the clothing stained with corrupting flesh referring to witnessing to these people that have got into the mess of the middle section of the chapter so six resolutions and finally the last section a glory hallelujah my favorite verses where's the choir

Angela couldn't you sing this can you not make this into Scott can you make this into a song I was actually looking up and I couldn't find a song to sing to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our Savior be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever more amen as I said at the start of this I love these verses to keep you from stumbling my goodness any of you here have ever stumbled in the Christian way I've stumbled and to keep you from stumbling to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy he's going to do that for me isn't that wonderful and for you to the only

God our Savior be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever more amen yes it's for you Lord the only God our Savior all this it's for you to the Lamb upon the throne be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before

all ages now and forever more amen have you known that elation that lifting up of your heart and soul as the temporal Kenneth joins with the eternal Trinitarian Father Son and Holy Ghost and we sing and we sing and we sing to him who is able to keep you from stumbling have you got this for yourself and if you have have you told your friends about it and are you working out how you're going to get folded up and disappear all this clothes even

Angela's shopping this is what lasts to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy it's freely offered!

[32 : 10] as Callum leads us in prayer shortly come and pray with us as we pray and all the people of God said to the only God our Savior be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever more Amen Lord we thank you for the opportunity to pray to trust to claim these promises we pray for open ears to hear your call we know how sometimes we have tried to resist your call but hallelujah that your call is all powerful so Lord come and call us from darkness to light call us to grace and to mercy call us to repentance call us to peace that passes all understanding in

Jesus name Amen and