

Making A difference!

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[0 : 00] This morning it's fallen upon me to read from the book of Jude. And Jude, if you're reading from the church Bibles, the blue Bibles, it's the very last chapter before the book of Revelation.

So from the book of Jude, Jude was a brother of James and a half-brother of Jesus. And Jude wrote this Bible, this story. Oh, Lord help me. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ, mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Next chapter, the sin and doom of godless men. Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all trusted to the saints.

[1 : 14] For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in amongst you. They are godless men who changed the grace of our God into a license of immorality and deny Jesus Christ, our only sovereign Lord.

Though they already know all of this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home, these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day.

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns have themselves, gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.

They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal life. In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

[2 : 35] But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand. And what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals, these are the very things that destroy them.

War to them. They have taken the way of Cain. They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error.

They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm.

Shepherds who feed only themselves, they are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind, autumn trees without fruit, uprooted once dead, twice dead, sorry.

They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame, wandering stars for whom blackest darkness has been reserved for them forever.

[3 : 49] Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men. See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone and to convict all ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way.

And of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These men are grumblers and fall finders. They follow their own evil desires.

They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. Next chapter. A call to persevere. But dear friends, remember that the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

They said to you, in the last days, there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.

These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the spirit.

But you, dear friends, build upon yourselves up in the most holy high faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life.

[5 : 10] Be merciful to those who doubt. snatch others from the fire and save them. To others show mercy. Mixed with fear hating, mixed with fear hating, even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

I didn't quite understand that. So we come to doxology. Well, doxology is a word that we know is in the Bible.

But I didn't understand what doxology was. And forgive me, but I had to look it up. I had to Google it and find out what it says. And it says, it's praise and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the doxology in this book of Jude goes like this. To him who is able to keep you from falling 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 forevermore.

Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for your help. Amen. Amen. Well, good morning, everyone.

[7 : 08] Okay, so probably by now, you've had a knock at the door and you've been asked for a vote.

And the promise that you've probably been given is that it'll make a difference if you vote for me. But when we come to the letter of Jude, he says in verse 20, but ye, and what he is saying is this, that it is ourselves, both you and I, that make the difference in the day we are living in.

But before we get to his message, he has a warning for us. He has a big sign, beware. Beware. Beware of what can creep into the church.

Contend for the truth that has been once delivered to the saints. And I think his message is very relevant for our day.

But I came across a survey of books of the Bible and I found that the book of Jude is the most neglected book of the New Testament.

[8 : 50] Well, one of the most. It comes somewhere behind 2 John and 3 John as the least read. And I think it is number five as the least popular book in the whole Bible.

And I think the book of Jude is unpopular because of its blunt, hard-hitting message of apostasy and judgment. And you know, some of the quotes that he used are from outside of the Old Testament.

They're from Jewish tradition. But the Holy Spirit, like we haven't a problem with that when we look at it this way. The Holy Spirit inspired you to include these quotes.

And it's only the quotes that he included are inspired. We don't have to take it that the whole source that he quotes from is inspired. But as Helen already read, and I thank you, Helen, for your reading, who was Jude, the Lord's half-brother?

The Lord Jesus, he had half-brothers and sisters. We get the names of the brothers in Matthew 13, 55. James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.

[10 : 02] Jude is short for for Judas. And all of his brothers, they did not believe on Jesus as the Messiah. John 7, verse 5.

And you know, that was also foretold way back in the Messianic Psalm of Psalm 69, verse 8, tells us that his brothers would not believe in him.

So all through his earthly life, his brothers didn't believe in him. They didn't believe that he was the Messiah. But something happened because we find his brothers and it's after the resurrection.

So that's how we find out what happened. It was following the resurrection, his brothers believed in him. We find his brothers in the book of Acts with the church.

We find in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 7, James, who was one of the leaders in the church, that James met with the Lord Jesus.

[11 : 07] It changed everything for James. It changed everything for Jude. But we find that both James and his epistle, as well as Jude, they never mentioned the fact that they are the brothers of the Lord Jesus.

Instead, they put themselves as the servants of the Lord Jesus. And you know, that's in direct contrast to what the false teachers that Jude was talking about were doing.

The false teachers were exalting themselves. But Jude kept away from that. He put himself down as just a servant of Jesus. He didn't use the fact that he was the natural half-brother of Jesus to exalt himself.

No, he was the servant of Jesus. And what a difference it made to those brothers when they believed.

They used to have a very high opinion of themselves and just an ordinary opinion of Jesus. But now, they had a very high opinion of the Lord Jesus and they had a very low opinion of themselves. [12:21] They were just his servants. And you know, there's a lesson there for you and for me and it's this. He must increase, we must decrease. So, when we get to Jude in verse 1, Jude tells us three things.

And I find it kind of fascinating in the book of Jude, he's working in trees. Everything seemed to come at us in trees. Not trees that grow, but the number three.

Okay, so, so he tells us three things that make a difference in the life of every believer. And those three things in verse 1 are, God called you and God has sanctified you and God is keeping you in Christ Jesus.

In the King James, it says, you're preserved in Christ Jesus. Jesus. And then in verse 2, we go on to three blessings that flow from that. Mercy, peace, and love that every believer has and that Jude is praying that it will be increased in the life of the believers.

And when Jude began to write his epistle and he sat down to write, he was so excited. I mean, can you imagine? He had traveled his life with Jesus in a family circle.

[13:43] He had seen him. He had seen everything about him. You know, the quotes from the Bible, in him was no sin. You know, he was tested in all points but yet he was without sin.

And all this. And he could place that he could testify that all that was true. And he had seen the Lord risen from the dead. And he was absolutely convinced that he wanted to write about this common salvation we share.

It was kind of exciting stuff but then he saw there's something else happening in the church that needs to be addressed. Not a subject people want to hear but I have to go there.

I have to go there. There's a need because to contend for the faith. We have to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints, he said.

And you'll notice, he said, it was once delivered. The body of truth and the doctrines of the Bible was delivered once. And these false teachers were doing a continual thing.

[14:46] They were coming up with new teaching and new stuff and he puts a stop to that when he says it was once delivered to the saints. And one of the great doctrines of the Bible is God's grace.

And it's fixed in our Bible from cover to cover and all false teaching falls down on grace. Christ's riches, God's riches at Christ's expense.

And one thing that stands out about these false teachers is that they didn't get grace. The verse tells us they were turning grace into something that it was not.

To them, grace was permission to sin. That grace was permission to sin.

But grace is not permission to sin. Grace is a solution to sin. Grace where it is present will see sin diminish.

[15:52] We will not see sin grow and increase where grace is. And they were saying we can continue to sin live after the flesh and grace will still abound.

But the apostle Paul makes it clear that God forbid that we should think that way. He said how can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?

And so these apostles they were saying that while they were paying lip service to Jesus in the church but in truth they were unbelievers they never understood the grace of God they were turning it into an excuse to get involved in the flesh and they were denying the deity of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 4 When a true believer sins he or she can never be happy. You know we may backslide but an apostate is completely different from a backsliding Christian.

An apostate is someone who who just never believed to start off with. A backslider is someone who falls and slips up but who has a love for the Lord.

[17:14] An example of a backslider is Peter and an example of an apostate is Judas Iscariot. The mark of an apostate is they do not have the spirit and if we don't have the spirit Romans tells us we are not his and in verse 19 Jude says that these do not have the spirit they are clouds without water and one thing about trusting in Jesus there will be streams and springs of living water within a believer.

These have no water. They have clouds they have no water. So so Jude gives us now three examples of apostates from the Old Testament and the first example he gives us is this that God's people who came out of Egypt some of them remained unbelievers.

The angels that sinned they were disobedient to God's authority. These fallen angels they went beyond the boundary that God had set for them and I think that this is referring back to the story of Genesis 6 where the sons of God had relationship with the daughters of men and then he connects that story with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah which speaks of homosexuality but he also ties it in with strange flesh and strange going on there and then he goes on to give three Old Testament examples again the way of Cain which is the way of the world that he built a corrupt city and he was a murderer then the way of Balaam who was willing to curse against God disobedience to God went his own way and was interested in a bribe and then there was the rebellion of Korah again rebellion against God's authority which speaks of the devil so we have there the pleasures of the world the lust of the flesh and rebellion against God and today in the media it's playing a big role promoting things that God has condemned it's putting down

God's authority today there are many things creeping in in the name of tolerance and the Bible has the media has its darling subjects which are contrary to what the Bible says and James warns us that to be friends with the world is to be an enemy with God now in verse so Jude tells us to contend for the faith how do we do that well in verse 20 Jude turns his attention away from the apostates and onto the believers and his words there in verse 20 start off with but ye in other words ye have a role to play in this and you know he talks about common salvation and when he talks about but ye

I was just thinking of that that individually we've been saved collectively we're here together individually you can make a difference collectively you can make a greater difference because you are the body of Christ so we have a role to play with this and in verse 21 he tells us that role keep yourself in the love of God and the role is to stay close to the Lord in fellowship with him and he gives us three words I'm taking from the King James three words that can make a difference in a time like this three words and all three words end with the have the same ending they end with I in G the three words that I want you to take away today to make a difference is this building praying and looking building yourself up in your most holy faith verse 20 building yourself up in your most holy faith well what are you building on you're building on the foundation of the

[21 : 59] Lord Jesus Christ you're building what's going to create that building the word of God your building is the word of God you're contending with the sword of the spirit the word of God you're building you need to get time and study and put time away take time away from the world and put time into the word of God you are building that is one of the ways to keep yourself in the love of God then the second one is this you're praying but it isn't like I must pray at one o'clock and then I must pray at eight o'clock you're praying in the Holy Spirit you're praying because you're praying to the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit is living in you and that prayer is alive as a prayer to God that is really coming from your heart your spirit praying with God's spirit leading that prayer you're you're you're looking for you're looking for the hope verse 21 looking for the mercy of the

Lord Jesus unto eternal life you're looking for that day that day that's coming you're fixing your eyes on things above not what's on the news not what's on the world is telling you you're fixing your eyes you're praying you're building you're praying and you're looking and you're looking to the day when all this world will fade away it will all go and so will each one of us but we're going to a place we have a hope a sure hope of where we're going and we're looking for that but as I thought of this I'm just thinking right when we're building we're looking what are we're looking for we're building and we're looking for God to come into the pages of scripture when he does because this is the inspired world so we're not just rushing through the Bible and maybe getting nothing out of it when we come to it God is going to give us something in it we're coming looking to God and when we're praying in the

Holy Spirit we're looking to God and we're looking and looking at the eternity we're looking to God in everything so keep yourself in the love of God and you're building you're praying and you're looking okay so I'm going to just share a story here which I'm trying to get across my point so I hope we'll help get across something for you to take away today to make a difference and I think it's this I was in a time when I was in the fire brigade I have many stories from the fire brigade you probably fell up a year ago but anyway I was in the fire brigade and we were called to a fire and was out in Shurken Island and we couldn't take the fire engine out to Shurken Island because we went out on the life ball actually we took a pump with us so we only had shovels to blow the fire and the hill was blazing when we got there and it was up near the pub on

Shurken Island somewhere near there but there was a rugby team and the rugby team were in the pub and they saw the fire and they came out to help and the locals were trying to beat out the fire so the rugby team big strong fellas big muscles they had shorts they had runners and they had t-shirts and they grabbed the shovels off the locals and they ran up and they were beating out the fire and if anyone was going to pull out the fire it looked like these big rugby players were going to do it but the flames were getting the better of them and they were being pushed back and we arrived to this site to the scene we were walking up and we see the lads above and they came back down and they said no no there's no hope you're not going to put that out with shovels and so we went up we had around the same number of people because they had only about six shovels and we had six fellas with shovels that's all that turned up that day there were six of us and we went up and we beat the fire and put it out and they were like no we were scrawny compared to them but what was the difference what was the difference the difference was that we had the provision that the fire service gave us we had the provision of the gear that when we went into the fire and the heat started getting us we put it on our head and the helmet protected the big heavy coat which seemed to be in the seemed to be in our great idea on a hot day that protected the heat getting into our body where they stripped off and the flames got to their flesh and pushed them backwards we were able to get in on top of the flames and put out the fire and it was a great feeling just that we put it out and they couldn't but I think to the picture to us of this the world attracts it will be very attractive and the church sometimes get caught up and you don't see things coming in because they see that you know there's an attraction if we bring that into the church it might even promote it and if some false teachers come in and say yeah we should have that the church is going but you see the thing is keep yourself in the love of God building praying and looking to God when we do that we're depending on what God has given us the armor of salvation just like the fire gear to protect to be able to go into the fire and to be able to be effective and to make a difference in the fire we're not going to be effective the more we get like the world the less effective we'll be it might seem ordinarily speaking the other way around but we can be sure from the word of God that we have to be depending on God and looking to God and then at the very end he says now unto him the doxology now unto him again that's looking he turns his eyes to God and he says it's looking to him looking to God now unto him who is able to keep you from falling that's an amazing statement that he is able to keep you from falling didn't he just say that we're to keep ourselves now he's saying he is able to keep you from falling and when I thought about this I said how long could we keep ourselves in the love of

[29 : 10] God I don't think very long but he is able to keep us from falling and you know something I think it's this way when we are keeping ourselves in the love of God when we are looking when we are building when we are praying and we are looking we begin to see that God is actually keeping us God is keeping us it is working in a way that we begin to see clearly that when we're looking to the scriptures we see God keeping us we have the responsibility to build to pray in the Holy Ghost and to look to God but God is working in through that God is working through that and you know the most wonderful thing of all then is that it says he's able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless

I think each one of us here that truly is a wonderful thing because we're full of faults we're people that are not perfect but just to imagine on that day that God is able to present us faultless because of the Lord Jesus Christ that is really an outstanding statement to take in and and to take away and to take away with you and looking but we're looking to him not to ourselves he's able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory in exceeding joy who has the joy is it you have the joy or the gods have the joy well there's there's joy in heaven over one sinner that repents now I actually missed the passage so I have to go back to it and it has to do with the fire on some have compassion you know

I miss out that section sorry that statement there is when you're he just says and on some have compassion what he's saying is there when you are building when you are praying when you are looking there'll be a time for you to have compassion there will be an opportunity and he says it says on that making a difference the King James is making a difference and some have compassion making a difference you'll get the opportunity there will be people in the church that are influenced by the world they'll be going after strange they'll be doing things that aren't right but they'll come under false teaching but you know if you are building if you are praying in the Holy Ghost and if you are looking to God you can have compassion on that person you can make a

difference in the life of that person because you're looking to God and God is working through his word and what you're reading and what this verse is saying to you today building praying looking and God is working and some have compassion making a difference and in others it's even going to be more difficult you're going to be pulling them from the fire hating even the garments spotted by flesh the rugby team won't do that you have to have the right gear on and you have the right gear on when you're building when you're praying and when you're looking to the Lord and we're looking to the Lord this morning and we're going to finish with this to the only wise God our saviour be glory and majesty dominion and power both now and forever amen