

# Gods Preserving

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us now turn to the letter of Jude. We looked at Jude last week, and if we could just look again this week.

Second last letter in the Bible. Last week we looked at verse 20 and 21. Today, if we could turn to verse 24.

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 forever. Amen.

Now, we, of course, are living in a time when the Christian church is under great threat. Threat from without and threat from within.

Now, of course, we're never surprised when the church is under threat from without, because the Christian church has always had many enemies who have wanted to destroy it and wanted to remove its witness and its testimony.

[ 1 : 24 ] But probably the greatest problem that the Christian church has faced down over the years are problems from within, where people have actually, people within the church are wanting to attack or undermine the truth.

And probably there's no greater attack that can be set upon the church than when we attack, actually, the Word of God, which is at the very foundation of what we are.

There are some people, and there are many within, and when we talk of the church, we mean the church at large, who try to undermine the truth of the Bible.

They will say that the Bible contains the Word of God, but they don't make out that all the Bible is the Word of God. And the moment any person goes down that road, it is, in a sense, it is suicidal teaching.

There's nothing that will undermine or destroy or shake. It's not that it will ultimately destroy, but it's going to cause so much damage, the Christian faith. And there are many who, with great minds and great leaders, who have, for many, many, many years, have been attacking the truth of Scripture, great truths, like, for instance, the virgin birth and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, fundamentals to the Christian faith.

[ 2 : 51 ] And that is the very thing that Jude has been talking about. And he's saying that these days were going to come. There's nothing new under the sun.

We find that history repeats itself over and over and over and over again. And so Jude is warning about these days where the church is going to come under attack from people within it and the damage that it causes.

And Jude, in his writing, goes on to deal with the very solemn warning of apostasy, where people turn away or fall away within the church.

And so we need to always be alive. We need to be aware. We need to be vigilant. And we need to be seeking to be watchful and strengthen the things that remain. And it was on this very theme of apostasy that last week we looked at our duties and our responsibilities regarding the Christian faith, and that was the importance of persevering.

Now, we looked last week at persevering, and we saw that the apostle in verses 20 and 21 highlighted the importance in persevering, and there were four things he set out for us.

[ 4 : 12 ] It was building, building yourselves up in the faith, praying, remember, in the Holy Ghost, keeping yourselves in the love of God, and looking or waiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, waiting, as it were, for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this week I want us to look at the great theme of preserving. Last week it was persevering.

It was persevering. Our responsibility, our duty, where we were to persevere. But the reason why people are able to persevere is because they are being preserved.

It is of God's preserving. We couldn't persevere of our own. And that is the solemn thing. And I'm sure that as Jude wrote this letter, he couldn't help but think of somebody who had a name very similar to himself, and that was Judas.

I mentioned Judas last week, but Judas was somebody who lived very, very closely with Jesus. For three years, Judas went everywhere with Jesus. For three years, Judas preached.

[ 5 : 27 ] Judas healed. Judas was a treasurer. In other words, he had a very prominent place amongst the disciples. And yet Judas, for all his privileges and for all his opportunities, for all his gifts and abilities, was somebody who was going to fall away, somebody who had never come to a living, personal faith in Jesus Christ.

And Judas had rivals on the throne of his heart, rivals that were going to push Jesus Christ off. And of course, Judas' great problem was his greed and his love for money.

Money became more important to him than adherence and following and love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And at the end, he sold Judas. He sold Jesus.

And I'm sure that as Jude wrote this, the likes of Judas would be in his mind. Judas, of course, he fell away, never to recover.

Peter, on the other hand, he also fell, but he repented of his fall. Now, Jude here shows us that this preserving of the Lord is all for a great and a wonderful purpose.

[ 6 : 52 ] And so, as we looked last week at the persevering, and this week we're looking at the preserving, Jude begins and says, Now unto him who is able to keep you from stumbling.

Now that is music to our ears. To him who is able to keep you from stumbling or to keep you from falling.

And that is speaking about falling in such a way that you won't recover. Talking about a fatal fall.

Doesn't mean that the Christian will never, ever, ever stumble in their Christian walk.

Just as it'd be very surprising, I doubt that there's anybody in here who has never physically fallen in life. We fall when we begin to learn to walk, and we continue to fall for different reasons as we go through life.

We stumble, we trip. There are lots of things. Sometimes people fall on ice. Sometimes people fall downstairs. Sometimes people fall off ladders. Sometimes people fall when they're running.

[ 8 : 01 ] There are loads of reasons why we fall. And I don't think there's anybody in here who's never fallen as they've journeyed through life. And similarly, at a spiritual level, I also believe that everybody at one, to one level or degree or another, that there have been slips and little stumbles and such like on the way through life.

And I believe that the Lord permits, this may sound strange, but I believe it, that the Lord permits us to stumble and to sometimes fall in order to prevent greater stumbles and greater falls.

I believe that. Peter, I think, is a classic example of that. The Lord could have prevented Peter from sinning in the way he did.

But he didn't. The Lord knew that Peter was going to deny, that he was going to swear and curse and tell everybody that Jesus Christ meant absolutely nothing to him.

In the presence of Christ, he was going to do that. The Lord knew that. He could have prevented it, but he didn't. And I believe one of the reasons why he didn't was that within Peter, while Peter was a good man and he loved the Lord Jesus Christ, he was zealous for Christ, yet there were traits and issues and characteristics and all kinds of problems within Peter's life that needed dealing with.

[ 9 : 42 ] And it's the same in your life and in my life. The Lord has to deal with so many of the issues, so many of the characteristics, so many of the quirks and traits that are within us.

And sometimes he will do that by allowing us to stumble and to fall in order to prevent greater stumbles and greater falls.

And Peter, although he continued to show some of these characteristics throughout his life, there's no doubt whatever, that there was a difference in the restored Peter to the Peter before his fall.

So the Lord will sometimes permit, but he will permit in order to prevent. And that is the way. But the Lord will often, he will often keep us from stumbling, and he does it in different ways.

The primary way he will do it will be through his word. And you know that there might be times when you're tempted, and you're tried, and you're bruised, and you're battered, and you feel that you're slipping and sliding away, and you're struggling with your Christian faith, and you open up the word,

and it's like a breath of fresh air.

[10:58] All of a sudden, as you've opened up the word in this particular morning, or this particular night, it seems to be that God is speaking to you so personally. And the very words that you read are an answer to the particular problem, the trial, the temptation you're going through, and you find a strengthening within it.

And you realize that this is God at work. And through that word, you are being strengthened in order to reach, to come over, or to be delivered from this particular temptation.

And again, God, through his spirit, he comforts us, he guides us, he directs us, and he will often, you will have this sense of God's spirit, just like that, can't even call it whispering, but giving this awareness awareness within your heart when something is right or something is wrong.

Have you felt that? You can't really describe it to anybody else. But there's this instinctive something that is saying, no, this isn't right.

And God's spirit will often work in that way. It's giving you that almost instinct of grace. And again, God will often deliver you through his providence, where God will close a particular door, so that in order for you to actually, to push on, you have to break down the barriers that God will sometimes erect to keep you in order to prevent you from stumbling.

[12:34] stumbling. But the Lord will also guard us and keep us from stumbling. And again, I think the context, as you read through the chapter, one of the things is he will keep us from stumbling at the truth.

Because, you know, again, we live in a day when there are so, so many different ideas being thrown about. So many people have so many different views in Scripture.

And there are times where unless we are grounded in the truth and taught of the Lord and by the Lord, as it were, it's very easy to be sidetracked.

Because there is almost like an explosion of different teachings and different truths. And there are people who will take the Bible and take verses out of context and they can build whatever you, you know this, you could actually, you could almost argue anything in life you wanted from the Bible by taking a verse or part of a verse out of context.

But that is never the way we're to work with Scripture. Scripture must shed light on Scripture. And we have to deal with Scripture in its context and bringing Scripture to shine light on Scripture.

[13:57] Scripture. But as I say, you could virtually argue anything you wanted by taking a little part of a phrase out of the Bible and say, well, it's in the Bible and there are people who do that.

And that is one of the things that the Lord does for His people. He keeps them. Keeps them from being led away by error. Keeps them from being led into sin where they are, where they don't stumble by the Word.

And it's a wonderful thing to be grounded in the truth where you're persuaded of the truth. Now, that doesn't mean that you understand it all.

I don't believe there's anybody in here today who understands everything that's in the Bible. I would go as far as to say I don't believe that there is any person who has stood in this pulpit who has understood everything that is in the Bible.

There are things within the Word of God that I believe are too high for us to understand. That doesn't change anything. We still believe it.

[15:02] We accept it as the truth and we try to understand it with the understanding that God has given to us. But there are places and things that we have to stand back from and we have to agree with what the Lord says where He says my thoughts are not your thoughts.

He said my thoughts are so much higher than your thoughts that they're higher than the earth is from the ground. So there are times we have to say that but whether we're able to understand it or not we still believe it we accept it and that's what God has done for us.

And we are kept now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling. Why? In order to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy.

Isn't that a wonderful thought? That one day that all believers will be presented without any defilement without any blemish without any fault without even the slightest stain of sin anywhere around them about them within them.

And that is what the Lord is going to do. And Jesus is going to take a special joy in presenting the church His bride in presenting each one before His Father.

[16:30] This is part of the joy that was set before Christ. This is part of why He endured or this is why He endured the cross. No bridegroom ever received their bride with the joy that Jesus Christ will receive His.

and let us remember that the purpose the great purpose of salvation is not just to deliver us from the lostness of hell great and all though that is.

The highest of all is to the glory of God where Jesus will bring His church and He will bring them to share in His glory the glory that He has won for them.

You remember before Jesus died part of the high priestly prayer was Father I desire that they also whom Thou has given me may be with me where I am.

And we will be as we were singing in Psalm 45 all glorious within. Isn't that an extraordinary thought?

[17:40] it tells us in that Psalm that the King shall greatly desire Thy beauty. You know sometimes you say to yourself how can that be?

But that's how it will be because we will be resplendent with all the purity and the majesty and the glory of Christ who as our mediator has transformed us into the glory and the beauty of who He is as mediator.

And it's an awesome thought that that's how the saint in glory will be absolutely resplendent in all the transcendent glory of who Christ is as mediator because we will share in that glory that He has won for us forever and ever and ever.

And it's little wonder then that there's another side to the coin. You know I often think of that at death and death is such a horrible thing such an ugly thing something we recoil from and we wish that it just wouldn't be but if we could see the other side of the coin if we could see the glory that the soul that has just departed the body was entering into and sharing into.

Not for one millisecond would that soul want to come back into this world because where they now are in the presence of the Lord is where they now want to be forever and ever and ever and ever and this this is what Jesus is offering to us today.

[19:29] this is what he is giving his people and if you're here today without the Lord Jesus Christ this is what he is offering this is the future because without Christ there is no future this is the future that is worth everything to the only God our Savior that's what it says to the only God our Savior see how personal it is our Savior my Savior your Savior that's who Jesus is he's our personal Savior it's not something abstract as we say as it says in the Bible who tasted death for everyone every man to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion authority glory everything about the Lord is glorious man's glory fades it's only for a little man's glory can be very glorious and we've seen that in many different ways but it's fading but God's glory is eternal glory in a sense is a totality of God everything about him is altogether glorious his majesty there are many kings in this world but he is the king of kings he is regal throughout all the generations kings come and kings go and there are times when you look at the glory and the majesty of monarchs and presidents in this world it's quite extraordinary but their days come and their days go their days of power fade away and we can see how the brightest and the most able can become we've seen great presidents and prime ministers and we've seen kings and queens who rolled with authority and power and we've seen them lose their mind become disabled become weak become frail and eventually die and that's the way it will be with all humanity but not so with the Lord his glory his majesty is forever his dominion now that word really means strength and might and it means complete control over everything and my dear friend that's what the

Lord exercises he has dominion over all and authority that is in a sense it is the right to use that might and control the Lord who has that dominion he has the authority to exercise that dominion in the way that he pleases he does remember when we're looking at Daniel and we're looking at Nebuchadnezzar and that that man made one of the greatest declarations about who God is that any person ever made remember what he said who does according to his will with the armies of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth and who can stay his hand it's not an awesome thought he does according to his will whatever he wills and purposes and that is why I said a wee while ago that there are many things in God's word and indeed in God's providence that you and I cannot understand there are times you have to step back and we say

I don't understand but you see God's will is always leading to his glory you cannot separate the one from the other and that is why while we live in a sinful world and where our understanding is so limited and so marred there are many things that we do not think are glorious and we do not think

are redound to the glory of God that do we don't think of death as being glorious we don't think of death surely as bringing glory to God and yet it does you remember when Lazarus died Jesus said that to Mary and Martha and he said this is for the glory of God the death of Lazarus was for the glory of God and so that's why we have to stand back and say Lord there's a lot of things I don't understand but he does as we say according to his will with the armies of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth and so we find that it is to this great saviour be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time now and forever and you know when you read that these two verses just as we read at the end of

Ephesians do you find yourself becoming smaller and smaller and smaller as you read it and as you consider it and see God becoming greater and more majestic and more glorious in your sight and that is part of the whole purpose because we are so taken up with ourselves we can't help it it's the way we are but one of the prayers we must be asking the Lord to answer is that we become more and more taken up with him that's really why we're here in this world and my dear friend if you're a believer that's why he has saved you it's for his glory it is for you to show his glory in this world it is for you that let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and so glorify your father which is in heaven that's what

Jesus said that's why this is all part of why he has saved you it's not ultimately about you and with the Lord's supper coming in view let's remember that that it's not just about me and about you it's about the Lord and the Lord has set this table for us for all his people to remember him in this special way to eat and to drink by faith remembering him until he comes again it's about him but sometimes we become so wrapped up in ourselves and I want you as you to consider and all of us the Lord's supper next week that we don't become too wrapped up in ourselves but that we see the big picture and above all we see the great

[ 26 : 26 ] Savior the great God of heaven and earth the one who has worked out this salvation the one who has saved his people and realize that although the table has been given to us that it is ultimately to his glory that we do all things so may this be in our thought and may we be exercised by these things regarding our duties before this God who has done it all for us let us pray oh Lord our God we pray to help us to understand more and more of thy word and to understand and to recognize the way in which thou art guiding us and leading us throughout life oh Lord we pray to prepare us for the sacrament of the Lord's supper and we ask that we might be kept from the snares and the warfare of the evil one because we know that whenever things are heightened with regard to the things of God that

Satan will do his utmost to try and prevent and to disturb and so we pray Lord for peace we pray for togetherness and unity we pray for protection and we pray for a great sense of thy love we ask that thy presence might be with us and we pray that thou will take us all home safely keep us and forgive us our sin in Jesus name we ask all Amen