

# Keep Yourself in the Love of God

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Amen. I appreciate that special. Amen. Good to see you again this evening.

Thank you for being in the Lord's house this evening. Turn to the book of Jude, Jude chapter number one, the only chapter in the book of Jude. Amen. The only chapter, but Jude chapter number one.

We're going to be looking at the book of Jude this evening. Let me say this, Trent, I don't remember that story Trent just told. He makes up a lot. What's that?

He makes up a lot. But I do remember this when Trent was there. Brother Gardner was out of the country and he said, take care of Trent. He's coming in. And so I took him to my kids' soccer practice and then we went to play basketball someplace.

And I was shooting three-pointers and this is what Trent said. He's not always said good things about me. This is what he said. He said, Mr. Staley, do you ever think there'd be a time where it would take so much energy to shoot a basketball?

[ 1 : 0 4 ] And I said, that's why I was upset at him. Amen. But I appreciate Trent and he's always been a blessing. And even if he did break the basketball, it's all right.

But I appreciate the opportunity to come back to Vision. It's always exciting. It's always an honor to come back. And I thank the Lord for the opportunity to come and preach to you this evening.

I want to say congratulations to Jonathan's son. That's very exciting. Amen. To have the opportunity to baptize your son. I don't think there's any greater experience for a preacher to baptize their children.

I'm so excited this Sunday I'm baptizing two of our van kids, Zach and Carson. And Zach and Carson, we just started moving the kids upstairs.

Usually we let the kids have junior church for as long as they wanted. But we said it's time for them to be in big church. And so Zach, he sits like he comes in church and he's unlike any other Baptist.

[ 2 : 0 0 ] Nobody's taught him yet. He sits right in the front row. And he doesn't, he doesn't, he's not very still. He's always moving around. He's kind of a distraction to everybody else. And so Zach was sitting there the other day.

And sometimes when a preacher asks a question, he doesn't really want you to respond. Amen. He's just asking you. He just wants you to think about something. And so the other day I was preaching Sunday morning and I asked this question.

And all of a sudden I seen Zach and Carson's hands go up. And I mean, it wasn't just like, it was like. And so I asked the question, yeah, I was just going to ignore them.

And then Zach just blurted out the answer. I wanted it. My question was this. I said, did you, do you know what the people were doing when God was giving Moses the law on the mountain?

And I wanted, I wanted the people to think about it. And all of a sudden Zach puts his hand up. And so I asked the question again so everybody would understand it. And then Zach just blurted out. He said they were disobeying all the laws before they even knew him.

[ 3 : 04 ] And I was like, that's good. Amen. That was exactly right. And so I'm looking forward to baptizing them on Sunday. And that'll be an exciting time. And so it's always good to see boys and girls come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Amen. And after those 20 questions that his dad asked him, he is truly saved. Amen. And so, but it's good to be here with you tonight. Let's look at the book of Jude chapter one, verse one, if you would.

And let's read down to verse number four to get started this evening. Jude verse number one. The Bible says, Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James to them that are sanctified by God, the father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.

For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 25 ] Here we have the introduction to the book of Jude. And Jude tells us in verse number three, he says this. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation.

That was Jude's desire. He wanted to write about the common salvation. He wanted to tell something that was on his heart about salvation. But the spirit of God got a hold of Jude's heart.

And Jude said this. He said, but it is neat. It was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.

And so Jude says, I want to write about salvation. I want to write about the common salvation. But the spirit of God stirred my heart and I need to write unto you. It's needful for me to write this unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith.

I'd like to say this to you tonight. It is time to fight. It is time to contend. It is time to do battle. When apostasy arises, when false teachers emerge, when the truth of God is attacked, it is time to fight for the faith.

[ 5 : 43 ] And that is what Jude is writing to these people. He is saying, hey, I want you, I want to exhort you to contend for the faith.

And how much more in the day that we live in is it for us to contend for the faith? Is it for us to stand for the faith?

To stand up for what we believe in? We are living in a day where there's all kinds of things happening. And Christians are going to be called upon to take a stand.

We are going to have to contend for the faith. We are going to have to do our part. Somebody said this, one commentary said, The book of Jude forms a vestibule or hallway leading into the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ.

It is God's way of leading us to the teaching of the last things we find in the Bible. And so we find that this book of Jude leads us into the book of Revelation.

[ 6 : 45 ] And we know what happens in Revelation. We know about the church being taken out. And we know about the tribulation time. And so Jude is right before the book of Revelation.

If you look at verse number 4, you see that, For there were certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude was writing about a time of apostasy. He was writing about a time where there were false teachers around, and they were everywhere. Can I say that we have false teachers today?

Amen. You can watch TV. You can listen to the radio. I mean, there's all kinds of things out there. But we always must go back to what does God's Word say?

We find in Jude, verses 5 through 16, we find that Jude describes these false teachers. He uses a little word, these, to describe them.

[ 7 : 51 ] Look, if you would, in verse number 8. He says, Likewise also these filthy dreamers, defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

He talks about these, and you can find that in verse number 10 again. But these speak evil of those things. And so he goes through the book, and he describes these false teachers.

He describes these apostates. But I want you to turn to verse number 17, if you would. Verse number 17. There's a turning point that takes place.

He had been describing these apostates, these false teachers. But look at verse number 17. He says, But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their ungodly lust. These be they who separate themselves sensual, having not the Spirit.

[ 8 : 55 ] But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

And if some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Notice verse 17. He says, But, that's always, I always love the word but, because generally it is a word of contrast. He had been talking about these false teachers. And now he says, But, ye are different.

You that are saved are different. There is a contrast between the world and the Christian. There is a contrast between those that don't know Jesus Christ, and those that do know Jesus Christ.

We live in a day when it's getting, it's just becoming, everybody's coming together. You can't tell who's a Christian and who's not a Christian. A lot of times Christians do the very same things that non-Christians do.

[ 10 : 01 ] Hey, but there should be something different in our life. Amen? We have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We know Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. Hey, there should be something different about a child of God.

There should be something different in our life. And so he says in verse 17, He says, But, beloved, remember ye. Remember ye. He's talking specifically to them now.

He says, Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. That word, beloved, means loved of God.

And we find that Jude uses that word three times. If you look at verse number three, he said, Beloved, when I gave all diligence for his purpose for writing. Here in verse 17, and then also in verse number 20.

The truth is, this word, remember, is the first command he gives. And he says, I want you to remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles and our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 11 : 03 ] He says, Remember what they said. Remember what they wrote. They told about a time of false teachers. Listen, this time of apostasy should not take us by surprise.

The world getting increasingly more wicked should not take us by surprise. Amen. The Bible says, In the last days, perilous times shall come.

Hey, that should not surprise us. The Bible says that. Amen. We should be expecting it. But sometimes as Christians, we go around and say, Oh, man, wonder what God's doing now.

Wonder what... Hey, God is still in control. Amen. Amen. He is still in charge. He is still on the throne. So this time of apostasy should not take us by surprise.

Peter talked about this. A time when he said in 2 Peter 3, verse 2, that ye be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.

[ 12 : 13 ] And so Jude writes, and he says, Listen, remember what is written. Remember what the apostles have spoken. Remember what they've said about the Lord and Savior.

Remember what they've said. So he says, Remember the scriptures. But I want you to look at verse number 21, and that's where we'll find our title tonight. Verse 21 says this, Keep yourselves in the love of God.

And I've titled the message tonight this, Keep yourselves in the love of God. Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Now you need to understand this. This does not mean trying to get God to love you. God already loves you. Amen. John 3, 16, For God so loved the world.

Amen. That He gave His only begotten Son. He died on the cross for our sins. Romans chapter 5, verse 8, But God commanded His love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[ 13 : 19 ] Hey, we're not trying to gain God's love. See, God's love is unconditional. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more. There is nothing you can do to make God love you less.

God has a perfect love. Now our problem is that many times we think, we remember back to when we were children, and we say, Man, if I do this, if I do my chores, Dad's going to love me.

But the truth is, our dads loved us anyways. Amen. They might have been disappointed with us. They might have been hurt by some things we did.

But they always loved us. They always cared about us. They might have said things that hurt us. But our parents loved us. But even if that, maybe you say, Preacher, that's not true in my household.

It is true in God's household. Amen. There is nothing you can do to gain God's approval or God's love. There's nothing you can do to lose God's love.

[ 14 : 26 ] God's love is unconditional. So this verse really teaches us to obey the Lord and stay in the place of blessing. Hey, I want to be where God is blessing.

I want to be where God's presence is and where God's will is. And I've said this a lot of times in my life. Hey, I want to be the center of God's will. I always ask the Lord, What is your will?

What is your direction for life? What do you want me to do? God, I want to be in your will. So keep yourselves in the love of God. That word keep is an interesting word.

It's a military word that speaks of keeping an eye on a prisoner lest he escape. That word keep yourselves in the love of God. That's keep.

That's a military word to keep your eyes focused on a prisoner. If somebody came to you and said, Hey, you're in charge of these prisoners. Hey, you better keep your eye on them. Amen. You better watch what they're doing.

[ 15 : 24 ] You better not let them escape under your watch. A couple of set, probably about a month ago, we were out visiting at a hospital. And we went to visit somebody and they weren't at the hospital.

And we came out a different door and there was a guy being wheeled out. And I looked at him and he was in the wheelchair. And obviously he was the patient. And I looked at his clothes and I thought, Man, that's kind of a unique hospital garment to wear.

You know, the hospital, they put you always in those garments. Generally, they're blue or a different color. But this guy's was really unique. And I was like, Man, I've never seen a hospital do that. I mean, his were orange and white, orange and white, orange and white.

And he had a nurse that was pushing him out in his wheelchair. And then there was somebody else with him. And then there was a bigger guy that was with him. And they're just pushing him out there. And as I got closer, I kept looking at the guys like, Man, those are some neat hospital garments.

I mean, I might need to pick some of those up sometime. And as I kept looking, he looked me right in the eyes. And he said hello to me. I said, How are you doing? And then I looked down.

[ 16 : 35 ] And he had handcuffs around his feet. He was a prisoner. And I was like, Man, what's he looking at me for? Why? Hey, don't look at me. And the big bodyguard, he was there.

He had his gun right on his side. And I was like, Oh, man. Those weren't hospital garments. Amen. He was a prisoner there. I don't know why prisoners always want to talk to me.

The other day, I was out jogging. And on Monday, I jogged. And the trailer came by with all the, it says, you know, the state prison workers. And they clean up beside the road.

And I seen it go by. And your mind just begins to wonder. And I said, Oh, I hope they don't start cleaning the road where I got to jog past. What if one of them kills me? What if they take that stick they're picking up the litter with?

And what if one of them jabs me in the heart and I die out here on the road and nobody even finds me? And so, they went on down. And so, I made it home safe.

[ 17 : 32 ] And then on Wednesday, I went out and I was jogging. And I got all the way to the airport. I got turned around. I come back. And guess what? That van and that trailer from the prison were there.

And they were cleaning up stuff along the road. And so, usually I run against traffic. And so, I was on this side of the road and they were cleaning up on this side of the road. And I said, Man, I'm going to jog over on this side.

I'm going to get away from them. I'm staying away from them. And I get down there and I'm just like, I'm just jogging by myself, minding my own business. And these ladies are out there picking up the trash.

And they say, Hello? How are you? And I'm like, Good. I don't know why prisoners want to talk to me. I don't know why they're always looking at me.

I don't know why. But if you're going to keep, it says, Keep yourselves in the love of God. Keep your eye on them. Take a close look. Watch them.

[ 18 : 31 ] Hey, keep your eye on your love for God. Stay focused on Jesus Christ. Guard your love for God. Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Remember in the book of Revelation, Jesus said to the church of Ephesus, I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. They left it.

See, the problem is not God leaving me. It's not God not loving me. The problem is that I could leave God's love. I could walk away from God's love in the expression of His love.

That's why it says, Keep yourselves in the love of God. Now let me give you three ways real quickly tonight that you can keep yourselves, we can keep ourselves in the love of God from our text.

Notice the first way. Look at verse number 20. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Hey, build on your faith.

[ 19 : 37 ] Hey, building up yourselves. Whenever I think about a building, and maybe you can think about this too, when you think about a building, like somebody's saying, I'm building a house, what does that mean?

Hopefully there's some progress. Amen? You don't want to go out there one day and they come and they say to you, here's the foundation. Isn't this going to be good? This is our house. It's laid out. This is our foundation.

You don't want to go back in two months and see just that foundation, do you? No, you want some walls to be going up. You want some things to be going up. You want the, I don't know what they call those things that hold the roof up, but you want to see some progress.

You want to see some movement. You want to see something going up. Hey, and it should be the same way in our lives. Hey, there should be some building going on in our lives.

If you're a child of God, there should be something happening in your life. There should be some construction going on in your life. See, to build upon, and we have the right foundation in Jesus Christ.

[ 20 : 38 ] But there needs to be something built. There needs to be some construction going on. I told my church a few weeks ago, sometimes they get disappointed if they fail or maybe they mess up or something doesn't work out.

And sometimes, you know, God deals with us and God steps on our toes and God speaks to our heart. And I told them, I said, listen, when God speaks to my heart like that, I am happy.

You say, preacher, why is that? Because I know God still loves me and God's still working on me. Amen? Hey, the time to fear is when God's not dealing with you, when God's not speaking to you anymore.

And so there should be some building that's going on. There should be some construction going on. And so he says, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Can I say this to you tonight?

The believer must never stand still spiritually. He must always be growing. Always be growing.

[ 21 : 41 ] There's always something you can learn. There's always more that you can learn about Jesus. Always keep growing. How many of you, when you were a little kid, maybe you had a door, maybe you had a wall that you marked how you were growing.

Anybody ever do that as a kid? All right, several of you have. And you would go up to that and you would stand against it. You would stand up straight and your mom or somebody would mark that mark and then you would go back and sometimes you did it in the same day.

You thought you just grew rapidly. You'd go back and you'd stand there and say, hey, am I any taller? And your mom would be like, no, you're not any taller. But you had those marks. I remember hearing a story of a little kid.

He went to his dad and they had a door and they kept making marks where the child was growing. And he looked at his dad. He said, dad, how come you're not growing anymore? It's very true, huh?

Why do we stop growing? Spiritually, we should not stop growing. Amen. We should always be growing. And so he says, building up yourselves. See, faith, trusting in Jesus is not the stopping point in our growth.

[ 22 : 49 ] It is just the starting point. So many people think, man, I'm saved. I'm going to heaven. I'm a child of God. It's done. It's finished. It's all over. No, no, no, no.

You're just getting started. Amen. So what's the first way we keep ourselves in the love of God? We build it by building up yourselves on your most holy faith.

Hey, always be growing. You say, how do we grow? Just real quickly. Read your Bible. Pray. Attend church. Witness.

Tide. Hey, that's how you grow as a child of God. You know, Ed, right? Ed, you can't get support if you don't go into church.

You know that, right? Okay? You do have to get out of the car, okay? I mean, it's not like the drive-thru at McDonald's. You can't get something by not going to. You have to go in, okay? But the truth is, what did Ed learn?

[ 23 : 51 ] He learned that he could trust God, didn't he? And that's going to help him the next time. Now, I'll be honest with you. It's probably not going to happen like that every time. I mean, then everybody would be showing up to those churches.

But, hey, you grow. And we should always be growing in our life. We should always be growing. So the first way that we keep ourselves in the love of God is building up yourselves on your most holy faith.

Look at the second way real quickly. He says there in verse 20, praying in the Holy Ghost. This is spirit-filled prayer. This is prayer that gets a hold of God.

Now, I know that you guys never offer up prayers like this. You're a lot more spiritual than I am. But sometimes, I offer prayers up and it hits the ceiling and it comes right back down. I mean, it doesn't even get close to God.

I mean, generally because it's so selfish. It's so self-centered. I mean, it doesn't get close to God. But listen, if we're going to pray in the Holy Ghost, if we're going to pray in the Holy Ghost, hey, we've got to be walking with Him.

[ 24 : 55 ] We've got to be talking with Him. We've got to be communing with Him. We've got to be spending time with Him. See, when we read our Bible, that's when God talks to us.

When we pray, that's when we talk to God. Hey, when's the last time you spent some time talking to God? My wife and I will be celebrating 24 years of marriage in August.

And I can still remember when we were dating. We would talk all the time. I mean, we would go out on a date. We would talk. We would get home.

I would call her. Hey, how are you doing? How was your day today? We would talk. We'd just talk, talk, talk, talk. I mean, we'd stay up until 3 o'clock in the morning just talking, just communicating.

And then we, the longer we're married, it seems like the communication gets less. And sometimes I'll come home or something will happen and she'll say, how was your day? Good. How'd everything go?

[ 25 : 56 ] Good. How was everything? All right. Hey, but is that not what we do with God also? When we were first saved, we went to God, we said, God, I don't know anything.

Help me. Help me, God. God, I need you. I need your power. And it seems like the longer we're saved, God says, hey, is there anything I can do for you? Ah, we're good today.

Hey, we got to pray. If you're going to grow, if you're going to, if you're going to keep yourselves in the love of God, you must pray in the Holy Ghost. Pray in the Holy Ghost.

Keep communicating with God. Keep speaking to God. Then look at the third way in verse number 21, if you would. Let me hurry along. So the first way is building up ourselves, yourself in the most holy faith.

Secondly, praying in the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, found in verse 21, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[ 26 : 55 ] You say, preacher, what's that mean? That speaks of the Lord's return. And so we're looking for the Lord's return. Hey, why keep yourselves in the love of God? Because we're waiting for the trumpet to sound.

We're waiting for the Lord to come back. We're waiting for the Lord to take us home. We're waiting for that moment called the rapture. Hey, that's what we're looking for. Hey, our eyes should not be on the world.

Our eyes should be on the sky and on the Lord and say, Lord, come quickly. Hey, that's what we're looking for. So how do you keep yourselves in the love of God? You build on your faith.

You pray in the Holy Spirit and you look for the Lord's return. My prayer has always been this. Since I got saved, since God called me to preach, my prayer has always been this.

When the Lord comes back, I don't want to be any place where I would be ashamed of Him coming back. That's always been my thought.

[ 27 : 57 ] And I want to be faithful until He comes back. I want to keep on loving Him. The story is told of R.U.

Darby. Darby's uncle was from the East Coast and he had gold fever and he went out west to begin looking for gold. And he found some gold out there and he covered it up and he hid it and he went back east and he borrowed money and he got supplies and he got the machines that he needed.

And he went back out west and his nephew went with him and they began to mine for gold and they began to find some gold and they found a little bit of gold and they were able to pay off their debts.

They were able to pay off those that loaned them money. But all of a sudden the gold dried up and there was no more gold. And they began to stop working and they let their machines just sit there and they began into rust.

And finally Darby said this he said we might as well just sell our machines and go back home. There was a guy that came along just a junk dealer just a guy that was passing by and he said I'll buy that stuff from you.

[ 29 : 10 ] And they said yeah we'll sell it to you. And the guy before he decided to scrap everything he said man maybe I should get somebody out here an engineer somebody that knows about mining.

And they brought out this mining engineer and he began to look at the land and he said he said you know what there's a fault there's gold close by.



And the truth is that man kept digging and he found the biggest area of gold at that time. Darby R.U. Darby went on to be a successful insurance salesman but they asked him he said hey what did you learn from that?

And he said this never stop digging three feet from gold. Now here's an illustration I seen the other day and I believe it's so true.

That's a diamond area and there you see the one guy walking away he's so close and what I would say to you is this today hey keep yourselves in the love of God.

[ 30 : 22 ] Hey keep building up yourself keep growing in spiritual things. Hey keep praying hey keep looking for the Savior to come he can come at any moment he's so close don't quit don't give up the race when it's so close to the finish line because about that time you quit about that time you turn around I believe that'll be the time the trumpet will sound.

Hey keep yourselves in the love of God. Every head bowed every eye closed dear gracious heavenly father I thank you for this day I thank you for this opportunity to come and preach your word and Lord I pray Lord this evening that you would speak to hearts tonight that you would help us keep ourselves in love with you.

How do we do that? We build upon our faith we pray in the Holy Spirit and then we look for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Lord help us to keep ourselves in love with you.

Lord I pray you'd work during this invitation maybe there's somebody that's ready almost to give up maybe there's somebody that's almost ready to give in the towel Lord I pray that this would be an encouragement that they need Lord I pray you'd speak to hearts tonight Lord help us to keep ourselves in the love of God This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia For more information log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com) where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings next animation like antes music and housekeeping be