

## Keep On Being Kept

Call to Worship – 1 Timothy 1:17, Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles with me to Jude, the next to last book of the Bible. When you find Revelation, turn left. We are in our 3<sup>rd</sup> and final week in the series of Jude.

Hear the Word of the Lord. Scripture reading - Jude 17-25

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

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

Let’s pray.

Father, with our Bibles open before you, we ask for the enabling of the Holy Spirit to both speak and hear and understand, and to believe and to obey, and to walk in the pathway of your choosing. So accomplish your purposes, we pray. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Intro -

I have another road trip/backpacking story. My Mom and dad would take us camping from the time I was a pre-schooler and later, week long backpacking trips added on to camping. Laura and I had our family and did the same.

Show the dam pic

This time was with a good friend and coworker who loved to go backpacking with me in the Sierras when we lived in San Jose. We spent a week hiking and fishing around the high country above Hitch Hetchy reservoir in northern Yosemite where few people go. This is me standing on the Hetch Hetchy Dam before we started our ascent up the switchbacks on the trail.

On one of the days, we hiked out to the mesa on top of the big granite wall. Show the pic on top of the mountain.

You will notice that I did not get too close to the edge and I did not stand too close to my friend Jim. I did not want to stumble or cause him to stumble or fall. I wanted to keep from stumbling.

I thought about this as I read the wonderful promise in Jude 24, “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling...” There are promises of God keeping in the letter of Jude. Not only here in 24 but also in verse 1 Jude tells his readers they are called, beloved and kept for Jesus Christ.

In Jude 3, we are told to “contend earnestly” for the faith. Remember 2 weeks ago, we saw that he wants us to agonize for the faith to keep false teachers and apostates whom have “slipped in the side door” from watering down the faith and cause some to stumble and doubt and tell you they have a better way.

As Jude’s letter draws to its conclusion, one crucial question arises: How can we as believers practically contend for the truth so that we will be victorious in a day of rampant falsehood? In other words, how can we personally apply Jude’s cautions regarding apostasy to our own lives and ministries? To be sure, Jude’s warning is unmistakable, and it clearly demands a response. But what does that response look like? And where does it begin?

Jude, of course, recognized that his readers needed more than just a warning; they also needed a plan of attack. Instead of being merely defensive, they had to be proactive in their fight for the faith.

I hope we can see this morning in these verses is at least this: that the best reply to the scoffers—is not a clever argument. The best reply to the scoffers is a transformed life. Jude reminds us in 17 and 18 that the Apostles predicted that scoffers would come with ungodly passions. Jude 19 goes on to say, “It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”

The best reply to the scoffers is, on the one hand, to contend for the faith—verbally upholding it, assuring it, dealing with error as it comes—but not only to contend for the faith but actually to live the faith. And what you really have in Jude 20 and 21, are four marks of those who are called to live out the faith.

There is only one imperative, incidentally, amongst these verbs. The verbs are *building*, *praying*, *keeping*, and *waiting*. The imperative is the verb *to keep*—“keep yourselves.” The others are expressed differently, as you will notice. I hope this will help us.

## Keeping

He starts the letter in Jude 1 and ends the letter in Jude 24 with God keeping us but here in Jude 21 we are to keep ourselves.

Jude 21, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Let’s just think about “*keep yourselves in the love of God*” for a moment. In other words, he says, “Stay where you are. In Jesus, you have been brought into the circle of God’s amazing love. He has called you. You are his beloved in Jesus. You have been kept for the Lord Jesus Christ.” As John puts it, “Herein is love...” “This is love,” he says: “not that we loved God, but that he loved us and that he gave his Son as an atoning sacrifice,” or as the “propitiation,” “for our sins” 1 John 4:10 —God’s love is an initiative-taking love.

Most of the time, when we think about love or loving someone, we are almost inevitably responding to something that we find attractive in the other person, so that our love for them is in response to who and what they are, when in actual fact, God’s love for us doesn’t operate on that basis—that God has not loved us in Jesus on the basis of how attractive we are or how good we are. He has loved us because he always loved us.

Now, how are we to keep ourselves in the love of God? In John 15, where we have the record of Jesus using the picture of the vine and the branches. As he explains to his followers these things, he then says—in John 15:9—“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.” It’s an amazing thought. The love between the Father and the Son? “That’s the measure of my love for you.” Then what does he say? Four words in English: “Abide in my love.” What’s Jude saying? Same thing. “Keep yourself in the love of God.” Well, how will we do that? Verse 10: “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” Remember Jesus came to do the Father’s will? Do you remember in the garden of Gethsemane, in the prospect of all that was before him, he sweat “as it were great drops of blood”? Luke 22:44. “If there is any other way that this could happen, this would be fine with me; nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.” Luke 22:42.

Now, the big problem with these folks who were ungodly people is that they were perverting the grace of God into a license for immorality. In short order, it went like this: “The grace of God is such that he sets you free from your sins so you can do whatever you want, so that you can be whatever you want. This is the immensity of his grace.” Nothing could be, actually, further from the truth. Quoting Sinclair Ferguson, the idea that God loves you just the way you are is wrong; that after Adam, God has only loved one person just the way he was—namely, the Lord Jesus. So “God loves us *despite the way we are*.” Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2016), 173.

And when people come up against the notion, for example, of the commandments of God, that somehow or another, they think, “There must be something wrong with this. This is a call to legalism, mentioning that we’re supposed to obey things.” Yes! Keeping the commandments of God on account of the love of God by the enabling of the Spirit of God is not easy. We need the enabling work of the Holy Spirit to keep ourselves in the love of God. Because we live, as believers, in a battleground. Temptation is everywhere every day. The inclinations of our hearts are still sinful inclinations. We’re not the finished product. We have been redeemed. But we’re living in this context. And in the responsibility of keeping ourselves in the love of God, we need to do just that.

Think about it this way. How do you keep yourself married? By keeping yourself married. How do you keep yourself married? By being true to your covenants. I said, “I will.” It’s not a legalism that keeps us true. It’s a love. It’s a covenant-keeping love. So there’s no collision between love and obedience. In fact, he says, “If you love me, you will reveal it in obedience.” John 14:15.

Robert Murrey McCheyne said, “Learn much of the Lord Jesus. For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. He is altogether lovely. Such infinite majesty, and yet such meekness and grace, and all for sinners, even the chief! Live much in the smiles of God. Bask in his beams. Feel his all-seeing eye settled on you in love, and repose in his almighty arms...Let your soul be filled with a heart-ravishing sense of the sweetness and excellency of Christ and all that is in Him. Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.” (Andrew Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne*, p.293), p.293)

That sums up, “keep yourselves in the love of God.”

## Building

Jude 20, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit”

Now, with that said as the imperative, let’s go to these other verbs: “But you, my dear friends”—back at the beginning of verse 20—“building yourselves up in your most holy faith...”

He's not saying "your faith," "your own personal response to Jesus." No, he's already set the scene for that by saying in Jude 3, *"I want to earnestly urge you to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints"*—in other words, to the doctrine which has underpinned the development of God's people throughout the ages.

Ephesians 2:19-22 says, *"...you're fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God"—you're not on your own—"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him"—in Jesus—"you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."*

Building ourselves up is a corporate reality. And it is also a lifelong reality. It's not that you can attend a course that's called "Building Yourself Up in Your Holy Faith"; it's a four-week course; you finish that, and you move on. No. It goes on for all of our lives. Jesus told his followers, "I'm going away. The Holy Spirit will come. He will lead you into all truth. When he leads you into all truth, then what I want you to do is teach that truth." John 16:7, 13.

The regular exposition of the Bible and the application of the Word of God is central if you want to be building yourself up in your faith. This is the reason why as you read all the way through the Bible, God is saying to his servants—whether it's Moses or Joshua or any of the prophets—"Assemble my people," he says. "Assemble my people that they might hear my word." Deuteronomy 4:10. It's mutual edification. It's mutual correction. It's mutual consolation. It's mutual encouragement.

You see, how are you going to be working this stuff out? How am I going to work this stuff out on my own? I can't on my own. I need you. You need me. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Take care, brothers [and sisters], lest there be in any of you [a sinful], unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God." Hebrews 3:12. He says, "Look out! Take care! Be alert!" The natural temptation will be declension. So we are on the lookout—in a wonderful way, not in a negative way.

Matthew Roberts said, "A human life is only what it should be if it is a life centered on serving and adoring God while we are assembled as the Body of Christ." And here is his most striking statement of all: "If you want not only to know, but to be, your true self "then you need to go to church," Matthew P. W. Roberts, *Pride: Identity and the Worship of Self* (Fearn, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2023), 169.

You ever thought about it that way? Where is the true expression of humanity? It's not at the Super Bowl. It's not in athletics. It's not in a university campus. It's in the assembling of God's people. Why else would the whole thing be moving to one great assembly—to a company that no one can number from every tribe, language, people, and tongue? Revelation 7:9. God has given us the privilege of keeping ourselves in the love of God as we build ourselves up in our most holy faith.

## Praying

Jude 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit"

Then *praying*: "praying in the Holy Spirit."

Now, let me just say straight off: you will find people—and you may be one of the people—who immediately says, "Oh, this is a special kind of prayer. This is a special prayer where you don't know what you're saying, but you say it anyway, and it's peculiar, and you'll be all the better for it." I don't subscribe to that view. This is, if you like, the very praying that a Christian needs always to pray. And it is the prayer in the Holy Spirit, contrasting with those who are devoid of the Spirit—verse 19. These are the people who are perhaps telling

you, “This is the way to really make progress in the Christian life.” But he says, “They are actually devoid of the Spirit, and anyone who doesn’t have the Spirit of Christ doesn’t belong to him.”

A Cross-reference for praying in the Spirit would be Romans 8:14, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons [and daughters] of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”

You see this juxtaposition between “building” and “praying”—“praying in the Holy Spirit,” enabled by the Holy Spirit, praying *in line* with the Holy Spirit? Paul goes on later in Romans 8, doesn’t he, to make clear that we don’t know how to pray, very often. “We don’t know how to pray as we ought,” Romans 8:26. But our prayers are an expression of dependence upon God. And so we pray *with* one another, and we pray *for* one another. And there is a reason why we would pray for six weeks about this issue, praying in the Holy Spirit, praying an expression of our dependence upon God, and praying for one another—“praying,” as Paul says in Ephesians 6, “at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication,” Ephesians 6:18 and in the awareness that the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that we can’t even utter, Romans 8:26.

I think we need to pay careful attention to this notion of building and praying, given that they’re put together. You see, again, all of this we’re able to do on our own, but we’re not best on our own. You see, it is when we’re prepared to be honest with one another about the fact that we are seeking to keep ourselves in the love of God and building ourselves up in the most holy faith that we find out from one another that we’re not the only person that ever—messed up..sinned in such a way. We’re together on that.”

## Waiting

Jude 21, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

*Building, praying, and finally, waiting:* “Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“But surely we began with the mercy of the Lord Jesus?” Yes, in fact, we did. Peter begins his letter in that exact way: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” [\[28\]](#)

What we have here is just an indication of what runs through the Bible, and that is that our Christian lives have a “now” and a “not yet” dimension to them. A “now” and a “not yet” dimension. Best cross-reference, I think, is probably 1 John and chapter 3, and so I’ll read it: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called [the] children of God; and so we are”—present tense, presently. “The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” I just referenced that. “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.” [\[29\]](#)

So the reality of being in Christ on account of his mercy sends us out into the journey of life, where “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but ... against spiritual wickedness in [the heavenly] places.” [\[30\]](#) And in this whole process, as we recognize the challenges that are within us and the challenges that are around us, we’re heeding the exhortation of the Word of God: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, building yourselves up in the holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, and *waiting* for the mercy of the Lord Jesus when, on that day, you are welcomed into his eternal glory.”

## Mercy

We pray for mercy for ourselves, and having discovered the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are then entrusted with the responsibility and privilege of being merciful towards others.

And the Bible, of course, centers on this. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...” Ephesians 2:4–5.

“Now,” he says, “I need to exhort you to deal mercifully with doubters and with disputers.” A reason for him to address those who are the doubters is because he knows some doubters will hear his words.

Jude is saying that dealing with the doubts and the disputers is not about winning an argument; it is about wooing them, winning them, saving them. And I take it that here in verses 22 and 23, he has three separate groups in mind. Jude’s triplets.

### **Mercy for Doubters**

Jude 22-23, And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

First of all, “Have mercy on those who doubt”—group one. I take it that these are people who perhaps have been attracted by the story of those who have “crept in.” They’re not certain that it’s actually better than the faith. So they find themselves in a quandary, doubting—It might be something like:

*Doubting maybe about Jesus, who is “our only Master and Lord.”* “Well, I don’t know whether he is or whether he isn’t.” They’re doubting because of the false teachers.

*Doubting about the dreams—* “Well, I don’t know. I like the dream thing, actually. It seems more immediate. It seems more direct. It seems more spiritual.” And they’re doubting because of the false teachers.

*Doubting about the nature of freedom.* But now these false teachers have come, and they’ve said, “No, you don’t really need to get tied up with rules and the Bible. Lighten up!”

“You need to say to them, ‘Hey, look out. That’s dangerous.’” It is, if you like, a call to preventative care. It’s a call to pray for our friends, to be patient with our friends, to be persevering with them.

Jude’s saying, “Love them to win them.” They’re not going to be won by argument. “Go easy on those who hesitate in the faith.” I’m not suggesting that you diminish the gospel. I’m not suggesting that we do anything other than contend for the gospel with love.

### **Snatching Others from the Fire**

Jude 22-23, And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Secondly, “Save others by snatching them out of the fire.” I take it that these individuals that he has in mind have gone a step further. These individuals are not just unsettled by what has been said, but they’ve actually begun to embrace some of it. They’ve begun, as it were, to take a seat along with some of the scoffers themselves. You remember the opening of the Psalms: “Blessed is the one who doesn’t stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord,” Psalm 1:1-2.



And here's what's happened: they once really delighted in the law of the Lord, but now the scoffers have come and told a different story, and some of them began to say, "Well, I think I'll take my seat there"—been enamored with the new way of seeing things. Instead of embracing truth as being objective and universal and verifiable and ultimately proclaimed in Jesus himself, they have succumbed to the idea that there are all kinds of truths. In fact, it seems far more appealing if you can have your own truth, if you can have your own spirituality.

Take for example, the game of Golf. These kind of people might say, "the best thing you can do in golf is to not put any pins on the green; do not have any red stakes for a hazard; do not have any white stakes for out-of-bounds. But what you're playing then is not golf. Because there is no golf without the place which is a target, without the places that are hazards, and without the places that are out of bounds. And these people are saying, "This is the way you ought to figure your Christianity. Don't let anybody tell you how to do it. No! Make your own framework."

You see, for these people, the "holy faith" was wholly unappealing. And so he says, "You'd better snatch them out of the fire."

Now, what is the "snatching" mechanism? The "snatching" mechanism, if we can put it in that way, is the gospel. It's the story of the immense love of God in Jesus for those who are tempted to take a different path, believe a different story, and try it in their own way. It's not an argument. It's an adventure. It's a love story.

You see, the reason we're close to Jesus is because God has reached out to us in Jesus. He took the initiative and took hold of our hand. Now, what are we to do with those who are sitting, as it were, in the dangerous position of doubting and dissenting and disputing? We're not to walk idly by. We're not to leave them. We're to save them—save them by "snatching" them. And the "snatching" mechanism is the story of the gospel. We become the means whereby God brings people to salvation.

Keep yourselves in the love of God. Have mercy on those who doubt. Save those by snatching them out of the fire, because you will save their souls from death and cover a multitude of sins."

### Showing Mercy with Fear

Jude 22-23, And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

What about group three? "to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh." I take it that these are so far gone that it will not be possible to intervene without putting oneself in danger. Doesn't it seem that that's what he's saying? Why does he introduce fear?

Well, maybe he has in mind the fear that Paul has in Galatians 6, where he says, "Brothers [and sisters], if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness." And then he says this: "Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted." Galatians 6:1. In other words, "If you go into that environment where they are, do so in the fear of God and in the realistic fear of your own sinful heart."

Hywel Jones, professor at Westminster of old, he says, "Those who would save gross sinners have to go nearer to sin and Satan's domain than it is safe for them to go." Hywel R. Jones, "Fighting for the Faith," *Tabletalk*, March 25, 2022, <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/fighting-for-the-faith>. In other words, over group three there is a big sign, and it says this: "Approach with extreme caution so as not to be contaminated." In other words, be tender with sinners, but don't get soft on sin. Because sin stinks to high heaven.

Some people, I think, are given peculiar abilities in areas like this. It's not for everybody. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, the Church I grew in, was a unique individual for sure. He's the one who said,

"Some want to live within the sound of church and chapel bell.  
I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell."

But the point for the congregation, for Jude's readers, and for us is to hate the sin but treat the sinner with mercy—to realize that from our perspective, such people as in group three appear to be, it would seem, beyond hope. But they're *not* beyond hope. Because they may still be the recipients of God's grace. Because Jesus can save fully and completely those who approach God the Father through him. With God, failure is never final. It's *never* final. We don't give up.

Because the answer to every group is at the same place, in the same person: at the cross of Jesus, before whom we all come and bow down and say with the tax collector, "God, be merciful to me; I'm a sinner." [Luke 18:13](#). Have you ever said that to God? It's not a question about "Have you ever got interested in religion?" Have you ever actually faced up to that?

### **"Now to Him..."**

Jude 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,

Now, in Jude 24, Jude returns to where he'd begun: "God keeps you."

Well, that is the encouragement that comes in verse 24: "Now to him," he says—well-known verses. In fact, if people know only a couple of verses out of the letter of Jude, then they will know these two. I think the amazing brightness, the reality, the forcefulness of verse 24 and 25 stand out best against what is a dark and a dangerous backdrop as described in the body of the letter.

Notice the opening phrase: "Now to him..." "To him." It'd be easy just to slide past that, wouldn't it? But remember, Jude has begun with God. And having found it necessary to mention so much that is unsavory, he then ends his letter by establishing without doubt the one in whom all security, all joy, all assurance is to be found.

"Unto him" what? "Now [unto] him who is able to keep you from stumbling..." Three words; here they are: *preservation, presentation, jubilation*.

### **Preservation**

First of all, then, here is the promise of our preservation: "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling..." "Stumbling."

Now, I think it's very important that we are prepared to acknowledge how easy it is to be tripped up, so that we might then say how wonderful it is that we are *kept* from stumbling. Because we face the weakness of our own hearts, first of all—that we can so easily run after things that God does not design for us or desire for us. We recognize, too, that although the pathway of the Christian life is in one sense supremely safe, it also is incredibly dangerous. It is fraught. "Through many dangers, toils, and snares," Newton is honest enough to say, "I have already come."



There is the problem of my heart, there is the danger of the path, and there is the presence of the enemy. It's like you're standing on the granite rock high above Hetch Hetchy, and you have to be very, very careful. There's somebody who's just looking for the opportunity just to push you over.

It was the question of a servant-maid that caused the apostle Peter to stumble and to fall: "I don't know Jesus." "No, I'm not a Galilean like Jesus." How did that happen? Well, he stumbled.

Now, it's very important here that we understand that Jude is not writing about the possibility of the believer stumbling and falling out of the family of God. Right? That's not what he has in mind. The Scriptures are really clear. Philippians 1: "Being confident of this," Paul writes to them, "that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" Philippians 1:6. If our Christian life began with us, then we could never be confident that we would ever get through to the end. Because if we started it, how could we be sure that we would finish it? No, *he* began it. He began a good work; he brings it to completion.

You see, these individuals, who have been on the receiving end of these people with their various dreams and fancies and immoral suggestions, Jude recognizes that some of them might easily have stumbled into these environments. And he says, "Now, listen: before any of the rest of you start to do that, you need to know this." "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling..."

But didn't we just read earlier that we were supposed to keep *ourselves*? Yeah! That's verse 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How are you going to do that? Well, he "is able to keep you." God provides the means; we use the means. God preserved Noah in the deluge before the judgment of the flood, but Noah built the ark with God's instructions.

Preservation.

## Presentation

Jude 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,

Secondly, presentation: "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory..." Kept *from* and presented *to*. There is a day when we will be presented. The final graduation where, you know, the tassels come off on one side, and you get to throw your hat in the air. That kind of thing. It's going to be a great event.

How will we ever get there? Well, the one who keeps us will present us. He's in charge of the presentation. We're not going to go in there and boast about our background, what we did, what we said, what we gave, or whatever it might be. No, it will always be "unto him." "Unto *him*."

You see, if a congregation does not begin with "Unto him," it will begin with something else. If when people come to our congregation they don't say, "This must be about him," then they will start to believe it must be about us. And then we have failed miserably. "Unto him"! *He* will present us—present us faultless.

## Jubilation

Jude 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,

We must finish: "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling ... to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy..." Hence my word *jubilation*. Jubilation.

In other words, the thing that we long for—the *thing* that we long for—is actually beyond us; that the solid joys are these joys: the joy of sin being gone, the joy of Satan being shut out, the joy of temptation being over forever; The joy of the Lord Jesus himself—

And what will we do? We will say, “Unto him...” “Unto him”—the one who keeps me from stumbling, the one who brings me here, the one who presents me faultless and gives me a joy such as no joy could ever have been known.

### **“The Only God”**

The closing verse of Jude: *“To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

Jude is ending his letter by turning the gaze of his readers to the living God. Turning them to God—the God with which his letter began. They and we are the ones who have been “called” and loved and are being “kept” by God. And so he ends his letter by comforting them and us with the greatness of God: his glory, his majesty, his dominion, his authority, before all time and now and forever more.

Let’s pray.

Father, help us to wait. And while we wait, help us to pray. And while we pray, help us to help each other, to build one another up in this most holy faith. For we know that we could only keep ourselves because you keep us. And so we pray, keep us kept, Lord. In Jesus’ name we ask it. Amen.

How do we keep ourselves in the love of God? What are ways that you keep yourself in the Love of God?