

Jude - Pt 1 Believers Secure & Called

by Billy Strachan

Jude's letter reminds Christians of their security in Christ, emphasizing their sanctification, preservation, and calling, and warning against false teachers.

Duration: 38:42

Scripture: Jude 1:18-22, Jude 1:24-25

Topics: "Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need to understand and experience the depth of God's peace, mercy, and love. He encourages the audience to grasp the assurance found in the opening and closing verses of the epistle being discussed. The purpose of writing this epistle is to urge believers to defend the truth that God has given them and to keep it unchanged throughout the years. The preacher uses a powerful illustration of a man trying to demonstrate the limitless nature of God's love, mercy, peace, grace, goodness, and kindness, showing that it cannot be fully comprehended or measured.

Transcript

The Epistle of Jude, and put down section one, the introduction. The introduction. Now this epistle is greatly neglected by the church, that's why we've bung it up right next to James, because it's a very practical one as well.

So under introduction put A, the time of writing. Most commentators agree that it was written about 66 A.D., 66 A.D., before the destruction of Jerusalem. B, particulars of the letter, particulars of the letter.

Under that we're going to do three things. Number one, it is a very similar letter to that of 2 Peter. It is a very similar letter to that of 2 Peter.

Secondly, it has many phrases found nowhere else in the Bible. It has many phrases found nowhere else in the Bible. Thirdly, it contains a fondness, it contains a fondness or a love of the writer, it contains a fondness of the writer to express himself in threes.

In threes, one, two, three. In threes. And then put down under that, there are, and then we're going to go A to G, and list the threes in the epistle.

So there are A, three words used in greeting, three words used in greeting. B, three examples of retribution. C, three wickednesses, three wickednesses.

D, three kinds of evil workers, three kinds of evil workers. E, three encouragements to Christians, three encouragements to Christians. F, I'll quickly nip through those again in a minute, F, three kinds of Christian service, three kinds of Christian service.

And lastly, G, three expressions in the doxology, three expressions in the doxology. D-O-X-O-L-O-G-Y. Now there they are.

A, three words used in greeting. B, three examples of retribution. C, three wickednesses.

D, three kinds of evil workers. E, three encouragements to Christians. F, three kinds of Christian service.

G, three expressions in the doxology. Section two to your notes, the opening of the letter, the opening of the letter. Now if you turn to it, I'm going to read it to you, the epistle of Jude.

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 ye 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 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.

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, does not bring against him a railing accusation, but said the Lord rebuked me. But these speak evil of those things which they know not.

But what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Cor. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.

Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds. Trees whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead, plopped up by the roots. Raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame, wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

And Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken 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 own ungodly lusts.

These be they who separate themselves sensual, having not the spirit. But ye beloved, building up yourselves in 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.

And now the two verses about the only part of the epistle most people know. Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Good. So put A under the opening of the letter. The writer, the writer.

We've already commented of a Jude who is a brother to James, and whether he is the brother of the one who wrote the epistle of James, it's not certain, though most commentators believe so. So put down that Jude is the brother of James. That's the, in other words, he's a sort of half-brother to the Lord.

Mary would be his mother and Joseph his father. Be the readers, the readers. Verse one.

Now this is another letter that's written solely to Christians, solely to Christians. And there are three things that mark out these Christians. And I want you to note, before we get into this epistle, because really it's a shattering letter, and I want you to note that it opens and closes on a note of security, a note of assurance and security.

Now I think that the writer was very wise in doing that, because he was about to go into some things that were so pertinent and personal in his epistle that he had to make sure that he reminded those that would read the letter that in Christ they are secure, because this letter really does convict. And he had to close the letter after all the phraseology that would bring conviction to the readers by reminding them again that they belong to one who is able to keep them from falling and to present them faultless before his Father with exceeding joy. He is able to keep them from falling.

Now this is vitally important. You see, this little letter, in a nutshell, is telling you how to recognize a false Christian, a false teacher, and how to deal with a false teacher. Now if we really knew that, there would be less likelihood of Christian churches and fellowships being split down the middle by error and false teaching.

That's why Satan has had to do his best to keep the Christian knows out of the epistle of Jude. If you begin to be able to discern the spirits of people and to exercise the gift of discernment over the words that are preached and the ministry that's being dished out from pulpit to pulpit, you will be able to look after the flock under your care. You will be able to see someone that's about to uproot fellowship and spoil it.

But the thing is, if you don't know what to look for, you don't know how to recognize these people, then they can come in, create havoc in the church, destroy fellowship, and render the whole place totally impotent as far as God being able to use it as an outreaching ministry to save people in the world. So this is one of the things that's behind his writing. But notice in that first verse three things that mark out a Christian.

Number one, sanctified. Sanctified. And in this particular case, the sanctification is not by self-effort, but by God the Father.

Sanctified by God the Father. Not by self-effort, but by God the Father. Now just a word about sanctified.

Don't attach to it some super spiritual meaning. We have too many people that like a mystery attached to the word sanctify, and therefore the runaround meeting saying, I am sanctified. God bless them if they are.

But generally when you ask them for a definition of sanctification, they've got some aura, some mystic holiness attached to it. And this is not so. Sanctified in scripture is simply setting apart.

Setting apart. Taking from one thing and setting it apart specifically for another, and in particular to God. And if you read your Bible, you'll see that, for instance, in the Old Testament, they sanctified a mountain.

They sanctified trees. They sanctified food. They sanctified clothing, as well as people.

They sanctified vessels. They sanctified an altar. So, for people to run around saying, oh, I'm sanctified.

Well, they just better be careful about how they're using it, because it doesn't put you above the level of a mountain, or a tree, or a loaf. You know, these things were sanctified. And so take away this super spiritual connotation to it.

It simply means a setting apart. Now, there are ways in which you can sanctify yourself. You can sanctify yourself.

In other words, if you say, I am giving myself wholly to God for a specific purpose today, that is a measure in which today you are sanctifying yourself from the things of life that would otherwise be occupying you to give yourself to a specific task for the Lord. That's self-sanctification. But notice here, this particular sanctification is something God does without your help, and you've nothing to do with it.

And he's writing to Christians, and as far as he's concerned, he's telling us one of the hallmarks of a Christian is that irrespective of their self-effort, God himself has earmarked you. He has sanctified you. Out of the peoples of the world, he has taken you and put you aside exclusively for himself.

Now, you might not have been aware of the fact that that's happened to you, but you are special. God's Word declares you have been sanctified by God the Father. You're set apart exclusively for him, for his purposes.

Now, it's hard to take that, especially when we know what we are, but it's God that's saying it, and God's Word that's declaring it. We'll come back to Jude, just flip over to Ephesians chapter 1. Verse 3, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us, past tense, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Now, the verb in there, if I've never told you before, is in the aorist tense and in the middle voice, and you could well relate every phrase in that verse to the verb.

So, you could read it, according as he, God himself, hath chosen us. This is the verb, chosen, and it's in the aorist tense, which means once and for all, forever, out of. That's what it means.

So, you could say, according as he, God himself, hath chosen us Christians once and for all, forever, out of all the other peoples, you see, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be once and for all, forever, out of, holy, and without blame, once and for all, forever, out of, before him in love, once and for all, forever, out of. In other words, every phrase in the grammar of that verse is directly related

back to the verb, and that which is before the verb is related forward to the verb. So, you couldn't meet a verse more pointing than this, and for those who are Armenian in thought, and like a sense of insecurity, I'm sorry to announce to you, but this is one scripture you beggars have to swallow, whether you like it or whether you don't, because the Greek is quite immovable in this verse, that before the very foundation of the world, and this boggles the mind, I can no more understand it than you're going to understand it, but God's word declares it, that according as he himself has chosen us once and for all, forever, out of the world, in Christ, once and for all, forever, out of the world, before the foundation of the world, once and for all, forever, out of the world, that we should be holy once and for all, forever, out of the world, and without blame, once and for all, forever, out of the world, before him in love, once and for all, forever, out of the world.

Have you got it? There's security there. Did you know you were holy before? Once and for all, forever, out of the world. God is so certain of your being with him for eternity that he has sanctified you.

He's put you aside and he's declared you a peculiar treasure, a holy people, a royal nation, a priesthood, the aristocracy of the world. Are you enjoying your aristocracy? Are you enjoying the fact today that you are holy? You say, as all of us must say, as I must say, oh, that's what the word declares, but have you been to my mirror this morning? Yes, but what you are in condition, as far as God is concerned at the present moment, does not alter your position. Position is one thing, condition is another, and you will always be aware of your condition, but God is so sure that what he's begun in you, he will complete, and that you will be presented by Jesus Christ.

He's going to take each one of us in to meet the Father, and with joy, he's going to present you there as spotless, no record, no flecks, no dirt anywhere, spotless, blameless before the Father. That is your heritage, that is your hope, that is your security. These people to whom he is writing are people that are sanctified by God the Father, they're his, and you can be sure of that before we go into any of the letter.

Secondly, they're preserved, they are preserved, preserved. Oh, I'm sorry to upset thee this morning, if you want to get lost before lunch. You are preserved, not by self-attainment, but by Jesus Christ.

Did you notice that? To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved, where? In Jesus Christ. Preserved in Jesus Christ. Since deep freezes came in, we don't do as much preserving nowadays as they did in the past, but people used to preserve fruit, and you preserved onions, and you preserved beetroot, you preserved all sorts of things, and it keeps it.

You go to a hospital and they've got little rooms where they'll take you and show you things that they've preserved in formaldehyde. It's a great word that, I like it. You might even see it, an unborn babe that's had to be taken out from the womb of a mother, and they have kept it, they've preserved it by putting it into a bottle of formaldehyde, and it stays there, sealed up in that jar, and it doesn't rot away, and they have them there for their students to look right down the years, and you get tomatoes, and you skin them, and you put them into jars, and you seal them, and you preserve them.

You preserve them, they're there, and you don't break the seal until you're ready to enjoy them, and the Word of God, remember, taught us when we're doing the Holy Spirit, that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of redemption. In other words, if you're a Christian, you're pickled in Christ, completely saturated. You're completely saturated in Christ.

It's as though heaven in itself had a big jar, and in that jar is Christ, and the lid is opened, and you are dumped into Christ, and it's sealed by the Holy Spirit, and on the outside, not to be opened until the day of redemption. Preserved. Preserved. Preserved.

Preserved. You begin to get the idea that you can have a sense of confidence toward your God, irrespective of your condition. Now, this is why I keep repeating this today, because when we go into the rest of this epistle to see what false people are like, you're going to come bang up against what you're like yourself.

That's why false people can get in and ruin us, because we are not really behaving, acting, drawing upon what is ours by right in Christ, so that we don't have to be like that. No Christian has to live a crummy life, and if we do, we are doing it because of the old nature within us that wants to, and we're not utilizing the preservative that we are in, and it's necessary for us to get this security tight, both at the beginning and at the end of this epistle, before we look at that awful picture. It's not going to be nice.

I hate doing this wretched epistle, because it makes me go home and look in the mirror and say, now, come on, how about you? We talked yesterday about warnings. This is one of the biggest ones you'll find in the Bible. That's why the devil likes to keep your eyes away from it.

If we read this two or three times a year, we wouldn't be as easy prey to being slack individuals as Christians. We would be more willing to see to it that we live the kind of life that God expects us to live. We are preserved in Christ.

Number three, called, called, preserved and called. You are invited, called, and put down opposite this, not because of their value, but by grace. We are called into this life of sanctification and preservation, not because of who we are, but because of his grace, unmerited favor, because of love, the fact that he wants you.

It's great to be wanted. It's great to be loved. So, there are the three hallmarks of the person to whom he's writing.

It's definitely Christians, people who are sanctified, people who are preserved, people who are called, us Christians. See in your outline, the greeting, the greeting. Now, very cautiously, Jude is not only awakening us to the reality in these opening phrases of his letter, to the fact that we are Christians, sanctified, preserved, and called.

Before he takes us into the awful picture we're about to see, he makes this further practical step of sending them in his greeting, a reminder of some of the things they're going to need after they've looked at the picture, because there it says in verse two, mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. Now, it's important to note that you would think that it was just a casual greeting, but too many believers think too soon after conversion that they can reach the limit of God's mercy, that they can reach the limit of God's peace, that they can reach the limit of God's love. So much so that two or three days after conversion, if somebody goes out and makes a mess of their Christian life, they think God's abandoned them, or that he ought to, because of what they've done.

Especially since they know what they've done, the Holy Spirit said in their heart before they did it not to do it, and they went ahead and done it anyway. And people almost but invite God to be exhausted with them. I've done it, I've said to God, why don't you just cut me off and forget me? Punish me, I've almost been

pleaded for punishment.

To discover that I was still at peace. Oh, it's so aggravating to have peace when you want to be irritated. It really is annoying.

When you want to feel guilty and you can't, you might be convicted, but no guilt, because he has mercy. Mercy has given you the opposite of what you deserve, and it can be multiplied. Now, even if you get nothing else out of this epistle, just try to remember that mercy can be multiplied, because some of you are going to leave this school, and within a year or two, you're going to be really in hot water.

You're going to get into troubles and problems in your life that you never conceived you possibly could get into. Well, if you don't remember anything else from the whole of the Bible school, try to remember that when you come to yourself, and you're in your pig pen, and you think that you're no longer a Christian, that God has abandoned you, that you deserve to be flung out, you deserve hell, try to remember mercy can be multiplied, and come back to God. Because I'll tell you this, if it wasn't for the multiplication of his mercy, I wouldn't be up here today.

I wouldn't. It's interesting to see how, to explain a thing like this, how it can be multiplied, that you can't reach the limit of God's love, you can't reach the limit of God's peace, and you can't reach the limit of God's mercy. The best way of describing it I ever saw was when we had a house party here for deaf people, and quite a few of these people, I think there was five or six of them, were not only deaf, but they were blind too.

Now that's a tremendous affliction, not to be able to see so that you could lip read, but to be deaf on top of the bargain meant that they were completely shut off, and each person that came from the blind society, deaf and blind, they had to sit with a person who was deaf but could lip read beside them, and the blind person held their hand out, and the other deaf person repeated the entire message on the fingertips of the blind person. You just see the blind person sitting nodding as they got the message. Now I remember one occasion Mr. Van Dorn was preaching, and he was using the phrase that God can do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think.

Now that's utterly bad grammar. It's sticking two superlatives bang up against each other, but the only way Paul could express the limitlessness of God's goodness was by being bad with his grammar and smacking two superlatives together, exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think, and I sat at the back and I thought, how on earth is Mr. Barrett going to get through two words like that by signs, because he not only said it, he couldn't spell every word out, he signals the entire message with actions as well as giving them words, and so suddenly Mr.

Barrett stopped, and he stopped Mr. Van Dorn, and he thought, and the audience was looking at him, they'd got it that God's love, God's mercy, God's goodness, God's peace was, but now they had to stop because he had to tell them what it was, and it was to be exceedingly abundantly above all that they could ask or think, and so he told them that his love for you and for me is that size, and then he looked up and he said, no, no, no, no, no, it's that size, and then he said, it's that size, and he kept putting his hands further and further out, you see, and making measurements, and he'd say, it's that size, then he'd cancel that out again and say, no, no, no, it's that size, and when he got his arms to the absolute limit that he could stretch his arms out, he said to them, no, no, it's not like that at all, and then he turned around, and he said, I got it, and he faced one direction, and he did this, and he was waving away in that direction, and he kept this up for about three or four minutes, and then he stopped, and he turned to the other direction,

and he went like that, you know, the whole of us that could understand the preaching had to sit for about five minutes while he tried to put into action form the limitlessness of the love, mercy, peace, grace, goodness, kindness of God, in other words, you cannot fathom it, you can't reach it.

One of the best ones, I think, is in Ezekiel, when you get the guy to the river, he comes out of a desert, no water, nothing for thirst, and the angel takes him to a river and says, go ahead, enjoy it, and the prophet marches in, and he's ankle deep in the water, and he's thinking, isn't this great, look at me, ankle deep in water, and I've been in a desert, and here I am actually ankle deep in water, oh, what blessed ankle deep water, isn't it great, and the angel says, go a bit further, but why, it looks the same level, yeah, on the surface, go a bit further, and he starts to walk in further, and he finds that it's up to his knees, and he looks back at the stuff that he walked in, ankle deep, and thought, and to think I was content to be ankle deep in water, and I evaluated the entire

surface of this river on the basis of what I got at the edge, and now it's up to my knees, oh, blessed knees, splashed in water, and the angel says, go further, but could there be anything further, and he went in, and it was up to his waist, and he discovered that he had been content to be knee deep, and he could have been waist deep, but you know, this picture keeps on going, until it's waters to swim in, all that's out is his head, and his feet had left the bottom, and he couldn't fathom the bottom, he couldn't get to the bottom, it was so deep, and you know, I like that, because it keeps reminding me, that when I think of the mercy, and the love, and the peace, and the grace, and everything I need from God, it's like that, and too often, we Christians are puddling around in the edge,

we puddle around in the edge of God's love, we puddle around in the edge of his mercy, we puddle around in the edge of his peace, and we think, that's it, that's about all you can really enjoy of God, little titbits, and you've never yet fathomed the depth of what you can enjoy of God's peace, mercy, and love, now he wants you to see that, and I want you to see that, before we look into this epistle, because you're going to need it in the next three lectures, and I have to keep reassuring myself of those opening verses, and the closing verses of this epistle, that end with these great notes of assurance, because I need that assurance, especially when I have to come face to face with the kind of person I am, so very often, which the word here says, we shouldn't be, so put down d in your

outline, the purpose in writing, the purpose in writing, d, the purpose in writing, verse 3, 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, he was to remind Christians to stand up and be constant in their fight for their faith, it was written to remind Christians to stand up and be constant in their fight for their faith, now the rendering of this verse in the paraphrase new bible, I think is quite apt, listen to it, dearly beloved friends, I had been planning to write you some thoughts about the salvation God has given us, but now I find I must write something else instead, urging you to stoutly defend the truth

which God gave once for all to his people to keep without change throughout the years, he said, you know, I had decided to sit down and write you a little devotional letter, a homily, something to encourage you in your faith and salvation in God, but already in the early church, I can look at the church, I've stepped back and taken a look at the church, and you know, I can see already that I'm going to have to tear up my devotional thought, I'm going to have to take pen in hand, and I'm going to have to write one of the most stern warnings that there is to the church, that look, corruption is already present, we better start fighting for what we possess, fighting for our faith, fighting to stand up and nail our colors to the mast, and

be what we ought to be, or we're going to lose ground,

we're going to lose in our own enjoyment of what we have, you see, people take their faith too lightly, they ought to be serious about it, not serious looking, but they ought to take it seriously, so just keep that in mind until this evening, it's an epistle written to Christians, Christians that can be sure they're Christian, because they're sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ, and called, and they have at their disposal to keep them assured of their faith and salvation in Christ, mercy, peace, and love that can be multiplied, and Jesus Christ is looking forward as the one who is able to keep you from falling, to present you faultless before the Father with exceeding joy, so let's really get down to nailing our colors to the mass, and fighting for our faith, let's have a

word of prayer.

Father, we ask that you will deeply embed into our hearts the assurances that are ours, that we are your children, and give us a willingness to accept your word, that even before the world began you have us all ready to be presented blameless and spotless before you, to live with you forever, keep teaching us to utilize the great depths of everything you have for us, that it will encourage us to nail our colors to the mass, and be what we ought to be, for Christ's sake, amen.

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