The Other Brother: Jude 24-25

Pastor Carlos Sibley

Sunday, May 21, 2017

I want to invite you to open your Bibles to the book of Jude. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Jude. It's been a delight to be able to take this letter that’s just 25 verses long and spend five weeks in it. I know God has His design for His word and what His purposes are, but this particular opportunity to take the whole message of one letter with just 25 verses and really slowly work through the message has been a delight to me personally. And I hope in your walk with Christ that it will make an eternal difference, and that you would come again and again to the letter of Jude and see the great riches that are provided for us. When we started this series, we referred to Jude in the words of another commentator: “Jude is the most neglected book in the Bible.” I pray that moving forward that would not be true for your life and it would not be true for our church.

In fact, verse 24 and 25 today that we will primarily focus on, I want to offer to you as being from this point on your favorite verses in all of God's word. Now I know that's a personal decision, and you have verses that you have clung to for years and years perhaps as being the verses that are just “That's my verse!” For a number of years, Proverbs 16:32 has been my life verse: “Better is a patient man than a warrior.” It's just helped in so many different ways and so many different decisions in living life for Christ. But I want you to know Jude 24 and 25 is pushing hard to be the verse to be my life verse. There's so much here and so much packed into these two verses that tell us who God is, what God does. They remind us of what's ahead in eternity, remind us of what we’re about here in this life- it is a rich, rich passage of Scripture.

Now look this way for just a moment. Have you ever lost your day before it ever began? Have you ever lost a day before it ever began? Maybe it's the task list, maybe it's the weather, maybe it's the appointment that's on the schedule, maybe it's a meeting that's ahead for you. Maybe it's just an evil spirit that moves into the environment that you're in at the very beginning of the day, and already before you ever get five minutes into it, your decision is “This is an awful day, and it's going to be an awful day. In fact just give me tomorrow.” What’s happened is that something has crept in, and it just causes you to lose from the very beginning. Have you ever seen a team that lost the game in warm-ups? They’re lined up, they run out on the field or run out on the court, and when they are supposed to be getting ready, when they're supposed to be getting warmed up they begin to kind of cast a look at the other end of the field or at the other end of the court. They hear the chants, they see the organization, they see the routine, they see how long they are, how big they are, how excited they are- and in a way, that team or that individual decides “You know what? We’re toast. It's over already. Why do we even play the game?”

There is a strategy of the enemy to try to so discourage us and defeat us that we look at life and living for Jesus as already defeated. We walk into a day, and we see how big the enemy is, how great the opposition is, and we think, “There’s no hope. How am I going to live for Jesus in this environment? How I am going to honor Christ in this day? How am I going to hold on to my faith in this trial?” I think it's that kind of feeling that pushed Jude to wrap up this letter in this way. He had introduced them to false teachers. He wrote wanting to celebrate their common salvation, but there is a sense of urgency that set in on him that he needed to say to them: “There are people that are teaching false things. There are people that are going against this once and for all faith that was given to you to live by and to pass on to another generation.” And when he gets to the end, it's almost- you can feel it- like those who claim to be believers, those who are called and loved and being kept by Christ may think “We’re not going to survive this. The church is going to be defeated. Believers are going to fall from the faith.”

Listen to how he describes these false teachers. There’s a summary when you go from verse 3 to verse 16. These are the words that are used to describe the false teachers that Jude was warning them about. He referred to them as “ungodly.” In fact about six times he refers to the false teachers among them as “ungodly.” He says they pervert grace, they deny Jesus, they defile the flesh, they reject authority, they blaspheme angels, they are unreasoning animals, they operate by instinct, they’re hidden, they have no fear, they creep in unnoticed, they are self-centered. He uses words like “wild, harsh, grumblers, malcontents, loud boasters, showing partiality and they cause doubt.” It's what they're up against; that’s the scouting report. That’s his challenge to believers who were to contend for the faith, agonize for the faith, fight for the faith, stand for the faith- this is what you're up against. Just about the time maybe that these believers were thinking what's going to happen to us, Jude comes to verse 24 and 25.

So I ask you the question: how do we not lose the day? People can creep in unnoticed, perverting grace and denying Christ and offering some kind of false way to know God. How do we not get tricked; how do we not get become doubters that fall away? How do we surrender the territory that Christ has claimed? Here's the answer: according to verse 24 and 25, contending for the faith begins and ends with who God is. Now I go back to those questions- how do I not lose my faith? How do I not fall? How I not stumble? How do I not surrender territory to the enemy? How do I not give in to the teaching of the false teachers? How do I not get duped into believing something that was not the truth from the beginning? Now listen to the answer. Contending for the faith begins and ends with who God is. It begins and ends with who God is. The answer to those questions is not that contending for our faith begins and ends with who we are, contending for the faith begins and ends with who God is.

In fact, when you take the first two verses of Jude and you take the last two verses of Jude, they completely overwhelm verses 3-23. It starts out showing us- this is who God is and what he's done. Look at it in Jude 1: “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.” Now look at verse 24. He bookends who these false teachers are with these two verses in the beginning and two verses in the end that talk about who God is. 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 and forever. Amen.” That's who God is, and he shows us that contending for the faith begins (verses one and two) and ends (verses 24 and 25) with who God is.

Now too many times, we find ourselves with our days reflecting what's in verse three through verse 23. We find ourselves sort of reflecting that we’re being duped, tricked, and led in some false way. We worry, we dread, we complain, we look at our inability and our inadequacy to stand for Christ and to live for Jesus and be His witness, and it’s like we lose before we ever leave the house! We go into the world and we say, “Well I don’t know if people will believe this. I don’t know if I believe this. I don’t know if I can stand for Jesus today; the temptation is so great and the enemy is so clever!” We’re out there just almost paralyzed. How do we contend for the faith?

Let me give you three answers to that. Number one: because of who God is, rest in the security of your salvation with great confidence. Rest in the security of your salvation with great confidence. Let’s look at 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…” One of the great blessings in your life will be to take a journey through the New Testament and see how many times it refers to God as being able. God is able.

You say, “Well I can’t…”

God is able.

“I just don't think I can.”

God is able.

“I don't know if I can hold on to my faith.”

God is able.

“I don't know if I can stand for Jesus.”

God is able.

It's such a great promise from God's word. He (Jude) doesn't say to you: “I know you're able.” He says to us: “I know that God is able. He is able to keep you from stumbling.”

“To keep”- there is the third time you see that phrase. Do you notice some words that keep popping up? The word “keep” is one of those. Three times Jude in 25 verses uses the word “keep.” Here this is a Greek word that is translated from the military world, and it means, “to guard or protect,” and he says, “I know that God is able to guard and protect you to keep you from stumbling. To guard you so that you won't fall. To protect you so that you won't stumble.” The word “stumble” there is translated as “falling” sometimes it's a word that means, “ruin.” It's a description of being ultimately destroyed for eternity because of your sin. And listen to what he says- God is able to keep you from ruining your eternity. God is able to keep you from falling. God is able to keep you from losing your salvation. Now that's assuming something. That's assuming that you’ve trusted him as your Savior. It’s not a general statement to humanity. He’s speaking to those that he described in verse one- “to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.” He’s speaking of those who at some point in your life you saw your sin, you saw Jesus as Savior, you turned to Him to trust, you turned to Him in faith, and He came to live inside of you. He came to live in you by his Holy Spirit.

Now he says, “What now?” You may say, “Pastor, I was eight when I trusted Christ as my Lord and Savior in Vacation Bible School. I'm 18 now. I don’t want to go into what I've done or what my life’s like, but I don't know if I can keep myself in the faith.” That's not the statement. The statement is this- that if Christ has saved you, if He's the one you trust in, you believe in- that He's the one that keeps you from stumbling. He's the one that keeps you from falling.

I can't keep anything. How about you? Are you good at keeping things? How many of you lost a pen this week? Anybody? Let’s participate. Anybody lose your keys this week? Anybody lose your phone for a little while this week? I lose pens, I lose phones, you lose billfolds, you lose keys, you lose a kid. I mean, I cannot keep things. I can’t. I just imagine. Imagine this as our salvation- “God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that whoever shall believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life”- as long as you make sure you keep yourself saved. What if you did wake up every day with it being on you to make sure that you live like Jesus today?

I love what Adrian Rogers says. He says, “Salvation is not your work. Salvation is God's work.” We rest in the security of our salvation with great confidence, and the confidence is not in my ability to be good enough. My confidence is in Jesus Christ to be sufficient enough. That He paid for my sin, that He is my hope, that He’s my trust. I'm so thankful today that I can stand before you and proclaim that John 10 says, “Nothing can snatch you out of the hand of the Father.” I'm so thankful that I can stand before you and proclaim from Romans 8 that “nothing can separate you from the love of God.”

Again Dr. Rogers says, “Noah may have fallen in the ark, but he never fell out of it.” You see, our salvation when we come to Christ and genuinely trust Him, we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The securing of that relationship, the sealing of that relationship is put on the God who is able to keep you from stumbling.

Number two: because of who God is, anticipate. Because of who God is, anticipate the celebration of your salvation with great joy. Because of who God is, anticipate the celebration of your salvation with great joy. Look: “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.” That statement is a foretelling of the future. This presenting of you blameless is a look into the room of judgment, the room of standing before God one day in eternity in what the Bible calls “that great day.” That great day when we come before God. Do you anticipate standing before a holy, righteous God with joy? Are you excited to take your life, your witness, your history and stand before a holy God? What he shows us here is that we can anticipate celebration on that day and anticipate that celebration with great joy.

Unfortunately, many people who claim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior do not anticipate heaven in a celebratory kind of way. There is no looking forward to it. There is no joy when they think about it. There are a lot of reasons for that. One of the reasons is that some people have fallen so in love with this world that there is no desire or anticipation for the next world. It's just so good here. It's just so blessed here. It's just so great here. Heaven- as good as this is? But another reason is that many live believing that Jesus died to pay for their sins, but they don't look forward to heaven. You may not look forward to heaven because you think, “You don't know my story.” And the shame that you carry because of some event or pattern in your life, the guilt that you carry in your life because of somewhere out there that you fell short of the glory of God, some sin out there in your life- and there's guilt and there’s shame- there's a little bit of fear. There's some fear that you don't know if you really can stand before God.

The glorious great news of Jude is this- that we can anticipate a celebration of our salvation with great joy. Why? He says He's able. God is able to present you as blameless! You say, “Do you know my story?” Listen, church, do you know my story? If you just track back in your days- I'm 50 years old and if I just back up a little while and think about when I was 10 years old, the things I stole. And then the teenager years- the things I did. College days- the things I was a part of. The 20s and 30s- my motives and that the way I lived and the things that I battled with. You may think, “You take that and you're telling me that God will present me, stand me up before God, and I'll be able to be presented before God faultless? With my record? Blameless with your record? There can be joy in that scene?”

The word “present” there means “to stand up.” It means, “to stage.” It means, “to place.” It's like when you take a house and stage it for selling. You come in and you put the furniture in just the right place. You match the colors in just the right way. You bake the bread to get just the right smell. You’re staging, you're presenting, and you’re getting it ready. He says to use that word in your life. He's getting you ready, taking you to the throne room before God and he's going to stand you up before God, and He's going to look at you. Here's what the verdict is: faultless. Amen? Faultless.

You're missing a good chance to say amen right there. This is about as good as it's going to get right here. All right? That's our goal! That is what we live for! That is what we die believing! That's why we look forward to heaven- that our life can stand before God! But He’s not saying, “Yeah, I gotcha!” No, listen. We’re blameless. How? How can that be? 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Amen?

That’s how! When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He did pay for our sin. His blood paid the penalty for our sin. He bore the iniquity of us all. But that’s not the whole story! The rest of the story is that He paid for our sin, but at the same time, He imputed righteousness to our account! He took His righteousness and put it on our account so that when we stand before God, God doesn't see us in our sin; He sees us as justified. He sees us just as if we never sinned. He sees us faultless and blameless, and Jesus is able to present us there in that way. That's good news! That's our hope, that's our glory, that's the celebration! And he says, “He's able to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy.” Let that sink in. That you- plug your name in there, plug your life in there- standing in the throne room before God, ready to walk into eternity- that you in your life in your salvation, because of Jesus, brings joy to God. It brings joy to Jesus and brings joy to you.

You getting to heaven because of Jesus is a joyful event. For years, I've had the privilege to stand over and over and over again in this very spot in this room over the course of years of being a pastor, having conducted almost 100 weddings. I stand here, and the groom stands to my left on the floor looking at the back doors. Attendants fill the room, and flowers fill the room, and music fills the room, and family and friends fill the room. And everybody's in their place. Many times with Carla directing, those back doors close, the music amps up a bit, and those doors swing open and the bride steps in the door. And after weeks and weeks of planning and preparing and praying and pampering and a little bit of fuss, and there she stands! It happens again and again and again, I'm standing here crying! Me! I am! I’m standing here trying to get myself together! But the groom is looking down the aisle, and in many ways you feel like you have to prop him up! Sometimes they look down and take some time, sometimes they look back and wipe their eyes, and they’re overwhelmed by the presentation of the bride. There is coming a day where groom Jesus will present bride church to his Heavenly Father. Jude wants us to see that in that day it will be a glorious joy filled celebration because of who God is.

Number three: praise the Provider of your salvation with great passion. Because of who God is, praise the Provider of your salvation with great passion. Salvation was not my idea. Salvation was not a Southern Baptist idea. This is the 500th year anniversary of the Reformation. Salvation was not Martin Luther's idea. Salvation was God's plan from the beginning. We have the opportunity, according to Jude, to praise the Provider of our salvation with great passion.

Verse 25 says, “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.” These two verses are what we call with the technical term “a doxology.” Scattered throughout the New Testament you have examples of doxologies. It's where a writer of God's word teaches some truth or proclaims some truth, and to wrap up that lesson of truth or that illustration of truth, comes back and brings together something about who God is and what God has done, and it overflows in praise. That’s what you have in these two verses. Jude has talked about us being called and loved by God and kept for Jesus in mercy and peace and love being multiplied us and building our self up in the faith and praying in the spirit and he says, “Now praise Him.”

Now praise Him. To Him, to Him, to Him, to Him, to Him. To Him be glory. To Him be dominion. To Him be majesty. To Him be authority from all time now and forever, praise Him. Praise the Provider of your salvation. He says, “to the only God our Savior.” He's the One that has provided for us salvation. God has made a way. God has called you. He started out in verse one saying that it's God who placed the call. It's God who came searching for you! It was God who came looking for Adam and Eve in the garden when they sinned. It was God who came looking for you to save you. You, praise the Provider of your salvation.

He’s the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we see the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord as worthy of praise. He’s worthy, He’s worthy, He’s worthy. Here’s why He’s worthy- Jude says He has glory. “Glory” is a word that’s used to describe all the attributes of Almighty God wrapped up in one word. He's worthy of praise because of His glory. He’s worthy of praise because of His majesty. This Greek word here for majesty takes the word for greatness and attaches the prefix “mega” to it. Majesty is “mega-greatness.” Mega-greatness: He's worthy of praise. He has all the glory; He has mega-greatness, and then he says, “dominion.” That's the ability to rule. He rules over; He has dominion. Then He has authority; He has the right to rule. It’s one thing to have the ability to rule. It’s a whole other thing to have the right to rule. God is our Creator of all glory, of all majesty, of all dominion who also has the authority and the right to rule. He is worthy of praise! Praise the Provider of your salvation with great passion.

One of the reasons that we don't worship God with passion is because we don't acknowledge who God is. And in your life, if you feel like your relationship with God is growing cold, that you're losing your passion for Him, spend some time thinking about who God is and get to know Him. I preached a sermon in seminary my last year, that was in the spring of 1992- a message in preachers class called “Where Is Your Passion?” And over the years it's just been this journey of discovering. How do we keep our passion for Christ? Just this week, God reminded me. The way you keep a passion for Jesus Christ and God your only Savior is to get to know Him. The more you know Him, the more you love Him, and the more you love Him, the more you worship Him.

It may be that you’ve grown cold in your worship because it's been a while since you learned anything about God. It’s been a while since you spent any time with Him. It's been a while since you thought about His glory and authority and dominion and majesty. He’s worthy, and He’s worthy at all times, not just on Sunday morning at 11:30 or 9:00 or 7:00. He's worthy at all times- all times- every day of the week, every hour the day, in all parts of the world.

Psalm 48 -we’ll get to this summer- verse nine and ten says, “His praise reaches to the ends of the earth.” And on November 18, I read that verse in China. “His praise reaches to the ends of the earth.” And I wrote under that verse: “It's true. I'm in China.” I felt like I was at the ends of the earth, and even there, there were people praising our only Savior God- Jesus Christ. He's worthy of all our praise in all places at all times. Have you ever offered someone a treasure? Maybe you have a treasure you want to sell, and so you say, “This is a treasure; you ought to buy it!”

“Well, how old is it?”

“It’s older than dirt.”

“Well does it still work?”

“Yeah, look right here! Kick the tires! It still works! It runs!”

“Do you think it’s going to keep on working and keep on running?”

“Yeah, it’s got years and years to go.”

“I’ll take it; sounds like a treasure!”

Listen to how Jesus is described: glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time- Jesus. God. Is He a treasure?

How old is He?

Older than time.

Good for the 21st century?

Before all time and now.

Yeah. He’s changing lives and saving lives now.

What about in the future when robots are running the world and we’re living on the moon, is He going to be good then?

Before time, now and forever. He's worthy of praise. Because of who God is, rest. Because of who God is, anticipate. Because of who God is, praise. This week, there's your rap right there. R-A-P. Rest, anticipate, praise, because of who God is. I want to end this message the same way Jude concluded the message. One word, two syllables- amen. Let it be, it is true. Because of who God is.