

Fortify
Jude 1:17-25
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Introduction into Jude

Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible being only 1 chapter. We believe this Jude to be one of the half-brothers of Jesus who believed in Him after the resurrection.

Jude is addressed to a wide audience being those who are called, sanctified, and preserved in Jesus. Showing us the threefold nature to our salvation. The fact that we have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved.

Very quickly on in the letter Jude shares with his readers that he desired to write to them concerning their common salvation but found it necessary to write to them an exhortation to contend earnestly for the faith. (fight for)

As a result, Jude issues a warning of these false teachers who have crept in unnoticed and are wreaking havoc within the church of Jesus Christ. They had wormed themselves into their gatherings called "Love Feasts". They were apostates. People who turned away from Christ and the Word of God. Yet they sought to influence others away from Christ as well.

In order for his readers to contend and fight back against these people, they must first be made aware of who they are, what they are like, and what they do.

Within this small letter, Jude spends the larger portion of it calling out what these people are like but then there comes a POINT (which will be our text today) where he turns from what these apostates are doing to **WHAT THE READERS THEMSELVES OUGHT TO DO IN RESPONSE.**

If Jude were alive today and was to write another letter regarding contending for the faith, that letter would probably be longer than any other book in the Bible.

This was not just something for the early church to deal with but rather we know the Scriptures point us to the fact that this sort of thing will get worse before it ever gets better.

In the midst of deception, liars, deceivers, and so much more, we MUST fortify our faith. Let's look to the writings of Jude through the influence of the Holy Spirit to see how we FORTIFY our faith that we might be effective ambassadors for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Tonight, we will look at four ways we must fortify our faith in the midst of those who have turned away from Christ. The first way is to remember the Word of God.

Remember (verses 17-19)

¹⁷ But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁸ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹ These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

BUT YOU.... - a marker of contrast in the Greek. - And you, (shifted gears and changed directions)

Beloved: a person who is dearly loved and cherished

It is what God the Father said about Jesus at His baptism, and because we are IN CHRIST, we are now considered the beloved. (*2nd out of 3 times this is used within this letter by Jude*)

Remember: to recall knowledge from a memory, carries with it the idea to recall and respond

One commentator noted this about remembering... remembering in the Scriptures does not involve mere mental recollection, as when we remember a person's name that we had temporarily forgotten. Remembering means that one takes to heart the words spoken, so that they are imprinted upon one's life.

Before you can remember something, you have to know it. There is an assumption of knowledge of what was said by the apostles. When Jesus taught there were certain things that were assumed, not ignorantly but to set an expectation. "when you pray" or "when you give" or "when you fast"

The first way to fortify ourselves and the church against what Jude warned about is to know the Scriptures and be able to recall them to our minds that we might have the right perspective.

There were certain times that the disciples didn't understand what was happening in front of them but then it was the Holy Spirit who revealed the SCRIPTURE and the words of Jesus to them later on and it caused them to BELIEVE and trust Him after His ascension.

John 2:22

²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

So what did these apostles of Jesus' speak beforehand? What did they predict?

¹⁸ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

Mockers: scoffer, one who jeers

This is of course absolutely true. A few examples out of many are what Peter and Paul said...

2 Peter 3:3

³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 Timothy 3:1

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

Now why is this important to remember? Why do we need to be mindful about these words?

Because we can have the tendency to see all the false teaching, deception, lies, and to freak out about it. But we must remember what Jesus told the disciples in the upper room...

John 13:19

¹⁹ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

We are to trust on Jesus' promise that He will be the one who builds His church, and the gates of hell WILL NOT prevail against it.

It shouldn't cause us to freak out or fear but instead fortify our faith because we have been told beforehand and have been prepared for this very thing.

Jude here even gives the description of how these mockers will look....

- living by ungodly lusts, they are sensual (unspiritual), they are divisive, and they do not have the Holy Spirit which is the mark of every believer

BUT YOU, you that have the Holy Spirit ought to live differently!

Yet, how many people that have the Holy Spirit, don't live by the Holy Spirit? That is why Paul exhorts us to walk in the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit! The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak. That is why we **MUST** fortify ourselves!

That is how they live but now in contrast, this is how you ought to live! Notice with me our second way to fortify which is to remain.

Remain (verses 20-21)

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

It is significant that in response Jude doesn't tell us to attack the certain men who are a danger to the church. Instead, he tells us to focus on our walk with the Lord and help others affected by these certain men. Those who don't follow the Lord must not affect our following of Him.

Now don't hear what I am not saying. There is a time, place, and a need to call out those who walk contrary to the faith. That is what Jude just spent the bulk of the letter doing!

Ephesians 5:11

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

Paul is very clear in the last chapter of Romans when he says this!

Romans 16:17-20

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰ And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

Thank God that we have a pastor who does this! Even Pastor Dennis gave a message a few weeks ago on this very topic. But this shouldn't be the sole focus of our ministry. We don't start a false teaching slaying ministry because God will be the one to crush Satan under our feet shortly. We put our eyes on Jesus.

Romans 12:21

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

We overcome evil with good. That is our means and our method.

Notice what is the focus in this concluding exhortation.....

BUT YOU.... - a marker of contrast in the Greek. - And you,

Within these verses we have an essential imperative given to us. The core command is “to keep yourselves in the love of God.” The other aspects surrounding are three verbs that become adjectives that describe how: building, praying, and looking. Each of those verbs describe HOW we keep ourselves in the love of God. They are still commands, but they add understanding to the core command to keep ourselves in God’s love.

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, → This is the core command that is given.

Keep: to maintain, to stay in a certain state, position or activity

It is to seek to stay in one place. It’s how you keep your cup in front of the soda fountain so as to fill it up. If you move it away, no more soda. It’ how a sailor would keep up the sails of the boat as to be filled with the wind. The wind is blowing, and the soda is flowing but one must KEEP oneself in that position as to experience the benefits of it.

This is in reference to God’s love for us, not our love for Him. Jude here says REMAIN in His love.

This reminds me of what Jesus said in his illustration of the vine and the branches...

John 15:9-10

⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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.

God will not force us to stay in His love. We learn from Jesus that we are able to ABIDE or remain in His love as we obey His commandments.

An example of this is the Prodigal Son of Luke 15, who was always loved by the father, but for a time he did not benefit from it.

The love of God is always being poured out on His people but is your cup in the position to receive it? Are we under the spout where the blessings pour out? Not physical blessings primarily but Paul said we have been given every spiritual blessing in Christ!

Well, it is as we build, pray, and look that we put ourselves in a position to remain in His love.

1) Building

Building yourselves up on your most holy faith,

Building: to make near to the full completion, to construct further

Are you building yourself up on your most holy faith? The foundation is Jesus Christ for there is no other foundation that can be laid but are you apart of God’s construction project?

In Paul’s exhortation to the Colossians, he says this!

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

This tells us it is possible to have received Christ but not to be walking in Christ. If you aren’t walking forward in your relationship with the Lord, you aren’t staying where you are at.

There is a danger for every believer of being comfortable in your relationship with God.” Oh, I have been walking with the Lord a while now. I have read the Bible. I have put in the time. I have been around.” We must understand that you cannot plateau in your walk with the Lord. If you stop, you go backwards. There is no cruise control for the Christian. If we don’t build, then we will buckle.

This is why Peter says to **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE** to the adding to your faith.

2 Peter 1:5-7

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

Faith is the base foundation but is there anything else in your life to show for it? Remember what James said, faith without works is dead.

2) Praying

Praying in the Holy Spirit,

Paul already brought up the importance of knowing what Scripture says but Scripture should always be coupled with prayer. You take the sword of the Spirit to pray in the Spirit. You can’t pray in the Spirit without knowing what the Spirit says through the word of God.

Ephesians 6:17b-18

the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

We have the promise from Scripture that God will hear us in prayer as we pray according to His will. *Without the Spirit of God guiding us by the Word of God, we won’t know what the will of God is.*

Matthew Henry

Our prayers are then most likely to prevail when we *pray in the Holy Ghost*, that is, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and constant persevering importunity (*persistence*).

It is the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much. Our prayers are only as effective as they are guided by the Holy Spirit and infused with the word of God.

3) Looking

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Looking: to wait with anticipation and expectation

We all know what this is when it comes to buying something online! We buy something and then get sent that tracking number and right away we look at it for some reason. Then we sign up for the texts and emails and alerts. Every day we follow the package from one warehouse to another.

Titus 2:13

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Our love for God is fueled by the hope of His return for His people. *We are nearer to our ultimate salvation than when we first believed. It has been said that absence makes the heart grow fonder and as we look to that day, we grow in this inexpressible affection toward Him.*

So, as we build ourselves up on our most holy faith, as we pray in the Holy Spirit, and as we look to His glorious appearing THEN AND ONLY THEN will we be able to REMAIN in the love of God. **NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE** than to stay right under the spout of God's love where His blessings pour out.

Now before Jude closes with his ending doxology, he has one last exhortation toward the believers he is writing to and it's to not forget those who have begun to wander from the faith.

Now, I believe the order to this is important. Before he exhorts believers to reach out to those who wander, he tells them to make sure they are rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Kind of like in the safety demonstration on a plane, they tell you to make sure you put your mask on first before helping anyone else. There is wisdom in this.

And so we come to our third way to fortify, which is to recognize where other believers are at...

Recognize (verses 22-23)

²² And on some have compassion, making a distinction; ²³ but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Jude here makes the connection that as we look for His mercy, we also ought to display mercy to those who need it. The idea of mercy is compassion.

Compassion = care in action - Not only to care for someone but to reach out and help them.

I believe Jude is referring to those who have gotten caught up in this false teaching and apostacy. Some need intervention and help! So, as you keep yourself in the love of God, look at those who are acting in a way that puts them in a position outside of His love and turn them back!

Don't watch them drown! Don't watch them fall off a cliff!

James 5:19-20

¹⁹ Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

To stand in the gap and be willing to recognize and reach out to them.

BUT WE MUST MAKE A DISTINCTION

Making a distinction (one word in Greek): to distinguish, to discern, to make a judgement

Jude would add here that some people need to be handled differently. For some, they need that tender compassion and for others they need you to in a sense pull them out of the fire!

Jesus was full of grace and truth. He discerned how people needed to be handled and dealt with them accordingly.

Pulling: snatching (harpazo) - same word for rapture

Sometimes we hesitate to do this because we don't want to offend someone. I would rather you offend me and tackle me than let me get hit by a car!

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

Now again, we must recognize the difference and be discerning as how to do this. But we must do it.

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Don't act like everything is normal and alright but also don't count him as an enemy but treat him like a brother! **Admonish:** warn & instruct

At the end of the day, we need to realize that it won't be us who is able to keep ourselves or keep others, ***but it will be the keeping power of God that will see us through to the end.*** So, notice our fourth and final way to fortify is to rely.

Rely (verses 24-25)

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Keep: guard, watch over

Different word than to "keep" yourself in the love of God (maintain/remain)

Luke 2:8

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

What were the sheep doing? SLEEPING at night. David said in Psalm 139, when I awake, I am still with you.

2 Timothy 1:12

¹² For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

What did Paul commit to the Lord? HIS WHOLE LIFE

Stumbling: aptaistos, sinning and falling into ruin

Unique to this verse. Found nowhere else in the New Testament.

This is in direct contrast to the men who Jude previously talked about! As you keep yourself in the love of God, He will be the one who keeps you. You won't turn away from Christ because it is in the hand of Christ you stand!

Present: to stand in an upright position **Faultless:** unblemished

This is hard for us to imagine because we know our lives and our own wicked hearts. Yet GOD IS ABLE and God will present us in this way because we are in the Beloved, that is Christ. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God!

We must realize that as we rely on the promise of God to keep us it doesn't negate our responsibility to keep ourselves in the love of God!

Paul brought this balance when he said....

Philippians 2:12b-13

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

BUT OH, DO WE RELY ON THAT KEEPING POWER OF GOD IN OUR LIFE

1 Peter 1:5

⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God's part: to keep us by His power **Our part: faith:** trust Him!

Philippians 1:6

⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

He is the author & finisher of our faith. He is able to see us through.

As we HOLD ON TO HIM, HE HOLDS ON TO US.

It's like a child holding onto to the hand of their Father. The child looks up and sees their hand wholly consumed in His and yet they hold on with all their might. But who is really the one holding on? But at the same time, what does the Father say? HOLD MY HAND

John 10:27-30

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. ³⁰ I and My Father are one."

Old Hymn - He Will Hold Me Fast

When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast

Bought by Him at such a cost
He will hold me fast

When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast

For my life He bled and died
Christ will hold me fast

I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He must hold me fast.

Justice has been satisfied
He will hold me fast

Those He saves are His delight
Christ will hold me fast
Precious in His holy sight
He will hold me fast

Raised with Him to endless life
He will hold me fast
'Till our faith is turned to sight
When He comes at last!

He'll not let my soul be lost
His promises shall last

He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Savior loves me so
He will hold me fast