

SAVED AND KEPT

Jude 24-25

— **Intro:** The epistle of Jude is one of four one-chapter epistles in the NT.

The others, as most of you know, are Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John. There is just one book in the OT with one chapter, and that is the prophecy of Obadiah.

We don't know a great deal about Jude, and expositors differ among themselves as to who he was. From those whom I have consulted, it seems that most feel that he was an apostle, probably a brother of our Lord (or half brother), and, as he said in writing his epistle, a "brother of James." In the list found in Matthew 13 of the name of those who were related to our Lord, both James and Judas, or Jude, appear. For the epistle of Jude to be in the canon of Scripture, this is a strong argument indicating that he was an Apostle because as many have pointed out *the authority of the New Testament is based upon the authority of the apostles*. But I think that it was William Kelly who said in his commentary that the Scriptures don't make a great deal of who Jude was, and it is probably best for us to leave it that way.

— It is very apparent that Jude was greatly concerned about what was going on in the church of the first century. He intended to write about the Gospel to the people who first received this epistle, but instead he felt that it was necessary to face some of the issues that were troubling the church. And the fact that in his epistle he dipped back into OT times to mention problems that God's people in those earlier days, linking the past with the present, was an indication that history repeats itself. And you may remember that Dr. Johnson mentioned when he was with us two years ago and spoke on this epistle, that if Jude were alive today he would be greatly concerned that history was repeating itself again in our generation.

It is not my purpose to get into those problems tonight. I think that we all realize that the professing church today has the same kind of problems. And so the application of Jude's epistle to our lives today is just what we need as it was needed in the lives of first century Christians. The part that I am concerned about is what Jude exhorted the believers to do in those days long ago, as well as what he encouraged them to believe.

— I think that anyone who knows anything much about the Bible, has to be concerned about the condition of the church in these final years of the twentieth century. There has been something of a marriage between the

world and the church because the church has adopted many of the ways of the world, and as a result it is hard for anyone to see the distinctive character of the church as God intended it to be. There were those in Jude's day who were making the grace of God an excuse for sin, and so there was much more laxity in moral matters even among those who claimed to be the Lord's people. And, as Jude cited various OT illustrations of situations among those who professed to be the people of God, and how the judgment of God fell upon so many of them, it would raise questions in the minds of many as to what salvation really is. And one question seems to have been a problem in particular, and that was, Is it possible for a person to be saved, and then to lose his salvation? And this continues to be a problem with many people today. We all can cite examples of people we thought were truly saved, but today they are not making any attempt at all to walk with the Lord. And those who believe that saved people can still be lost, are quick to take these examples to support their teaching. But the only way to answer such a question is to come to the Word of God to learn what the Scriptures teach.

How does Jude's epistle help us in dealing with the situation we find in churches today, even where you find the amazing situation of people who claim to be Christians, and yet they don't believe what the Scriptures teach about Christ, and they know nothing about personal fellowship with Him in daily life?

Well, let me begin with verse 17. (Read verses 17-19.)

I. "MOCKERS IN THE LAST TIME" (Jude 17-19).

I suppose that there never has been a generation from the beginning of time where the people of God have not prayed and prayed, and longed for a mighty work of the Spirit in the hearts of those who profess to be the people of God, as well as in the hearts of people in the world who are not even interested in God or Christ or the Gospel. Can't all of us testify that that has been a concern of ours as long as we have known the Lord? We know that things could be better in our own lives, and we pray that they will be better. And our concern extends to others as well. But instead, we see how the world has invaded the church, and yet the world itself seems to move farther and farther from God. Instead of seeing things get better, they get worse.

Jude spoke of "mockers"? What did he mean when he used this word?

Basically the word which Jude used means *one who plays with the truth*, or *one who trifles with the truth*. They are people who are deluded, they do not understand the truth themselves, and the result of their work is that people are deceived into thinking that they are telling the truth when in fact they are distorting the truth. They are like children who have never grown up, and whose main interest in life is simply playing. The problem is they are playing with the truth of God, using it as they want to use it, which means that they are playing with the souls of as many people who will listen to them. And they can be very, very successful in what they are doing.

But Jude says that they are ungodly, they claim to have special insights into the truth, but they are "sensual" in that they are not saved, and if they are not saved, then they do not have the Spirit. And if they do not have the Spirit they are blinded to the true meaning of Scripture.

False teachers have always been everywhere, and those false teachers who use the Bible are the most dangerous kind of false teachers. But the problem is that they are misusing the Bible, and yet people are so gullible that they will think that anyone who refers to the Bible in any way must be telling the truth.

This situation can be very, very discouraging, can't it? The Apostle Paul told Timothy that in the last days things would be like they always have been, people who readily reject the truth, but turn to fables and believe fables as if they were the truth.

Now the big question is, What are we as the people of God to do in the kind of a situation that Jude was describing, and which we find is just like the situations we face today in many churches as well as in the world?

II. WHAT SHALL WE DO? (Jude 20-23).

You will find many answers to this question, but the important thing for us to do is to find out what God in His Word tells us to do. Some people would have us attack those who distort the Gospel, and do all that we can to shut them down. Others feel that we should engage in all kinds of political maneuvering in the church and in the world to get the whole mess straightened out. Others feel that there is nothing that we can do, and so all that we can do is to stand around and watch things get worse and worse. Did Jude have anything to say on this point?

Yes, thankfully, he did! And he brought it down to the life of every individual believer. Notice, "But, beloved," in verse 17, and "But ye, beloved," in verse 20. And this might seem very surprising to many to see what Jude has exhorted all of us to do. But remember, that although these are Jude's words, yet they are God's words because Jude was writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

But here is what he tells us to do.

A. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20a.)

He was saying, "Study your Bible, and get better acquainted for yourself with the great truths of the Word of God." Every one of us who knows the Lord is personally responsible before God to learn what God has given us in His Word.. The best way to be protected from error is to know the truth. And this is the only way that we can grow, as Peter exhorted us to do in the last verse of his second epistle: 2 Peter 3:18. When we are learning about God in His Word, we will grow, we will be built up, we will become stronger as Christians, and our lives will be transformed. This is a personal responsibility that each one of us has, and the Holy Spirit will be our Teacher.

What else did Jude say that we should do?

B. "Praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20b).

What does it mean to pray in the Holy Spirit? Well, it means to pray in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. We trust Him to teach us how to pray, and to lead us as we pray. But how does He do that?

I have a number of books in my library that are devoted to the subject of prayer. And I have learned much from most of them. But do you know how they have helped me the most? They have helped me the most by showing me what the Bible teaches about prayer. The Christian's prayer book is his Bible. As we faithful read and study the Word of God, we will find that we are learning a great deal about prayer. In fact, if all we had we to help us in our praying was the Bible, we would have all that we need. You see, the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, and He shows us from the Bible how to pray. This is the primary meaning of "praying in the Holy Spirit."

So as I build myself up in my most holy faith, I will find that among the many things the Holy Spirit is teaching me, is how to pray.

— But there is a third thing that Jude tells us to do.

C. "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21a).

What does this mean? Do I have to do certain things or God will stop loving me? No, that is not the meaning. But you may remember that while the Lord was speaking to His disciples in the Upper Room just shortly before His arrest and death, He said this:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John 14:21).

And then it was very likely the Jude who wrote this epistle we are considering to night who asked our Lord for further light when we read what followed:

22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:22-23).

— You see, we keep ourselves in the love of God when we live day by day, and even moment by moment, in obedience to the Word of God.

It is the neglect of these three points that Jude made in these verses that explains why the spiritual life of the church is at such a low ebb, and why we are not seeing greater blessing through the church out into the world.

But Jude still had another point to make:

D. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21b).

— It is because people are what they are by nature that we see history repeating itself. But history is not always going to continue on and on endlessly. The day is coming when our Lord Jesus Christ is going to come for us to take us to be with Himself, and this, too, is very important for us to remember. The more we know the Word, and the more we pray, and the more we seek in our lives to be obedient to the Lord, the greater will be our delight in the coming of the Lord. Our task is not to clean up this

world. We are to be a people who live for the Lord, who walk daily in fellowship with Him as we wait for His coming. And it is in this setting that Jude added:

E. Our ministry to others (Jude 22-23).

Let me read these two verses to you as they are translated in the NASB:

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;
23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh (Jude 22-23).

Do you see what leads up to our ministry to others? How often have we ignored the first four points that Jude made, and then come to this last point, only to be left wondering why we are so ineffective in seeing others brought out of darkness into the glorious light of the Lord? If we are to see the blessing of the Lord, we must do the Lord's will, and do it in His way.

But now I come to the last two verses of this chapter, the verses that drew me to this epistle for tonight. And I think that you can see the place that they have in the epistle. When Bible history gives us so many examples of people who may have started out well, and then appeared as though they had turned their backs on the Lord, only to face the judgment of God, what shall we say about them? Were they saved, and then lost? Was Jude saying in the verses we have just considered that we keep ourselves saved by building ourselves up, and by praying in the Holy Spirit, etc., and that, if we fail to do those things, we shall be lost forever?

No, he wasn't saying that. He was indicating that only a true believer would even be interested in learning more of God in the Word, and of prayer, and of obedience, and of looking for the Lord. These are some of the evidences that a person is truly saved when those exhortations in verses 20 through 23 describe the way he lives. *But preceding all of that, and in effect throughout a true believer's life, are these final two verses with which I close tonight. They give us:*

III. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR SALVATION (Jude 24-25).

The Bible has much to say about what God is able to do. And behind those statements of what He is able to do, lies the assurance that He will do it. The eternal security of our salvation rests not upon our faithfulness

to God, but upon His faithfulness to us. He saves, and then He keeps those whom He has saved. People can pretend, often for years that they are saved, and then fall away. If they do it is not an indication that they were saved, and then lost their salvation, but it is evidence that they were never truly saved. For those who are the beloved of the Lord, He keeps them from falling into sin again the way they were when we were saved. We can certainly sin, but never can any true child of God fall away and be lost again. And this is for us to believe.

But what does this all lead to?

Jude spoke of a time when we will be presented "faultless." "Faultless" means *without blemish*. It means that we will be presented before God without any charges against us.

And who will do the presenting? Some say that it will be God; others say it will be Christ. It seems to me that it will be Christ Who will present us to God, cleansed and without blemish, but all of this because He took our penalty upon Himself so that no charges remain against us.

And when we are presented to God (and oh, what a day that will be!), we will be spotless, and it will be "with exceeding joy." One question that suggests itself to us in the light of this latter statement, is, Whose joy will it be? The answer is simple. It will be Christ's great joy to present us to God, God's great joy to receive us, and it will be our overwhelming joy to experience what we know now to be true, God's complete acceptance of us because we are in Christ.

I don't want to be hard on those who believe that it is possible for saved people to be lost, but let me say that their problem is that they don't understand the meaning of what Christ did when He died on the Cross, and how completely He has satisfied God concerning our sins.

And our praise will be, not for anything that we have done, but
To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion
and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

Salvation is a work of God. He saves, and He keeps saved those who are truly born again. He gives us eternal life, and we will never perish. No one can pluck us out of His hand. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our case will never be re-tried in the court of heaven, but justice has been satisfied for us by our

Saviour, and our case is closed.

Concl: This will be graduation day for all of us – graduation from earth to heaven, graduation from sin to glory, graduation into the very presence of the Father Who loved us and chose us, to the presence of the Savior Who died for us, and Who has kept us, and to the presence of the Holy Spirit our Teachers and our Comforter. And only then will we truly realize that the glory is not ours, but the glory belongs all to the Three Members of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that we have not only been SAVED, but we have been KEPT SAVED for all eternity.