

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - February 17, 2022

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Title: "You Don't Have to Stumble"

Scripture Reference: Jude 17-25

(v17) "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (v18) How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (v19) These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. (20) But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. (21) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (22) And of some have compassion, making a difference: (23) And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (24) 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, (25) To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Note: When we reference the Book of Jude, since there is only one Chapter, the proper way to refer to a verse in this book is to simply cite the book, and then the verse (e.g., Jude 2; Jude 20; Jude 25).

I. Introduction

A. It has been recorded that the Great Wall of China was penetrated at least three times by the enemy, and each time, the guards were bribed.

B. A strong defense depends on strong people, and this is applicable to spiritual battles as well as military battles. If the Church is to oppose and defeat the false teachers, then those who are in the Church must be strong and able to "stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11).

Comment: Having said that, I want to ultimately remind you of what

our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to Peter: **"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (i.e., the bedrock of truth that Jesus Christ is the Solid Rock upon which the Church of God is built), I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** (Matt. 16:18)

C. There is always the danger of stumbling (Jude 24). The word "falling" in this verse is translated "stumbling."

D. In his closing paragraph, Jude gave his beloved readers four instructions to follow if they would stand firm and resist the apostates (i.e., false teachers).

II. Exposition [Part I] - Remember God's Word (Jude 17-19)

A. From the very beginning, Satan has attacked the Word of God. "Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1)

B. Once we begin to question God's Word, we become vulnerable to Satan's attacks, because it is only the truth of the Word that can protect us from the lies of the devil. God's Word is the only absolute and trustworthy standard. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20)

C. Jude says, remember who gave the Word (v17). While our Lord had many disciples, He selected only a few to be apostles, and in order to qualify to be an apostle (a sent one with a commission), one had to be a believer who had been a witness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1).

D. Wherever there is the authentic, the counterfeit will appear; this happened in the early Church. False apostles and teachers began to appear, and it was necessary to develop a system to protect the church against false prophecies and forged letters.

E. Since Christ had committed "the faith" (Jude 3) to His

apostles, one of the main tests in the early Church was, "Is this what the apostles taught?" When the church assembled the New Testament books, it was required that each book be written by an apostle or by someone closely associated with an apostle.

Point: True, God-given, Apostolic teaching recorded in the Holy Bible, was, and still is the test of truth.

F. Jude mentioned the words that were "spoken" by the apostles, because originally there were no New Testament epistles. Over the years, inspired letters were written by Paul, Peter, and John; we have these letters in our New Testament.

G. We no longer depend on tradition since we have the completed Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments.

H. Whenever someone offers you a "new revelation," test it by what is written in the Word of God.

I. In Jude 18, he tells his readers (and us), to remember what the apostles said. They prophesied that, in these last days, mockers would come who would deny the Word of God.

J. Jude echoed what Peter had written in 2 Peter 3:3 - "Knowing this first, that thee shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (2 Pet. 3:3)

K. Paul and John also warned their readers about the apostates (1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-6).

Point: When a warning is given so many times, it will be beneficial for us to take heed.

L. **Remember Why They Said It** (v19). The false teachers want to divide the church and lead people out of the true fellowship into their false fellowship. Consider Acts 20:30 - "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

M. Their appeal is usually, "We have a deeper knowledge of the

Word that your church doesn't have! We have a better understanding of prophecy, etc. ..."

N. Not only do false teachers divide the church, but they also deceive the church, because they are "sensual, having not the Spirit." The word sensual means the opposite of "spiritual."

O. This is why Paul used it in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, where it is translated "natural." (The Greek word is *psukikos*, which means "soulish.") Because the false teachers do not have the Spirit of God, they must function on their natural "soul power" alone.

Comments:

- 1) One of the tragedies in ministry today is that some of God's people cannot discern between "entertainment ministry" and the true ministry of the Spirit.
- 2) There is so much "religious showmanship" these days that the saints are confused and deceived. Just as there was "strange fire" in the tabernacle (Lev. 10), there is "strange fire" today in the church: therefore, we must exercise discernment.

III. Exposition [Part II] - Build Up Your Christian Life (Jude 20-21)

A. The Christian life must never stand still, if it does, it will go backwards. A house left to itself will eventually fall apart.

B. The apostates are in the business of tearing down, but every Christian must be involved in building up - first, his or her own spiritual life, and then the local assembly.

C. The foundation for our Christian life is our "most holy faith (v20), which is the same as "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (v3).

D. The Word of God is essential for spiritual growth. As I have encouraged you over the years, we must spend time in the Word, seeking the mind of God.

E. The power for building the Christian life comes from prayer:

praying in the Holy Ghost." (v20)

Point: The Word of God and prayer go together in spiritual growth.

F. If all we do is read and study the Bible, we will have a great deal of light, but not much power. However, if we concentrate on prayer and ignore the Bible, we may be guilty of zeal without knowledge.

G. We read the Word to grow in faith (Rom. 10:17), then we use that faith to ask God for what we need and what His Word tells us we may have.

H. In Verse 21, Jude says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (i.e., abiding in God's love). Our Lord made a similar statement in John 15:9 - "**Continue ye in my love.**"

I. To love God means much more than to enjoy a special kind of feeling. There must also be obedience. "But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." (1 John 2:5) (also see John 15:10).

Point: We grow in our love for God as we listen to His Word, obey it, and delight in doing what pleases Him. This is how we keep ourselves in God's love.

J. God's love is a holy love; it is not shallow sentiment. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (Psalm 97:10). To love God is to love what He loves and hate what he hates! It is the dedicated, separated Christian who enjoys the deepest fellowship with the Father in the family (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

K. We build our Christian life on the foundation of faith and through the motivation of love. However, we also need hope: "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:12).

L. The word translated **looking** (Jude 21) means "earnestly expecting." It describes an attitude of life that is motivated by the promise of our Lord's return.

IV. Exposition [Part III] - Exercise Spiritual Discernment (Jude 22-23)

A. What should be the attitude of the growing Christians toward those who are being influenced by the apostates? Jude instructed his readers to exercise discernment and to act on the basis of that discernment. He described three different kinds of people who need spiritual help - "**And of 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." (Vv 22, 23).

B. Have compassion means convince and making a difference literally means those who are wavering. These are the people who are probably the "unstable souls" Peter wrote about (2 Peter 2:14). They are converted but they are not grounded in the faith.

C. Our responsibility is to have mercy on them, and show compassion toward them, by seeking to lead them away from the influence of the apostates.

D. This kind of ministry demands a great deal of love and patience, and we must keep in mind that immature believers are like little children who think they know right from wrong.

E. One of the best ways to draw them away from the false teachers is to magnify all that they have in Christ and to share His love for them in practical ways.

F. Verse 23 - "And others" - This could be the unsaved or perhaps even those who have left the fellowship and are now a part of the apostate group. They need to be snatched out of the fire.

Comment: The angels took Lot by the hand and pulled him out of Sodom (Gen. 19:16), and sometimes that must be done in order to rescue weak and unstable believers from the clutches of false teachers.

G. There is probably a reference also to Zechariah 3:2 and also Amos 4:11. In the Zechariah passage, the "brand" was the nation Israel brought back from the Babylonian captivity and resettled in their land.

H. In Amos 4, God was reproofing the people for not heeding His warnings and judgments which were - poverty, poor crops, drought, pestilences, war, and even judgments like those that overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. They were a brand plucked out of the fire, yet they did not appreciate God's mercy.

I. In Jude 23b, the phrase **with fear** means "**with caution.**" In trying to help those who have erred, we must be careful not to be trapped ourselves! Many who have tried to rescue others have been drowned themselves.

Point: When an unstable believer has been captured by false doctrine, we must be careful as we try to help them, because Satan can use them to defile us.

J. The principle Jude was laying down was that stronger believers must never think they are beyond satanic influence. Not every Christian is equipped to deal with false teachers or with those they have influenced and captured.

K. It takes a good knowledge of the Word, a faithful walk with God, and the fulness of the Spirit of God. It also demands spiritual discernment.

Point: It is much easier to instruct new Christians and keep them away from false teachers than it is to snatch them out of the fire!

V. Exposition [Part IV] - Commit Yourself to Jesus Christ (Jude 24-25)

A. This well-known benediction (and one that I personally love), contains a wealth of spiritual truth.

B. If we want to keep our feet on the ground spiritually, walk straight, and not stumble, we must yield ourselves fully to the Savior. He alone is able to guard us, but we must "keep ourselves in the love of God" (v21). He is able if we are willing!

C. Jude was not writing about the possibility of the believer sinning and falling from God's family. This was made clear in Jude 1, where true believers are "preserved" and cannot be lost. He was

writing about the believer's daily walk with the Lord and the danger of going astray and stumbling.

D. When we do sin against God, we may confess our sins and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9). If we persist in disobedience (which is sin), God will chasten us in love (Heb. 12:5-11).

E. The Father has covenanted with the Son that all of His people will one day see and share His glory (see John 17:22-24). Jesus Christ will have the special joy of presenting His bride, the church, before the Father's throne.

F. It was the anticipation of this "joy" that helped Jesus endure the sufferings of the cross (Heb. 12:2). **THANK YOU, LORD!**

G. The purpose of salvation is not simply to rescue sinners from hell, as wonderful as that is. The grand purpose is that God may be glorified for all eternity (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14).

H. Jude 25 is the only place in this letter where Jude called our Lord "**Savior.**" It is not enough to say that Jesus Christ is "a savior," or "the Savior." We must know, believe, accept, and say that He is "our Savior - **My Savior.**"

I. He is not only our Savior, but He is "**the only wise God.**" He can give you the wisdom you need to live your life to the glory of God.

J. The false teachers boasted of their special knowledge, but they lacked spiritual wisdom. If Christians would seek the wisdom of God in the Word of God, they would not stumble into the traps of false teachers but would walk to please the Lord (Col. 1:9-10).

L. Why should we walk in obedience to God's will? So that Christ might receive the glory! Glory is the sum total of all that God is and all that God does.

M. **Majesty** means "greatness, magnificence." Only God is great, When we praise God, we praise the most magnificent Person in the universe.

N. **Dominion** has to do with God's sovereignty and rule over all

things. He has complete control over all things.

O. **Power means** "authority," which is the right to use power. All authority belongs to Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18).

VI. Summary

A. What a magnificent doxology (Jude 24-25)! Knowing the purpose Jude had in mind when he wrote this letter, this doxology takes on even greater significance.

B. You don't have to stumble. If you will remember God's Word, build your Christian life in faith, hope, and love, exercise spiritual discernment, and commit yourself to Christ, then, He will keep you from stumbling.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the biblical passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. As usual, all passages have been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

"But they that _____ upon the Lord shall renew their _____; they shall mount up with _____ as _____; they shall _____, and not be _____; and they shall _____, and not _____."

[Isaiah 40:31]

"Now to him that is of _____ to _____ you according to my _____, and the _____ of Jesus Christ, according to the _____ of the _____, which was kept _____ since the world began."

[Romans 16:25]

"Now unto him that is _____ to do _____ above all that we _____ or _____, according to the _____ that worketh in us. Unto him be _____ in the Church by Christ Jesus _____ all ages, world _____ end. Amen."

[Ephesians 3:20-21]

"Now unto the King _____, _____, _____, the
_____ wise God, be honor and _____ for ever and ever, Amen."
[1 Timothy 1:17]

"And you, that were _____ and enemies in your
mind by _____ works, yet now hath he _____ in the body of
his flesh through _____, to present you _____ and
_____ and _____ in his sight:"
[Colossians 1:21-22]

My prayer is that this study session has been a blessing to you and
remember, "Your Don't Have to Stumble."

Jude 3, 24-25

Pastor Austin