

Jude 24-25

*To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy –
25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!
Amen. [NIV]*

You know, this book that we've been studying – the book of Jude – is something like a sermon in that, if we remember anything at all about it, we will probably remember the end – the last words that were said.

Most of us probably do remember his closing words – Jude's doxology – word of glory, that's what it means. We remember the lyrical, metrical expression of praise to God read for us just a moment ago. This is one of the most beautiful and powerful examples of doxology in the Bible.

Doxologies typically come out more like a song than a statement, and because of that we're tempted to think of them as just their own, separate thing – their own thought, as though they stand disconnected from everything around them.

But the fact is, a good doxology is one that arises out of and fits well into its context.

A good doxology is one whose praise flows naturally out of the circumstance in which it's used – which is the case here in Jude.

Jude "doxologizes" so well, in fact, that just from the words of the doxology we get a very good idea about the message of the greater book.

Now, of course we already know the message – we've invested several weeks talking about it. In fact, some of you have commented, "this is a pretty long series for a pretty short book," and I want you to know that I've noted your comments and filed them in the appropriate file.

But back to Jude. We already know that Jude wrote to warn the faithful at this church – First Church of Wherever – that they were in danger of being misled by false teachers who had infiltrated their ranks and were now living and teaching a combination of Gnosticism and Antinomianism. They claimed that they had, through dreams, been given a special knowledge that permitted them to declare with authority that behavior that had been formerly known as immoral sexual behavior was now just fine in God's eyes. They, themselves, were living that way, and they were teaching and encouraging others there to do the same.

And in response to that assertion of theirs, Jude says, in the immortal words of M.A.S.H.'s Colonel Potter, "Horse-hockey!"

Not only was this teaching blatantly false; it was also terribly dangerous and could ultimately wind up being eternally destructive, which is why Jude invests so much of this letter in making his case for orthodoxy.

But then at the end, in the last six verses, Jude's purpose shifts to explain how, even in an atmosphere of

blatant lies and falsehood, a faithful follower of Jesus can and should, Jude says, contend for – fight for and remain in – the truth and the true faith.

Three weeks ago, we went over verses 20 and 21, where Jude explains the part that *we're* called to play in keeping our faith vibrant and strong. Followers of Christ work *with* God in specific ways, Jude says, in contending for our own faith.

Two weeks ago, we saw that verses 22 and 23 explain how followers of Christ can and should be redemptive, merciful witnesses of truth to those who are caught in lies and falsehoods like the ones he describes – and even to those who are *teaching* the lies. God wants to redeem even *them*, and *we* have a part to play in that – in *helping* them *find* and then *contend* for their own true faith.

And now today in Jude's last two verses, the doxology, Jude speaks of God's part and God's power specifically regarding this circumstance – this conflict of true and false doctrine, such that all who will – all who would – might successfully contend for true faith.

In this doxology, Jude is re-stating what he's already said: there is falsehood in the world that is influential and powerful, and the fact is that we cannot overcome it in us or in others *on our own*.

But, with *God's* help and by *His* power, *we can do both* these things.

With God's *help* and by His *power* we can *victoriously contend* for our *own true* faith, *and* we can successfully *snatch* others from the eternal destruction that is the destiny of sinful lives.

And it's all because of *God's* power at work in us – which is why we have no reason at all to be proud of our accomplishments. We have no reason to be conceited or arrogant or to look down our noses at others, or to think ourselves better than others. It's not as though we, ourselves, have kept ourselves from falling or stumbling.

Any spiritual success – any personal victory in faith – that we have experienced is due to God's power at work within us.

"To Him," Jude says, *"who is able to keep you from falling."*

It is God's power that preserves us, you see?

It is God's power that keeps us from slipping, from stumbling, from literally losing our footing and then falling prey to anything or anyone that might negatively affect our faith or compromise our relationship with God. It is God's power that keeps our eternal salvation preserved, our future life with Him secure, and our guilt and shame atoned for.

It is by *His* power at work in us that all this is possible. That's why Jude begins, *"To Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy..."*

Any spiritual success in the midst of lies and temptation comes from God. It's His doing. Don't presume you can go it alone.

After *to that able, powerful God*, Jude goes on, "*to the only God...*" You see there in verse 25 that Jude takes a moment to make sure we understand: *there is only one God*.

Unlike those in his culture who found a god beneath every rock and around every corner and who acknowledged multiple gods competing for the souls and attention of people, Jude says, "No, there is only one God."

If you believe there are multiple gods, there are, in reality, no gods in your life.

If there you believe there are multiple authorities, there are, in reality, no authorities in your life except your own judgment between them.

This is the essential reality that successful followers of God have had to grasp ever since Adam: in order to follow god successfully, we must embrace the fact that there is only one God.

"*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.*" The *Shema* from Deuteronomy 6. In Mark 12, when Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was, this is how He began His answer.

But Jude goes on, "To the only God **our Savior...**" This one God is our Savior.

Now, typically, when you and I think, "Savior," we think, Jesus. Jesus is referred to as "savior" fifteen times in the New Testament.

But, did you know that God is referred to as "savior" in the New Testament seven times?

And realizing this, we find part of the argument for the Trinitarian nature of God, you see?

God is one. Certainly. Jude has affirmed that.

But, how can both God and Jesus be Savior if Jesus is not God?

The fact is, from the origin of time, it has been God the Father who is the author of salvation. God is the originator and the giver of salvation. It was all His idea and His gift to the world that He created.

But, of course, the bestowing of that gift—its means and its delivery—was accomplished through Jesus Christ, God's Son.

So, is God the savior? Yes, He is.

And to that one God, our Savior—the God who protects and upholds and empowers, Jude says, to that God *be...*," and then he lists four things—four nouns: "*glory, majesty, power and authority.*"

Glory. What is glory? It is God's transcendent worth. Glory is the honor that is His simply because of Who He is. It's that radiant magnificence that, apart from holiness, no one can look upon and live.

It is His glory that required God to hide Moses in a cave and cover him with His hand so that Moses could only see God's back as He passed by—because God knew that was all Moses could stand to see.

This is the quality of God that later gave Moses a semi-permanent suntan.

The glory of the sun itself is nothing compared to the glory of the One who made the sun and set it in place.

That's why Jude says, "*To the only God, our Savior, be glory!*"

And then, *majesty*. That's God's greatness. There is no majesty that compares to God's Majesty. He is the royal, regal, magnificent One. There is no king, no queen, no ruler, no president, no emperor, no potentate, no pooh-bah, no matter how grand, who compares.

The fact is, God is the One who sets all those persons in place, so how could any of them be anything near His equal? His kingdom is as much superior to theirs as the most magnificent earthly government is superior to the queen of the bee's nest or anthill.

There is no one on earth whose majesty compares to God's.

"*To the only God, our Savior,*" Jude says, "*be majesty!*"

Next, Jude commends God's *power*. God's *might*. His *strength*. His *dominion*. His *governance*. It has no limits. It has no boundaries. God is just as strong a million miles into space as He is in the center of our earth. His power is just as effective in Russia as it is in China, as it is in North Korea, as it is in Antarctica (among the penguins,) as it is in Portland and Seattle and Chicago and New York and greater metropolitan Nicholasville.

There is no wall that can keep Him either in or out.

There is no law that can stop His work.

There is no stick that can beat Him back.

There are no chains that can tie Him down.

There is no muzzle that can silence His voice.

He rules it all.

That's why Jude says, "*To this 'only God,' our Savior, be power!*"

And then, God's *authority*. God's authority is *all* authority. All rights are His, because all things belong to Him.

The false teachers in Jude's day claimed—and plenty of people in our day are still trying to claim, "God has no right to tell me how to live."

And yet the fact is, "God has every right to tell you and me how to live, because neither of us would even exist without Him."

We didn't make ourselves, you see? Not one of us ever had the thought, "I think I'll will myself into existence. I think I'll get born on August 1st."

No, it was God who thought us up. It was God who designed us, who made us, who gave us a birthday. And so, you see, He owns us—every part of us.

And yet, He has graciously, generously given us to ourselves that we might give ourselves back to Him—to the One who has every right to every part of us. He wants us to submit to His authority *willingly*, so relationship with Him can be real and genuine and voluntary.

But we dare not mistake His graciousness and His patience for impotence or feebleness or helplessness, Jude says.

Because all authority ultimately belongs to God. He is maker, and so He is the rule-maker of this world. And if we are to survive, either here or eternally, we want to be on His side.

That's why Jude says, *"To this only God, our Savior, be authority!"*

You see, the moral standards and sexual ethics that the false teachers in this church were scoffing – the "old-fashioned" ethics and principles that they were laughing about and making fun of and that they were dismissing – those mores were not the simple *suggestions* of some inferior deity – some *neighborhood idol* or some *small "g" god* made from wood or stone.

No, they were in Jude's day – and they *are still today* – the *design*, the *law*, the *standard*, the *imperative* of the *only* God of *all glory, majesty, power* and *authority*.

We may like them or we may not.

We may agree with them or we may not.

But just the same, they are not today, nor were they ever, up for discussion or debate.

They are not today, nor were they ever, in any way on the block for human evaluation and judgment.

And they never will be, because God Himself –

just like His word,

just like His laws,

just like His morals,

just like His standards –

God Himself is for all time, just as Jude closes, *"before all ages, now, and forevermore."*

God, and all that is God – all that is about God – is timeless, you see?

This is the God who was, who is, and who is to come.

This is the God who is the Alpha and Omega – the first and the last, the beginning and the end, as John puts it in Revelation.

And this is the climax, not only of God's person and character, but of Jude's argument.

Because, you see, the heart of the false teachers' claims was that God had changed – God had changed and changed His mind about what was good and right, specifically here, with regard to sexuality.

But Jude says, *"No, God has not changed."*

Although our world today claims that God has changed, the truth is, *God has not changed*.

Although so many, both then and now, want to believe that He's no longer there;

He's no longer real;

He's no longer interested;

He's no longer engaged;

He's no longer really serious about this or that or the other;

He's no longer glorious or majestic or powerful or in control.

The reality is, Jude reminds us, *God has not changed!*

His design for humanity, for us and for our sexuality, *has not changed*.

His calling of persons to Himself, to relationship, to transformation, to purity, to holiness, to lives of integrity and goodness *has not changed*.

His absolute power over our world – over nature, over germs and viruses, and over every earthly kingdom – *has not changed*.

His judgement of what is sin and what is not *has not changed*.

And thankfully – gratefully, His love for His creation, His offer of redemption, His ability to not only save repentant souls but to make them well and to make them whole, and His desire to re-create broken people: these *have not changed*.

Don't for a moment imagine God has changed His mind about any of these things.

He still defines and judges and punishes sin.

He still keeps the faithful steady.

He still makes the willing heart pure.

He still helps the lost find their way home – even now, just as He did before all the ages, and just as He will forevermore.

In a world that is changing by the day, if you haven't already, why not take shelter in a God who doesn't change?

Our world is unpredictable and fickle. It has always been like that. One day it says, "this is right; this is the way." But the next day we hear, "No, now this is right; this is the way."

Our world tries to tell us, "This is how to think about love. This is how to think about parenting. This is how to think about sexuality. This is how to think about money, about marriage, even about how to eat."

And then, the next day, it all changes.

But God does not change.

He is steady, and He can make us steady.

He is eternally secure, and He can bring security to our eternity.

He is the beginning and end of all *glory* and *majesty* and *power* and *authority* – He's always been, and He always will be.

So, why not give in to Him – to His design and path for your life?

Why not let Him have His way with you and bring stability and peace to your soul?

That's what Jude was offering to that church all those years ago, and it's what He offers to us today.

In a world that is changing by the day, if you haven't already, put your trust in a God Who doesn't change.

Closing Hymn: *He Is Able*

Benediction:

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.