

Preached at GBC on 8/24/25
“A Call To Persevere”

Jude 17-23

Nothing that Jude wrote to these **believing, justified saints** was written to cause doubt, fear, or anxiety concerning their **STATE** or **STANDING** in the kingdom of God. I'd have you recall **HOW** he began this epistle – “*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, **to them that are sanctified** by God the Father, and **preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.**”*(Jude 1,2) Whatever mistakes these believers had made in allowing these false teachers to by stealth enter in and sit among the brethren, Jude wasn't threatening them with a possibility of condemnation, **nor was he calling them unbelievers or compromisers**. His goal in writing to them in the manner he did was to make certain they were aware of these “*certain men crept in unawares*” who sat among them, seeking to influence and carry away God's children into error. Jude followed our Lord's words, encouraging **THEM** and **US** to – “*Judge not according to the appearance, **but judge righteous judgment.**”*(Jn.7:24) Everything he wrote to them concerning these false teachers and their foreordained condemnation was meant to be an encouragement for every believer to “*continue in the faith.*” In other words, everything in this epistle, and particularly what he wrote in these verses we're looking at today is “**A CALL TO PERSEVERE.**” **We need to be perfectly clear on this:** While a believer's perseverance in the faith **DOES NOT SAVE THEM** or **KEEP THEM SAVED**, every true redeemed, justified saint **DOES PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH**. The writer of Hebrews stated it this way – “*Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*”(Heb.10:38,39 – KJV) Let me read you a literal translation – “and ‘**the RIGHTEOUS** by faith shall live,’ and ‘if he may draw back, My soul hath no pleasure in him, and we are not of those drawing back to destruction, but of those believing to a preserving of soul.’”(YLT) **Do you see the implications of this truth?** In this all important matter of salvation and eternal life, the elect child of God isn't made **RIGHTEOUS** by their living, but because they **ARE** “*the righteous*” by virtue of their **ONENESS with Christ** – **II Cor.5:21** - **BY GOD-GIVEN FAITH in CHRIST AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ALONE** they live. Bill Parker was the first one I ever heard make this statement, but it summarizes the child of God's life – “The justified saint has for his or her **STARTING POINT**, what the self-righteous, lost, religious sinner has for **THEIR GOAL.**”

Notice Jude's last reminder to these believing, justified saints concerning these false teachers – “*But, **BELOVED, remember** ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*”(Jude 17-19) Listen to YLT – ‘and ye, **BELOVED, remember** ye the sayings spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: that they said to you, that in the last time there shall be scoffers, after their own desires of impieties going on, these are those setting themselves apart, natural men, the Spirit not having.’ Jude speaks to them by a word of endearment – “*Beloved*”. The Greek word means ‘beloved, esteemed, dear, favourite, worthy of love’. This word in the original has for its root the Greek word which speaks of a **GOD-LIKE LOVE** a **LOVE** the natural man **DOES NOT POSSESS** and **CANNOT PRODUCE**. **This is how important this is to you and me** – The same word Jude by which he addressed these believers is the same word used concerning their blessed Lord – “*And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This*

is my **BELOVED** Son, in whom I am well pleased.”(Matt.3:17) It is the same word the Holy Spirit moved Paul to use in writing to those at Rome – “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED [to be] **SAINTS**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”(Rom.1:7) It is the same word he used in beginning this epistle – “**Beloved**, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude exhorts these justified saints who had allowed these “*certain men*” to stealthily creep into their congregations to “**remember** ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” The Greek word translated “**remember**” means ‘to bear in mind or recollect’. What were they ‘to bear in mind or recollect’? We can also bring that forward to us as present day saints who see and experience the same issues in the church today. We’re ‘to call to mind or recollect’ **WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD AND TAUGHT**, what the Apostles and their disciples declared of the false teachers and false professors. **It wasn’t like they hadn’t been warned** – “remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” All the Apostles that wrote to the churches warned and exhorted them all about these false teachers and false professors who would infiltrate the church. They had been told the same truth by our Lord Jesus Christ – “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **IF** [it were] **POSSIBLE**, they shall deceive the very elect.”(Matt.24:24); “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”(Matt.7:15) The Apostle Paul warned the believers at Ephesus concerning these false brethren – “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”(Acts 20:28-30) The Apostle Peter did the same: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”(II Pet.2:1,2) I don’t want to be too harsh on these to whom Jude wrote, because we have never experienced in our lifetime what they endured for the sake of the Gospel. **But here’s the thing**: Even though they endured much for “*righteousness sake*”, it was no excuse for their tolerance of these false teachers who sat among them. It let’s me know that their discernment was similar to those believers addressed in Hebrews – **Turn to Heb.5:11-14**. I’d have you notice the vital distinction Jude makes between these “*certain men crept in unawares*” and those he called “*beloved*” – “*who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, **having not the Spirit***.” These false teachers didn’t have the “*witness*” within them, i.e., the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **The Spirit itself BEARETH WITNESS with our spirit, that we are the children of God**.”(Rom.8:14-16) The Apostle John wrote: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the **witness** in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the **record that God gave of his Son**.”(I Jn.5:10) The Greek word translated “*witness*” and “*record*” in this verse is the **SAME WORD**, and it mean ‘what one testifies, testimony, i.e. before a judge’.

Christ made it clear that the work of the Spirit is to bear witness of Christ as the God sent Messiah of God's chosen people. Any who have not the Spirit do not believe the record God gave of His Son, and the results are the same – **THEY WILL** “*walk after their own ungodly lusts.*” They can be moral, sincere, dedicated, and religious, but **EVERYTHING THEY DO** is “*ungodly*”, because they have “*not the Spirit*”, i.e., “*Christ IN YOU, the HOPE OF GLORY.*”

Look at Jude's words to them in **Vss.20-23**. Jude again addresses them as “*beloved*”, i.e., ‘worthy of love’. A literal translation of these verses clears up the errors that natural man believes and promotes, teaching that we build ourselves up in the faith and we actually keep ourselves in the love of God by our obedience or good works – “and ye, beloved, **on your most holy faith** building yourselves up, in the Holy Spirit praying, yourselves in the love of God keep ye, waiting for the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ—to life age-during.’ The word translated “*building up*” means ‘To finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid’. Paul used the same word in this way – “*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.*” (I Cor.3:11,12) Paul also told those at Ephesus – “*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*”(Eph.2:19-22) Anything a believer does apart from faith in Christ who is their only foundation, is “*wood, hay, and stubble.*” Jude wasn't implying that anything done by the sinner or in the sinner makes them more acceptable, more holy, or more qualified. He is saying that out of grace and gratitude to Him “*who loved us and gave Himself for us*”, we should seek to honor Him by growing in grace and knowledge of the truth. The same applies in a proper understanding of Jude's call “*to keep yourselves in the love of God.*” Our LOVE doesn't make God love us. John wrote: “*Herein is love, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, but that HE LOVED US and sent His Son [to be] the propitiation for our sin.*”(I Jn.4:10) The Greek word translated “*keep*” means ‘*to attend to carefully, take care of, or TO OBSERVE*’. Metaphorically it means ‘to keep oneself in the state in which he is’. The **ONLY WAY** we can observe ourselves in the “*love of God*” is by that **FAITH** which He alone gives us in regeneration and conversion. **The Scriptures tell us:** “*Without FAITH, it is impossible to please God.*” This **FAITH**, God-given **FAITH** enables us to “*believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*”(Heb.11:6) By faith we observe ourselves to be “*loved of God*” – “*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: BECAUSE AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.*” (I Jn.4:15-17) Notice what an understanding of God causes the child of God to do – “*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*” Aren't we all as saved sinners, those who still see so much remaining sinfulness in ourselves, constantly “*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*” God's mercy gives us **HOPE** in the best of times, as well as in the worst of times. When I think about myself and God's continual mercy toward me, I always think of Jeremiah's words – “*This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. [It is of] the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness. The LORD [is] my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope*

in him. The LORD [is] good unto them that wait for him, to the soul [that] seeketh him. [It is] good that [a man] should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”(Lam.3:21-26)

An understanding of God’s grace changes the child of God’s perspective concerning all their brothers and sisters in Christ – “*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.*” Here’s a literal translation – “and to some be kind, judging thoroughly, and some in fear save ye, out of the fire snatching, hating even the coat from the flesh spotted.” **Listen to me:** There is no doubt that God’s children can, and tragically often do go astray, even on doctrinal issues. **The true question is this: HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND AS BELIEVERS AND AS A CHURCH?** Jude’s words on this matter are similar to Paul’s – “*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*”(Gal.6:1,2) We have to judge thoroughly in every believer’s error. In lesser matters, the reproof might be milder, one on one. In greater matters, like Peter’s error in Antioch, the reproof must be greater. But in every instance we are to show compassion to our brethren, as the Lord has shown mercy and compassion to us, always “*remembering the hole of the pit from which you were digged.*” **That brings us to Jude’s closing admonition to all** – “*And others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*” I believe the “*others*” Jude was speaking of were these false teachers they encountered, as well as those who were being drawn away by the doctrine they declared. Even these kinds of sinners, we should use all the means God has given us to preach dogmatically and compromisingly the truth of the Gospel in hope that if they are His, He will be pleased to use His Gospel preached, heard, and understood – “*pulling them out of the fire*” of their own false doctrine. That’s exactly what Paul said of himself in **Rom.10:1-3**. We are to do so, “*hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*” While they have sought to corrupt the garment of salvation by calling into question the ground, hope and cause of salvation, we can truly like David say – “*I hate every false way*”, while at the same time not hating the one who is guilty of such grievous error. **Here’s the thing:** As long as one is breathing, being mentality capable to hear the Gospel, there’s **HOPE**. I really try by God’s grace to never give up on any - **friend, family, or foe**, until the Lord has removed them from this place.