



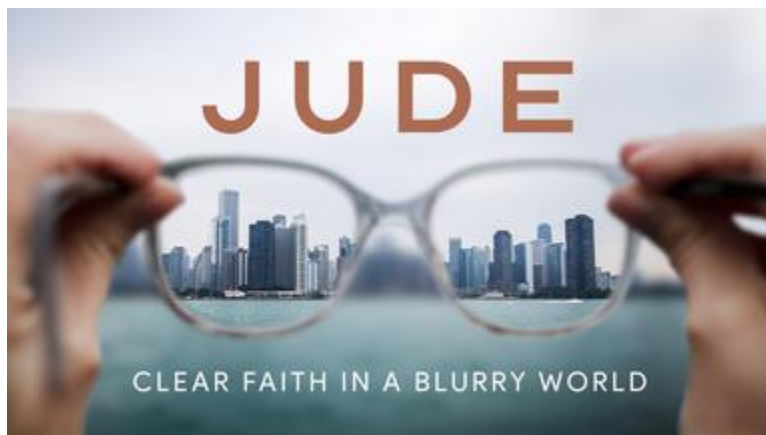
# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

## God Is Able

Jude 1:24–25

Tim Badal | December 3, 2023

Please take God's Word in your hands as we finish up the book of Jude. We'll be starting our Christmas series next week, "Christmas Is..." as we prepare for this season. Our prayer is that everything we do as a church, everything you do families, will point the world back to Christmas being about Jesus Christ.



I've got to be honest, there may be no better passage for us in Jude to start our Christmas season with than the passage we have in front of us today, the doxology that is the ending of the book. We've been looking at Jude under the heading "Clear Faith in a Blurry World." We've asked God to remind us through this book that our world is blurry. The boundaries and other things God has so lovingly established for us regarding our own life on earth have been blurred by the world. Voices and influences from the world have told us not to follow God, not His prescriptions and patterns for our lives, but to follow those of our own making. We're told to pursue our own desires, our own pleasures, and to rebel against God.

As Jude has walked us through this letter, he's reminded us of what goes on in the lives of those who rebel against God. He's given us two groups of people. First is a group he calls "those" or "these people." These are people who have crept unnoticed into the arena of Christians. We don't know what they looked like or sounded like, but we know what they were saying in order to influence the first-century Christians. Ten times, Jude refers to them as "ungodly" people or voices. He tells us they're already condemned. He says "woe" to them. He calls them "hidden reefs," "waterless clouds," "fruitless trees twice dead." In other words, their preaching and their pattern of living is pointless and worthless in the sight of God.

He also writes that Jesus will come and bring judgment against them at His second coming. He will convict them for all the ungodly things they've done. He says we will be able to identify them because they are grumblers, malcontents, loud-mouth boasters. They only have one pursuit which is to follow their sinful desires. We don't know exactly what this looked like in the first century, nor how these people crept in. Was it in the marketplace? Was it in a Bible study? How did it happen and how did it affect the lives of the Christians in that day? During this series, we've recognized that in modern media, especially in social media, we are accustomed to listening to many voices and influencers in our world.

I've challenged you in this series to be asking yourself, "With what I'm consuming through media, have some voices crept in unnoticed?" Maybe it's in the movies you're watching, the TV shows you stream, the music you listen to, the podcasts you subscribe to. Maybe it's the many voices that come on reels, TikTok videos and Snapchat pictures. We are being inundated with voices, so maybe this morning some of us need to be evaluating the voices we're allowing into our lives, the voices that may even make us begin to believe some of the lies the devil and this world want us to believe. Jude is telling us to be careful when listening to these people.

Then he describes another group of people. At the very beginning of his letter, Jude tells us these people are "*beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.*" They're people who are called, who are now building themselves up in their most holy faith. They're praying in the Spirit and fighting the good fight. They're keeping themselves in God's love and waiting, not for the condemnation that Jesus will bring at His second coming, but to receive His mercy. These individuals are known as

contenders. In verse three Jude calls them *"to contend for the faith."* They're not to listen to the voices of the world, not to allow those preachers through various media to carry the day, but instead to battle against them. They do this by remembering the prophecies and teachings of the apostles and following their pattern of living, looking to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith. This is what Jude means by contending for the faith and as we've seen, this isn't easy. At times we can be tempted to give up and give in.

I like what one heavyweight champion once said when he was asked, "How did you become a champion? Was it your talent or your punching ability? What was it?" He said, "It is the ability to fight one more round. When your arms are so tired you can hardly lift up your hands to come on guard, then fight one more round. When your nose is bleeding and your eyes are black. When you're so tired that when your opponent would crack you one on the jaw and put you to sleep, you fight one more round."

Remember, the man who always fights one more round is never whipped. What Jude wants to teach us is what Jim Corbett told that interviewer: We need to contend for one more round. "But I'm tired, Pastor." Keep contending. "But I'm getting beat up at work. I'm getting beat up at school. I'm tired of the ongoing barrage of hits. Every time I turn on the television, every time I turn on media, it's there." Fight one more round.

What we're going to learn today is that as we fight, as we contend, God has a word of promise for us. It's a word that will change our fighting from being a fight that makes us think we might possibly lose, to a promise that we will be the victors. The way Jude finishes this very earthy book is to turn our gaze to heaven. We'll be in the last two verses of this incredible letter, where Jude ends with a doxology.

<sup>24</sup> Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

You and I have been called to contend, so at the end of this little letter Jude tells us that as we contend, you and I will find victory. We find this victory because of the One Who is in our corner, the One Who is training us, the One Who is encouraging us to continue, and the One Who will resource us with everything we need to be more than conquerors in Christ Jesus. Today I want you to see that we move from being contenders to being champions because of Christ. We move from those who fight for the faith to those who will win because of faith, because of Jesus, once and for all. We're going to give our attention to the One Who deserves all praise. We'll learn that God is able.

Jude ends this letter of warnings and examples of rebellion and sin by turning our attention, not to a somber low note, but to the best of glorious high notes. It's the grand finale of a very difficult book. He turns our attention away from the things of this world and on to God.

Let me say this very clearly today. You will lose hope if you keep your eyes on the earth. You will be unsettled. You will lack peace and joy. What Jude wants us to know is that if we keep our eyes looking horizontally, we'll begin to despair. Rather, he is telling us to take our eyes off all the gunk of the world and turn them toward God. Lift your eyes toward the heavenly realms and see God in His glory. See God in His majesty. See God in His dominion and authority, then your hope will rise. See God seated on His throne. See Him high and lifted up, then you will see that He is in control and able to address whatever concerns you and me today.

So this morning come to what the Bible calls a doxology. The Greek word is a compound word: *"doxa"* which means glory or praise. Plus *"ology"* which is a word about. So this is a word of praise. There are 21 different doxologies in the New Testament alone. Jude is not giving us an addendum or an appendix to his letter. These aren't some superfluous words to just close things out. He didn't just make his point and then use these verses to "land the plane." He doesn't land the plane at all. He ends with a crescendo. He ends with a statement of victory: *"Now to him..."* So let's turn our attention to God.

Enough about us; surely enough about the counterfeiters and creepers of this world. Let's turn our attention to the One Who is greater and more magnificent than all of us combined. So he says, "I have a word of praise."

I want to go over a couple things about this doxology before we get to our main points. First, it is all about the Person of God. There's nothing positive in here about us. In fact, the only thing it says about us is that we stumble. This is all about God, His attributes, His standing, Who He is and what He is all about.

Next, it's not just about the Person of God, but it's about our purpose in life. If we are the contenders for the faith, then our whole purpose for living is to be a voice that gives the word of glory and praise to God. Everything we do and say should point back in some real ways to the One to Whom we give praise. Our lives should be doxologies. Whether at work or at play, at school or in our homes, everything we do should be a doxology. It should be done to the praise and glory of God.

When the writers of the Westminster Catechism began their questions and answers to help catechize (instruct) believers, question number one was this: What is the chief end of man? What is the purpose of man? The writers of that great Catechism said our chief end is to glorify God. Your number one purpose, your priority in life, is to glorify and give praise to God in everything you do. This is our priority. Notice, God isn't waiting for us to give Him glory so He will achieve glory. God isn't some competitor on America's Got Talent, as if He shows us what He can do, then we give Him a thumbs up or thumbs down.

Listen to me. If nobody on this earth ever gave God glory or praise, God still would be glorious and praiseworthy. The Bible tells us if humans don't praise Him, the rocks will cry out. The trees of the field will clap their hands. We know myriads of angels are perpetually giving Him praise for Who He is. He doesn't need us for this, but He invites us into it.

And remember, this isn't something we do just on Sundays. Doxologies aren't just for the time when we first come to know Christ. Rather they should be perpetually part of our lives, now and forever. God deserves our praise from the beginning of time to the end of eternity. Why? Why would anyone in this world give God that kind of doxology? The reason why you and I give God this glory is because His mercy, peace and love have been multiplied to you and me (verse three). By His grace, we have had our eyes open to see Him high and lifted up. By His grace and goodness, we have come to trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior. As we look to the heavens, we see this God Who is worthy of our praise. Why does He deserve praise? Because He's the God of all glory. He's the majestic God with all authority and dominion.

Now, it's true that you and I can do some things that are worthy of glory and praise. We can be majestic in our own little ways—or at least that's what our mommies told us. I carry some authority. My dominion is at 410 Prairie View Lane. I'm the king of that castle. I have authority over three teenage boys. Those are my subjects in my kingdom. But what God is saying to us is, "I rule the cosmos. Every molecule, every human being, every part of My creation is My dominion." After telling us this, God goes on to give us two reasons why we should praise Him all the more. His power, His ability and His resources are sufficient to address two things we need in our lives.

## Protecting us from stumbling

First, God is able to protect you and me from stumbling. Jude writes, *"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling..."* Let's start at the backside of this statement with "stumbling." Other translations may use the word "falling." It's a very specific word. God is promising us something. It's not that He might do this or that He could do this, but that He will do this. We can think of stumbling as being knocked down, even knocked out. It's a boxing term. You get a punch landed on you, you fall to the mat and you don't get up. You don't get up, even after a hundred ten-counts. You're down and out. God says, "I am able to keep this from happening to you."

Some of you may be wondering, "Does this mean God will keep us from sinning?" Stumbling isn't the same thing. After all, if we say God will keep us from sinning, then it looks like God is an abject failure. We sin all the time. This isn't giving us a license to sin, of course, but we are sinful people. In fact, the Bible tells us not only will we sin, but it also gives us the antidote for sin. It says when we sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us—as long as we confess our sin and seek that forgiveness from Him (1 John 1:9). The Bible assumes we are sinners, so it can't mean God will keep us from sinning.

So what is the meaning of this stumbling? We have this doctrinal statement at Village Bible Church that says perseverance is promised to all true believers. This perseverance is God's ability to keep us to endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ and who are sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from a state of grace. Rather, they will persevere to the end of their earthly lives.

Believers do fall into sin. You did this week. I did as well. We do this because of neglect, because of temptation. When we do, it grieves the Holy Spirit. We have brought reproach to the name of Christ. We may have found ourselves under the discipline of the Lord. Nevertheless, God's promise is sure. Philippians 1:6 tells us, *"He who began a good work in you will bring it to*

*completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*" Paul is agreeing with Jude here, that God is able to keep us from stumbling. God is not saying we won't get knocked down; He's saying we won't get knocked out. You will never disqualify yourself from the salvation God gives.

How does God do this? Jude says it's by keeping us from stumbling, from being knocked down and knocked out. Notice here one of Jude's favorite words: keep. Five times he uses this word in the 25 verses of his letter. Actually he uses two Greek words translated as 'keep' in English. In verses one, six, 13 and 21, the Greek word 'keep' or 'protect' is the word *tereo*. It speaks of protecting something from external influences. It says we are kept safe and nothing on the outside will do anything to us, good, bad or ugly. When Jude says God will keep us from stumbling, that Greek word is *phulasso*. It speaks of protecting us from internal influences.

Jude has already told us nothing external can defeat us. The voices of this world will not disqualify us from the faith.

But what happens when we start believing those voices and start living a life of sin? *Tereo* is used throughout the Bible, but the word *phulasso* is used less often. However, one time we see it used is in the context of the Christmas story, the season we're now entering. In Luke 2:8 we see an example of this kind of keeping. *"There were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."* We might wonder why it reads "keeping watch over" instead of just watching their flocks. This the type of keeping was unique to shepherds. They had to keep the sheep in two specific ways. They were to keep—*tereo*—the sheep from outside influences like wolves and thieves. They also needed to protect—*phulasso*—keep the sheep from destroying themselves. How did that work?

Sheep are prone to stumbling. As this [video](#) shows, when a sheep stumbles, it is in great danger. It needs someone to keep it from stumbling. Watch and learn.

**Video:** Greetings. Here we are in the field. We've got a sheep who's gone over on her back. Now, she's not able to get up. She's got herself into a situation where she's rolled over on her back. And because her back's quite flat, it's not allowing her to roll over.

If you see a sheep like this, help the sheep. Pull the sheep up because the sheep will eventually die. Gases will build up inside and they will eventually have a heart attack. So you have to approach the sheep carefully. It's not going to hurt you. If you grab hold of its hoof, move its legs, give it a pull, and pull it. [Tim: That's you in your sin, by the way.]

Now it's back over. You can see how flat its back is. That's the problem with sheep, especially ones like this that probably have a little bit too much weight on them. Now, it's going to get back up. It's going to be a bit wobbly, having been down for a little while. It's going to work its way back up, then just settle itself. And there we have it.

So this sheep has been saved. Its life has been saved. If it had been left there for a few more hours, it would die. It's important that you check sheep regularly. When you do see one, make sure that it's not on its back. "You've saved my life. You're my hero."



Why would I show you that? Because we are all like sheep have gone astray, each going our own way (Isaiah 53:6). As we wander from the Lord, even as part of His flock, we will stumble and fall. A sheep can lay on its back for a couple hours. Did you notice that sheep made no noise? Some of you were wondering, "Is this a still picture?" But then you saw it blinking its eyes. It made no noise. It was absolutely helpless.

Some of you right now have stumbled and the world around you doesn't even know it. But here's what I want you to know. God, the good Shepherd of the sheep, keeps watch over you. He promises, "Although you stumble and fall, I will help you get

back up.” Amen? That’s what God is doing. You stumble and fall, you’re laying there with your legs up in the air, then He comes and lovingly gets you back up. You don’t go down and out forever.

## Presenting us spotless

Not only does He protect us from stumbling, Jude also tells us God is going to present us spotless. We know we can’t be in the presence of God unless we are blameless. So Jude says God will *“present you blameless.”* This means that right now in our lives, God is purifying us. He’s cleansing us thoroughly. Even as we’re struggling with sin in this life, as we’re contending for the faith, God tells us, “At the finish line, not only will you make it there, but you will be victorious on that day.”

What day is that? It’s the day Enoch prophesied that the Lord will come and will execute judgment (verses 14 and 15). All those voices and all those ungodly influences of the world will come under the influence of God’s judgment. But what about us who are building our most holy faith? What about us who are beloved by God and kept by God? What about us who have been kept from stumbling? God says He will present us in His presence. The prophet Isaiah entered into the presence of God in a vision: *“I saw the Lord seated high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple”* (Isaiah 6:1). He describes the angels in God’s presence. Then Isaiah responds, “Woe to me. I am ruined.”

Remember, that’s what sinners say in the presence of God. God is saying the same thing to sinners when He says, *“Woe to them!”* in Jude 11. Because of Christ and His work on the cross, we are spotless. We are made holy. And there is a day coming, my friends, when God will present us to Himself.

Can I just tell you, one of the great joys of being a pastor is standing on stage at a wedding. At the beginning I get to ask, “Who presents this bride?” I love looking at the dad. He wells up with tears, but there’s great joy in his heart. He has his beautiful daughter next to him, then he says, “Her mother and I do.” He’s filled with pride.

Brothers and sisters, as children of God, you will one day stand in the presence of God. What you will not hear is, “Woe to you.” Rather, you will hear from your heavenly Father, with great joy in His heart, “Wow. This is My son, this is My daughter, in whom I am well pleased.” Why? Because when we are presented spotless before the Lord, it won’t be because of our own doing; it will be because He will see His Son Jesus’ righteousness on us.

This word ‘present’ is a vindicating word. This presenting will happen in the presence of those influencers, those voices, those creepers. Every man, woman and child, great and small, will appear before the Lord for judgment. When your name is announced, God will say, “He/she is beloved. He/she has been kept. He/she is now welcomed into My glorious presence.” All of our contending, all of our fighting, will be vindicated once and for all.