

Jude 20-25

Keep and Be Kept

Main idea: Faith isn't just about starting out strong—it's about staying strong because God's got us in His hands.

I started going to church when I was a teenager.

- I was part of one of those youth groups every pastor wants to see in their churches.
- But now, thirty years later, very few of us are still active in churches.
- When I began seminary, I was a youth pastor at a small church, and it was great...for a while.
- But in the years since that church closed, several of the kids in that youth group have also fallen away.¹
- With so many examples of people who seem to lose faith, how can we make sure we cling to our faith?

Read Jude 20-25

“Hey Jude” is the longest song that the Beatles recorded and released as a single.

- The song starts out kind of sad, but ends in what seems like a celebration.
- Well, the letter of Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible, and seems to start out sad, but also ends with this reminder of an eternal celebration.²

As we've seen, much of Jude's letter is about those who have lost the faith.

- And many of them probably thought that they were just fine with God.
 - Verse 4 talks about ungodly people who have crept into the church unnoticed.
 - Verse 5 talks about Israelites, who thought they were the people of God, who didn't trust God.
 - Verse 6 talks about angels who fell from heaven.
- What we do doesn't make us right with God. [\[Titus 3:5\]](#)
 - Being a church member doesn't make you right with God.
 - Being baptized doesn't make you right with God.
- Jesus makes us right with God by grace through faith.³
- Therefore, we need to keep the faith, and be kept in the faith by God Himself.

So if we want to have true faith that lasts, we need to nurture our faith and build ourselves up in it (v. 20).

- Faith is like a muscle—you don't grow stronger by thinking about exercising; you grow by exercising!⁴
 - Some athletes seem to have been born with natural abilities. [\[photo of Kobe Bryant\]](#)
 - Other athletes weren't born with their talent, but worked at it. [\[photo of Michael Jordan\]](#)
- God calls all of us to build ourselves up in our faith. So, how do we do that?
 - Very simply, we grow by resting in Jesus and making our faith a priority. [\[Matthew 7:24-27\]](#)
 - So we must keep coming back to God's Word.⁵
 - We must keep communicating with God through prayer.⁶
 - And then, we strengthen our faith by living it out and sharing God's Word. (v. 3)
 - We can't contend for a faith that we don't know.⁷
 - And then, knowing God's word, we're to share the gospel with others.⁸

As we build ourselves up in the faith, we keep ourselves in the love of God (v. 21).

- Learning to float is one of the most useful skills you can have if you plan on ever getting in the ocean.
 - The ocean is big and full of danger.
 - But floating, which just looks like resting, can literally save you from death.
- God showed His love to all people when Jesus died on the cross for us.⁹
 - But not everyone has embraced God's love for them.¹⁰

- Until a person rests in Jesus, they are in a very real way outside of the love of God, and outside of God's mercy.¹¹

So it's our great responsibility to share God's mercy with them (v. 22-23).

- We need to realize again how devastating sin is.¹²
 - We often excuse sin today as no big deal.¹³
 - If it's not hurting anyone else, it's okay, right?
 - Mold is sometimes called "the silent killer" because it can be so easily overlooked. [photo]
 - Sin is a big deal, because it separates us from experiencing the love of God.¹⁴
- So we need to love people, as God has loved each one of us, so that they might embrace God's grace.¹⁵
 - Lovingly showing them their sin and need for God if they aren't aware of it.¹⁶
 - Lovingly showing them the good news once they are aware of their need.¹⁷
 - And for those who do then embrace His love, God promises mercy that leads to eternal life.¹⁸

And what we read next is an extremely encouraging truth (v. 24).

- As we keep ourselves in the faith, we can trust that God will keep us from falling.¹⁹
- Keeping the faith is kind of like deciding to live with your parents when you're a child.
 - When you're a child, you have the choice to continue living with your parents.
 - Some of you may be thinking, "That's not really much of a choice, is it?"
 - And that's exactly right.
 - Your parents want to provide for you, and they're able to provide for you.
 - Yet some decide to run away, don't they?
- God wants to keep us in the faith, but some still decide to run from God.²⁰

I think there are two dangers to avoid in terms of how we think about what it takes to stay faithful to God.

- The first is that we think faithfulness depends completely upon ourselves.²¹
- If that's what we think, we will either get discouraged because we constantly fail, or else we will get boastful because we think we're doing great by our own strength.
- The other danger is that we think our faithfulness depends completely on God.²²
- If that's what we think, we might become lazy, and stop working at our faith.
- Instead, we need to realize that faithfulness takes a work of God in us, in conjunction with our own desire and efforts to remain in the faith.²³
 - God is able!
 - God is powerful!
 - God can do whatever He desires.
- Yet God doesn't keep us faithful against our will.
 - He's able to keep us from falling, yet He also commands us to keep ourselves in the faith.
 - God partners with us as we grow in our faith.
 - What a privilege to partner with God!

So the end of Jude's letter rightly directs us to worship this God (v. 25).

- We must keep the faith, and praise the God who keeps us in the faith.
- God is worthy of all praise, forever!

Endnotes

1. Matthew 24:10, 1 Timothy 4:1
2. Especially Jude 24-25
3. Ephesians 2:8
4. James 2:17
5. Matthew 4:4
6. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
7. 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15
8. Matthew 28:18-20
9. Romans 5:8
10. Matthew 23:37, John 1:11
11. John 14:6, Ephesians 2:12-13
12. Romans 6:23
13. Romans 6:1-2
14. Isaiah 59:2
15. John 13:34-35
16. Galatians 6:1, 2 Timothy 2:25
17. Romans 10:14-15
18. John 3:16
19. Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 1:5
20. 2 Peter 2:20-21, Hebrews 10:29, Luke 15
21. 1 Corinthians 10:12
22. James 2:26, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 12:1-2
23. John 15:4-5