

He Will Hold Me Fast

Jude 20, 21 & 24

Intro

Last week we traced Jacob's life and his long trek of faith. Jacob's faith journey was a slow and difficult one because he made many mistakes. He falls many times because he was self determined and felt capable of handling his affairs his own way. He was a supplanter, a manipulator and dishonest. He didn't seek God's will regarding marital and monetary matters. After he had married Leah and Rebecca, his home became a battlefield where two embittered women fought and struggled for Jacob's affection – a very dysfunctional family.

For about 40 years Jacob led a sad life with many problems and struggles. But yet God's grace was working in him and through him. God finally brought him to his knees and he became a broken man the night he wrestled with the Lord. From that point Jacob became a renewed man and finally made a deep commitment to the Lord.

But through his 40 years or so that seem wasted, God was preserving him and keeping him. Jacob realized it when he blessed his son Joseph and two grandsons.

This is what he said in Genesis 48:15-16, *“Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm —may he bless these boys...”*

Philippians 1:6, *““Being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Today I would like to talk about God preserving and keeping us just like He did with Jacob. We are going to look at a passage in the book of Jude that talks about persevering and preserving.

Jude

This book is attributed to Jude who was a brother to James of Jerusalem; not the apostle James. Jude found it necessary to warn his readers concerning the false teachers who were smuggling false teachings into the church, most likely the Gnostics. It is interesting that the epistle of Jude bears a striking resemblance to what the Apostle Peter deals with in 2 Peter 2 – 3:4 about the false teachers and their consequence.

Basically Jude warns against apostasy in the church

Apostasy means the denial of Jesus Christ and the renunciation of true faith. It means falling away from the truth of the faith and those who repudiate the truth.

Jude 20-21, 24-25

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. ²¹ Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life... ²⁴ 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.”

In the above passage Jude speaks of the way we are kept in the faith and kept from falling away from the faith. There are 2 sides to this keeping:

1/ The Human side (verse 20-21) > We Persevere

2/ The Divine side (verses 24-25) > God Preserves

If God preserves it is equally true that we must persevere. How we persevere is the subject of verses 20-21. How do we do this? Let's look at these two verses.

1. A Perseverance of Building Ourselves in the Faith

Perseverance: means to continue in effort in spite of difficulty or opposition; to persist; not giving up; pressing on without quitting.

Verse 20, "*Build yourselves up...*"

We are instructed first of all to build ourselves up in the holy faith. There needs to be progress and growth in our faith. The foundation has been laid which is Christ. We have to use stone by stone consistent with the foundation to build our faith upon.

The word build here is in the imperative sense which means it is a command and it's not optional. It refers to personal edification, spiritual growth and it centers on studying the Word.

In Acts 20:32 Paul instructs the Ephesian church,

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

The building or edification of believers centers on studying the Word of God and learning to apply it in daily life.

Verse 20, "*Build yourselves up in your most holy faith...*"

Our foundation is Christ and our faith is founded upon Christ.

This means that the faith of every believer is not founded on something that he or she has manufactured but on something he/she has received.

Faith comes from Christ not ourselves. Christ is the author of our faith; He evokes faith in us through the Holy Spirit.

The faith which we have is not merely someone's opinion; it's a revelation from Christ and which is given to believers by Christ.

I like what William Barclay said, "The good man rests his life, not on any one's uncertain opinions, not on any one's fantasies of thought, not on any temporary or local heresies, but on the revelation which came from Jesus Christ and which is preserved forever in the body of believers, so long as the Church is sensitive and obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Truth exercised in faith

Our faith is exercised in Scripture, the word of God. The word of God supplies the material for the building of our faith. The Bible is like the quarry where we get the stones to build up our faith.

"Most holy faith". Holy means separate and different from the world.

Our faith is different in 2 ways:

- 1/ It is different from other faiths and philosophies in that it is not man-made but God given.
It is not someone's idea or opinion but God's revelation.
- 2/ It is different from other faiths in that it has power to transform lives.

2. A Perseverance of Prayer

Verse 20, "*Pray in the Holy Spirit.*"

Real faith means dependence; our total dependence on God and His Spirit. As the word of God supplies the truth to be embraced by faith so prayer in the Holy Spirit supplies the energy and power to appropriate truth and faith into our lives.

When we pray in the Holy Spirit we rely on Him and surrender ourselves to Him. We seek the Spirit's wisdom and His will and trust in the Spirit's power.

There must be daily fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit. We must be careful not to grieve nor quench Him in our lives. We need the daily infilling of the Spirit in order to pray in His power.

3. A Perseverance in God's Love

Verse 21 "*Keep yourselves in God's love...*"

It is true that we can never drift beyond God's love and care, but it is also true that if we desire to remain close and in intimate communion with God, we must give to God our love and obedience.

Jesus said, "*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.*" (John 15:9-10).

This means that we must remain obedient to God because the divine blessing is promised only when we keep the Father's commands.

4. A Perseverance of Hope (Wait)

Verse 21, "*...as you wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*"

If faith provides the quarry stone for building and prayer in Spirit the energy for building up our Christian life then waiting presents the ideal of why we build.

To wait also means hope. Our living hope is in Christ. We must fix our eyes on Him and wait for that glorious day when we shall see Him face to face.

5. A Preservation of God

Verses 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.*"

There are 2 sides to this keeping:

- 1/ The Human side (verse 20-21) > We Persevere
- 2/ The Divine side (verses 24-25) > God Preserves

God is faithful and supremely powerful and infinitely loving that He will not allow His children, the true believers to fall away from the faith.

Hebrews 7:25, *“Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*

“To keep you” is a military word meaning “to guard” or “to watch over.” God is at His post standing on guard over true believers to ensure their safety from stumbling into apostasy.

John 10:27-29, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”*

Philippians 1:6, *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Play song “GOD WILL HOLD ME FAST” by Keith & Kristyn Getty.