

"Keep yourselves in the love of God"

QUESTION: GENERALLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE / YOUR FUTURE ? OR GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC?

IF THE QUESTION IS TOO GENERAL: WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT?

THE FINAL OF 5 SUMMER SUNDAY STUDIES OF THE LETTER WE CALL "JUDE."

IT COULD BE CALLED: **HOW TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT YOUR FUTURE. AND THE FUTURE OF YOUR LOVED ONES.**

LAST WEEK: REVIEW → key words.

1st LOVE Vs. 21 "keep yourselves in the love of God!"

2nd CONTEND Vs. 3 "contend for the faith..."

3rd GODLY From the repetition of the word "ungodly"

Godly means "well-devoted" to God / God-focussed / Godward

4th MERCY Vss. 21-23 waiting for the mercy of Christ / having mercy / showing mercy

And now one more sentence of the letter: one more key word.

JUDE'S CLOSING WORDS !

Vs. 24 Now to him who is **able to keep you...**

The 5th and final key word...

5th KEEP Or "kept"

The word is used three other times:

+ In the opening statement: **Vs. 1** Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and **kept for Jesus Christ...**

+ In a shocking comparison:

Compared: → that **God** is **keeping** us FOR CHRIST

→ how **Christ** is keeping the rebellious angels FOR the great day of his JUDGMENT.

Vs. 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling,

he [Jesus] **has kept** in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day

A wonderful, terrible, very good, very bad day is coming: May God help us to believe it!

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THAT DAY? PESSIMISTIC? ABOUT WHO WILL BE JUDGED? WHO WILL NOT COME INTO JUDGEMENT...

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

BUT, before that great Day, we have some living still to do.

And we, the people of Christ, being kept FOR JESUS CHRIST, must KEEP OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

+ **Vs. 21** The other use of this key word: **keep yourselves** in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THAT? PESSIMISTIC? JUDE'S ANSWER, THE CORRECT ANSWER IS "OPTIMISTIC"!

Verse 21 makes it sound as if it is all up to us, except for ...

JUDE'S CLOSING WORDS Vss. 24-25 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, 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.

SO NOW WE LOOK AT JUDE'S LAST WORDS: HIS FINAL SENTENCE: THE DETAILS ABOUT BEING KEPT

1. The danger from which we are being kept.

Vs. 24 Now to him who is able to keep you **from stumbling**

[The remainder of the verse erased]

James 3:1,2 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all **stumble** in many ways. And if anyone does not **stumble** in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

e.g. James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

But the Judge is the very person who is able to keep you from stumbling!

So don't turn away from him. Turn away from the sin that will cause you to stumble!

Turn to the Judge for help with your tendency to stumble!

A huge challenge. **James 3:2** "we all stumble in many ways"!

But God is able to keep us! All the help we need is available. ENOUGH TO MAKE OPTIMISTS OF US ALL!

2. The experience for which we are being kept.

Vss. 24,25 ... to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior ...

Only one God: "our Savior" ~ we are being kept to be presented to him:
And what an experience it will be! **blameless!**
with great joy!

3. The person through whom we are being kept.

Vs. 25 ...to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord...

God, our Savior, does his saving/preserving/keeping **through** Jesus Christ.

BUT we are being kept **FOR** Jesus Christ (**vs.1**) ???

Ephesians 5:25-27 ... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

What will one day be **true about the church** WILL be true because it will be **true of each of us** who are "members" of the body / pieces of the bride of Christ!

- + All of us who hear Christ's words and believe God who sent Christ.
- + All of us who have Christ's commandments and keep them.
- + All of us who keep themselves in the love of God.

We aren't keeping ourselves: we are being kept by God THROUGH Jesus Christ. FOR Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. !!!!!

And there we will be: "**blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy**"!!!

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THAT? PESSIMISTIC? JUDE'S ANSWER, THE CORRECT ANSWER IS "OPTIMISTIC"!

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT **Today's Real-Life Example**? **Vs. 24** When we are talking about God we are talking about "him who is able to keep _____ from stumbling and to present _____ blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy!"

No wonder Jude writes: **Vss. 24,25** Now to him...to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority

All the **glory** (honour) is his. All the **majesty** (greatness) is his.

All the **dominion** is his (Lord of all). All the **authority** (the right to exercise authority) **is his**.

SO... ANYONE HERE HAVE ANYTHING MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO??? ANY REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC?

4. The duration for which we are being kept.

Vs. 25 ...before all time and now and forever. Amen.

It's always been God's plan. He has always been working his plan. He always will be. Forever!

GETTING PRACTICAL... ONE OTHER THING: HOW DOES HE DO THIS WORK?

5. The method by which we are being kept.

It comes down to his authority. Over our minds and hearts. Our thinking and our passions.

(Obviously also his authority over our circumstances to keep us from getting killed or injured or diseased --- except when he chooses to use such things as a part of his plan for our minds and hearts)

Hebrews 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds

God works in our minds to give us understanding of his will.

God works in our hearts to give us a love for his will.

That's why **HOW TO BE A BELOVED CONTENDER** has two parts **Vss. 20,21**

Grasp clearly what the Bible teaches.

Love God with a Spirit-powered, whole-hearted, HOPE-FILLED obedience.

So let us be full of hope. About our own spiritual life. And about the people we love.

Let us not give up hope. Let us keep waiting for the mercy.

Let us look for the mercy.

Look at what God has done already! God has placed you in the life of your loved ones!

Speaking of mercy, it's a **Communion Sunday**

NEXT SUNDAY. **September 9th, 9:15 & 11:00 a.m.** *New series!*

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All Scripture references: HOLY BIBLE, **English Standard Version**, © 2001, CROSSWAY PUBLICATIONS