



20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:19-25)

Jude has been focusing his warning to us on those false prophets which will multiply among us in our churches in present days as well as past. Now, in verse 17, he turns his focus to the faithful. He says "**But, beloved, remember...**" Two important points in this counsel: 1) we are beloved if we are faithful members of the Body in Christ, and we are so loved by our Father that He would have us know how to live, and how NOT to live; and 2) We must have memories of those things of which we have been warned for which to be on the alert. In what a deplorable mess does the church find itself because she has disregarded Godly warnings and failed in the test of moral discipline! Having been warned by Jude of the perils false prophets and nominal faith of believers, he counsels that we REMEMBER these warning signs. Our souls may depend upon our sound memories. Political correctness was never a principle of Godliness!

Jude now, with the imputed love and righteousness of his calling in Christ, turns to address us in the tender terms of a loving brother. 20 "**But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.**" We are to be edified, or built up, on that most Holy Faith of Christ. Faith is a gift of God and not of our own invention. Invest that Faith wisely and rightly in the sure Word and Counsel of God's Holy Word. The edifice we build will stand the storms of time if the foundation is the Solid Rock of Christ, and if we are stones chipped from that Rock. Even our prayers and petitions should not originate in our fleshly hearts, but from the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. If we are One with Christ, and He is One with God the Father, we shall, as well, be One with the Holy Ghost and each other; and all of our prayerful utterances will arise from that One Will and Spirit of God so that our selfish motives are buried in that same Garden Tomb outside the gates of Jerusalem! "**And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine**

own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are .” (John 17:11)

Why can we not model our personal prayers after the example the Lord gives? Why must we make long and loud prayers as if the Father has neither memory nor ears? **“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”** (Matt 6:6-8) Is there any NEED of our hearts that is hidden from the All-Seeing Eye of God? Sometimes, I would prefer that our DESIRES, at least, would be hidden for they too often are of no righteous intent.

If we do, indeed, pray in the Holy Ghost, our prayers will be simple and child-like. Those things for which we pray will be the very things of which the Holy Ghost approves because our prayers are HIS prayers for us since we are One with Him!

21 “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” The predicate of grace, mercy, and even faith, is LOVE. Were it not for the Love of God in sending His Son to redeem us in His own LOVE, there would be no forgiveness or remission of sins. Love is the foundation stone upon which the pillars of Heaven rest. We have heard, perhaps all of our lives, that God loves every person – from the worn old preacher to the degenerate rapist and murderer. I know that God CAN love such as the latter, if they turn to Him in repentance; but His love is not available to the willfully wicked. We may take ourselves out of the love of God by our wickedness. That is why we are counseled to KEEP ourselves in the love of God – that is: responding to that overflowing fountain of Love which brought Christ down to us as a propitiation for our sins. **“Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.”** (2 Chron 19:2) Why do YOU love Christ? Did you seek Him out to love Him while you were yet an unrepentant sinner? Are any able to love Christ and come to Him of their own volition? **“We love him, because he first loved us .”** (1 John 4:19) With what amazing unity and consistency do the Scriptures speak! Jesus does not command the woman to love the husband, but He does command the husband to love the wife! Why is this? The Church is the called-out Bride of Christ. She loves her Lord because her Spouse (the Lord) first loved her and gave Himself for her. So it is with the wife of a loving husband. She will respond with the soft and gentle heart of a woman to love that is both sacrificial and enduring under every circumstance. **“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”** (2 Tim 1:14) The question of being kept in the Love of God is largely rhetorical. If we are truly converted in mind, body, and soul to Christ, it is impossible to fall from the sanctuary of those Everlasting Arms. **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 8:35-39)

22 “And of some have compassion, making a difference:” We must avoid casting our pearls before swine, but we must also recognize the frailty of the little lamb

that is hobbled by conditions of life and learning. Our compassion for the hurt and poor must reflect the same compassion Christ had for every sinner that ever came before His face. But there was one class for which Christ could not have compassion due to the pride and arrogance that drew a stark boundary between His heart and theirs – the Scribes, Pharisees, and Rulers of the Jews. We do not feed the pride of our members. Flattery has never saved a soul, but exhortation may. A “feel good” church is not one that can belong to Christ. What of those who struggle against the prods of moral truth?

23 **“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”** If our son or daughter is drowning at sea, we must not approach them in the usual way else we risk danger of perishing with them. The best approach is from behind. We might grasp them by the hair of their head instead of their arms or legs else they will, in their panic, bring us both beneath the waves. They must be saved in such a way that their own flailing struggles are for naught. This is the case for every sinner. Their struggles will only take them further beneath the seas of life. They must be saved in spite of themselves and their puny attempts at self-righteousness. Hate is a very strong emotion. If we hate the spotted garment of sin, we will be driven to cast it away from those whom we love! The Father of the Prodigal Son covered His son’s spotted and filthy garments with His own Robe of Righteousness – but only our Father can do that! We can only lead another to the source of such a Robe.

24 **“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,”** **“NOW”** – after all Jude has said of warning and edification, what remains? **“NOW”** remains – the here and now in which we must respond either by acceptance, or by rejection. If we have heeded and understood the admonitions and counsels of this Book, there is One who is able and willing to surely keep us from failing; in fact, the ONLY ONE who can fulfill that benefit – the Lord Jesus Christ! **“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”** (1 Cor 10:13) The old excuse, “The devil made me do it” is of no account for we are assured that temptations will never exceed our ability to resist. And NOW, too, we shall be presented faultless before Him with great JOY! **“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”** (Eph 5:27) and also: **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”** (Heb 7:25) Our eternal reward may not appear in the detail that we understand, however, it is enough to know that such a reward will be one of **“exceeding joy!”** We need not parse or question the promises of God beyond that one, sure truth.

These last verses of Jude are a glorious doxology to a letter of Love. 25 **“To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen”** This is a benediction, not only to the Book of Jude, but to the preceding twenty five books of the New Testament! It speaks with such affirmation of faith and Spirit that it is used in the Anglican tradition to close every sermon. Our praise of God does not end or dissipate after our initial joy at salvation, but grows to a crescendo of praise and glory at the very Banks of Jordan Waters. How blessed of the Saints to enjoy such joy and privilege, and to have a God who is the Only Wise God and Savior who has all glory and majesty, all power and rule – not just NOW, but down the never ending Halls of Time and Eternity! To this, I will say (and hope you, too, will say) a resounding AMEN!