

THE PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS IN CHRIST

Sunday Evening – 11th December 2022

Reading: Jude (vv24-25)

Preacher: Darren Clarke (Jacksdale).

These last two verses of Jude are a benediction or doxology. Jude was the half-brother of the Lord Jesus. We are not sure to whom he was writing but we know from v1 that they were believers, people who had been called by the Lord. These are people who had been preserved in Christ. They were people who had been saved, just like us today. What he wrote then applies to us all today as well.

His first thought had been to write about our common salvation. But then, in v3, he went in a different direction and urged the people to contend earnestly for the faith. There were people around who had no sense of godliness or morals, just as today. It was about what was good in man's opinion. The call was not to contend in our own strength but to do it with what the Lord has given us. We are to contend with every fibre of our being.

Jude warns in v4 about the false teachers. They were perverting the Scriptures and what they said about Christ. There were people then, like now, who come into the church but who do not behave like Christians. They were trying to pull the church away from having Christ at the centre. Jude assures the people that they have all they need. By contending, perhaps even some of the false teachers would be saved.

In v23, we see that we are here for other people. We are here to pray for people and witness to them. We are here to pull people out of the fire. Some people come to church and treat it like a social club where they can enjoy the banter together. We are called to hold fast. How do we do that? We face people who hate the Lord, and it can make us feel very down. This passage actually offers great hope and assurance. It encourages us to carry on with what God has called us to do. We are, at the end, human beings with temptations and with the old flesh that fights against us. What we have in vv24-25 is what protects us from ourselves and from the false teachers and prevents us from falling.

Here are some things that these last two verses bring out.

First of all, there is the 'Now' in v24. What follows is a statement said with authority. Jude is saying, 'Listen to what I am telling you.' It is like the 'now' in Romans 16:25. It marks a change of emphasis and shifts our attention away from the problem to God instead. It is a call to us to stop and to consider.

There is the 'to Him' (v24). To whom? It is God of course. But we can make our thinking about God too simple. If we under-evaluate God, we create theological problems for ourselves. Luther wrote to Erasmus to tell him, 'Your thoughts of God are too human'. We can be flippant about God and not stop to take Him seriously. God is not like man. We see in v25 that He is almighty, self-existent and majestic. God is God and we are not. He is high in the heavens. We cannot begin to understand Him. Do we see God like this?

Next, we see 'He is able'. It is very positive. It does not just mean that He is capable. It is not as if we have to twist God's arm. He is Omnipotent. He has infinite power. There is no beginning to it and no end to it. It is beyond measure. As we see in Matthew 19:26, with man these things are not possible, but they are with God. We are unable but we rely upon His ability. Jude, although the half-brother of the Lord, now calls himself a bond-servant. This is the change that God is able to bring about. It tells us in 2 Timothy 1:12 of His ability to keep us.

And what is it that He is able to do? There are two things to mention.

Firstly, He is able to keep us from stumbling or falling. He is able to keep us 'unfallen'. We mortify the flesh in His strength. The believer will be saved from apostasy. Our heart is sealed from above. He will hold us fast.

Secondly, He will present us faultless before the presence of God. God had a plan to save His people and to bring them to Himself. We will be before Him spotless, faultless and clean. We will actually stand before Him with exceeding joy. This is because of what God has done for us in Christ.

The better we understand these things, the more we will praise Him. He has assured us that He will do what He says that He will do.