

# The Christian Arsenal

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## JUDE 20-25

Last week we saw how Jude warned the believers of his day of danger, and he spoke specifically of folks who had crept into the church unnoticed...by the side door. We said those folks would knock the Christian off balance. **He described these folks in great detail...he painted a very vivid portrait of them, and it was not a pretty sight!**

We said last week that if all we had of the **Book of Jude** is the first portion of it...it would be a very depressing little letter. But, Jude doesn't end his little letter on a down note, but on an up note.

We also said last week that Jude is divided into four parts...

- 1) **The Dangers We Face as Christians**
- 2) **The Defenses We Have as Christians**
- 3) **The Disciplines We Must Practice as Christians**
- 4) **The Doxology We Walk In as Christians**

We covered the first two of these divisions last week, and I hope we can cover the last two this week.

Verses 20-21...

Once the Lord Jesus Christ has saved us, He doesn't just exit us from this world and take us safely on to heaven, nor does He grant unto us an automatic immunity from becoming tainted and corrupted by the wickedness that is going on around us.

But, in these two little verses, Jude gives us the way **we can stay straight even if we're living in a crooked world**, surrounded by wicked people who would twist the truth of God's Word for us and cause us to be knocked off balance in our Christian life.

***I want you to notice with me a direct command in these verses...***

***"Keep yourselves in the love of God..."***

and then he gives us three phrases that tell us how we are to do this....

by **building**

by **praying**

by **looking**.

Do you see what is happening here? **He is dealing with the discipline of the Christian life and he is throwing the responsibility upon you and upon me.** This tells us that we cannot be passive Christians. If a person simply sits down and becomes passive, and does not give personal attention to his own discipline in the Christian life, then he is going to be enveloped in the evils that surround him. He'll be like Demas...forsaking the Lord because he has fallen in love with this present world. So, there is **a personal responsibility...a discipline that is heaped upon us... "Keep yourselves in the love of God..."**

Now, in order for us to do this, we must understand what this means. Does this mean I can get to the place where God will no longer love me? Do you mean to tell me there exists a possibility of my doing something...committing some sin where God no longer loves me?

No, this is not what this means. Paul said in **Romans 8**

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that **absolutely nothing** can separate us from the love of God. God's love is not conditional. He loves us regardless of what we've done. **He loved us BEFORE we were saved...how much more does He love us AFTER we're saved?** We can do nothing to make God love us more, and we can do nothing to make Him love us less.

Look back at **verse 1...**

Jude says we are **"beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ,"** yet he turns right around at the end of this letter and he says, "Now, you keep yourself in the love of God."

Well, I thought I was **already** kept. I thought I was **already** loved of God! **I AM!!** And since I am loved of God and since I am kept for Jesus then I must act like it!! My behavior must correspond to all that God **has done and is doing and will** do for me!

In other words, he's saying, "Live up to your position. Your position is one of being loved and being kept...**now it is your responsibility to see to it that in your daily behavior that you live up and measure up to that position.**"

It simply means that I am to live in the place where that love can bless me to its fullest. I am to stay within the place of blessing. I am to keep myself in the love of God in the sense that I am to live the kind of life where that love can do everything for me that it wants to do.

I believe the best illustration of what he's saying is the prodigal son recorded in Luke 15. You know the story...the son went to a far country and there he found himself in a pigpen...rebellious and separated from his father.

Now, let me ask you...did the father still love him? Of course the father still loved him...the father loved him just as much as when he was at home, maybe more, humanly speaking.

The difference was that the boy, by his rebellion, had removed himself from the circle and the shelter of his father's love. Even though the father loved him, that love was not able **to bless him**. That love was not able **to minister to him**. That love was not able **to meet his needs**...and...

**It is possible for you and me to live in rebellion and sin, not to quench God's love for us but to make it where God cannot bless us as He wants to bless us.**

Jude is saying, "God will always love you...but listen, if you're going to be able to walk through this world and maintain your spiritual balance and live in victory, you're going to have to make certain that you stay in the place of blessing...that you don't contradict that love by the things you do...that you never do anything to grieve that love, **but that you answer that love by living a life where that love can bless you again and again.**

By the way, this word **"keep"** is a word that means **"to guard, to garrison, to preserve."** It is a picture of a **"fort."** It helps us to see God's love as a fort placed in the midst of enemy territory, surrounded by the enemy but as long as I stay within the walls of that fort I am safe and secure...regardless of the enemy on the outside that surrounds me. As long as I stay within that fort, I'll be safe...but if I get outside that fort then I expose myself to every danger that is out there and I'm liable to be captured or killed.

Whether you know it or not, you're living in enemy territory. We're surrounded by the enemy. **This world is not our home...our citizenship is in heaven...but as long as we live in**

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**this world, we have enemies who are dangerous and we must keep ourselves in the love of God where we are safe and secure and God can bless us.**

So...how is this accomplished? Well, Jude gives us three ways: building, praying, and looking. And I think you can sum that up with these three words: **Edification, Supplication, and Anticipation.**

## a) Edificaton

**verse 20... “building yourselves up on your most holy faith...”**

This is a **present participle** which means this edification, this building is an ongoing process...**it's a lifelong task.** All of my life I am to be taking the foundation of salvation that God has given me and I am responsible for building upon that foundation. There must always be progress...

For instance, Paul says in Phil. 2: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Paul didn't say to work FOR your salvation. But he says “work out your own salvation. The salvation you have is to be cultivated as a farmer cultivates a garden. Paul says that God has given us salvation and now we are to cultivate it. **You work it out...you realize its greatest potential and you do it with fear and trembling.**

God has laid a foundation in salvation and you and I have a responsibility to take that and to build upon it. Now, notice he says that we're to build ourselves upon on **our most holy faith.** Again, as we said last week, this faith mentioned here is not the faith that you and I exercise. Rather it is the Christian principles and truths and doctrines that are uniquely ours in salvation...this is the same faith that Jude tells us in the first part of his letter to **“contend for earnestly.”** This is **“our most holy faith”** that is our foundation...but it is not only our foundation...

You see, the tragedy of most of us is that we're living on a foundation without any walls, without any ceiling, without anything.

Yes, I'm saved, thank God! I know that! But the foundation is not the whole thing...that's just the beginning. And what Jude is saying is this...that faith opens up to you all kinds of possibilities.

I want to ask you this morning if you're living up to faith's capacity? Are you daily building upon your most holy faith?

**Or are you content to live upon the foundation of faith without any walls or ceiling or roof?**

Interesting thing about the disciplines of the Christian life...**if you don't move forward, you fall backward.** There's no such thing as staying stationery in the Christian life. You don't stay put...you either make progress or you regress. You just can't get to a certain place in your Christian life and stay there. No, unless you are constantly moving forward, you'll fall backward. Edification, building up is essential in the Christian life.

And we're to build upon that foundation...we should be diligently be constantly building roofs and supports and beams and walls and ceilings.

Not only is there edification, there also is

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## b) Supplication

verse 20... *“praying always in the Holy Spirit...”*

Paul says in **Romans 8:26-27...** “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

How many of you have had a burden so heavy that you couldn't even put words to your prayers. You fell on your knees and the words just wouldn't come? Well, Beloved, don't despair...the Holy Spirit takes those times in our lives and He intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered...**groanings that are too deep for words.**

This is also a **present participle**, which means it is an ongoing thing. This simply means a life of communion. And it is the Holy Spirit who makes it real communion rather than **ritual** or **rote** or even **mundane** and **ordinary**.

**Let me tell you this...you are not going to be able to keep yourself in the love of God if you neglect a life of communion with Him...and this takes discipline!!**

Have you ever thought of prayer as a discipline? **Well, let me ask this way...are there ever times in your life when you absolutely don't feel like praying?** Well, you know what we're to do when we feel like this? **WE'RE TO PRAY ANYWAY!!**

I've heard folks say, “Well, I don't believe you should pray or read your Bible if you don't really **feel led** by the Holy Spirit. Listen, Beloved, the Holy Spirit does not have to lead you to do something He's already told you to do. I really don't know where we get some of these ideas...I hope you didn't get them from me!

What did James say? **“The one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”**

You don't have to wait until you feel moved of the Holy Spirit. And if you know that you ought to **seek after the Lord** and **spend time in His Word** and **commune with Him**, it's ridiculous for you to sit around waiting until you feel moved upon to do it. **Feelings are fickle.**

Let me just quickly give you three ways that we can pray energized by the Holy Spirit...

### **1) He gives us the prompting to pray.**

**He is our “burning bush.”** He catches our attention and causes us to turn aside from everything else and come into the presence of God. Haven't you experienced this? There have been times you have an unexplainable desire to want to get alone with God and pray? You may not have had any big burden on your heart to pray about...but there is a drawing, there is an urging, there is a **prompting** in your heart...**That's the Holy Spirit!! It has to be! It's certainly not your fallen nature. It's certainly not the devil!!**

When you have this **prompting**...listen to Him and pray. Each time you listen to the **prompting** of the Holy Spirit, you will be more sensitive to it the next time and every time you turn that **prompting** off, the less sensitive you will be.

### **2) He gives us the petition.**

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When you're walking in God's will, with no unconfessed sin in your life, your prayer life will be in the will of God. Why? because your prayers won't originate with you, they will originate with the Holy Spirit. He will lead you exactly how to pray.

### 3) He gives us the power.

We pray depending on Him, not ourselves. How many times have you prayed and you haven't **felt** anything? Isn't it always good to **feel** something? But, listen Beloved, to pray in the Holy Spirit means to pray depending on the power of the Holy Spirit to take these petitions and to bear them to the throne of God, and **whether you feel it or not, the Holy Spirit is doing His job.**

Well, we've looked at two ways to keep ourselves in the love of God...Edification, Supplication...now let's look at

#### a) Anticipation

**verse 21... "waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."**

This is that eager expectation and anticipation when you long to see Him and you expect Him at any moment and because you do, you will keep yourself in the love of God.

I can remember when my husband came back from overseas...we were still newlyweds and the day I was to meet him at the train, I dressed so carefully, I did all I could to look so pretty for him...I wanted him to approve of me and be proud of me.

I wonder if we look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus with that same wonderful anticipation...I wonder if we're taking special care to meet Him. We don't want to meet Him having sinned against that love and having lived a life inconsistent with His love.

Those are three ways we keep ourselves in the love of God...but there is something else we can do...

#### Verses 22-23...

~~ "those who are doubting..."

These are those who need encouragement. They are doubting their salvation, or they are doubting their commitment. Jude says that we are to have mercy on them and come along side them and build them up.

~~ "those we must snatch out of the fire..."

These are folks who are on the brink of eternity...either because of age or illness. I remember we had an evangelist here some time back (I believe it was William Blackburn) and he said he felt compelled to witness to his aging mother one day, and I remember that prompted Bill to go to his own mom and ask her about her salvation and no doubt it prompted others.

We have the mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to snatch folks from the fire.

~~ "those to whom we must show mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh..."

This speaks of the sinner who is involved in such deep sin that even the Christian who goes to him as a witness of the grace of God might be in danger of being polluted by his sin.

This can be compared to a doctor who is treating an infectious disease and is in danger of becoming infected with it himself.

Dr. Allison: **"Never go into the den of iniquity...find a better place to witness..."**

Well, in the time we have left, let's see if we can cover the fourth division of this little letter...

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## 4) The Doxology We Walk In as Christians

Verses 24-25...

A doxology is a hymn of praise...and Beloved, we have a song to sing...we have a song to live by and to walk in. And if we're not walking in doxology as Christians, something is wrong in our lives. This doxology is really a confession of faith...it was Jude's and it is ours as well. And this is how Jude ends his little letter.

**Many times folks put a lot of emphasis on "first impressions", but I believe it's the "last impression" that lingers the longest, don't you?**

You and I remember a great many things that remain with us long after we no longer see them...those are the things that dominate us.

**If we look outward...at the things of this world...at the headlines and the news on TV and even the presidential primaries, we're going to be depressed. If we look inward and we see how weak we are and how inadequate we are, we're going to be even more depressed...but if we look upward...then and only then will we have hope and assurance.**

**And Jude ends his letter with an upward look!!**

**Jude has given to us a vivid description of those folks who are a danger to us, but here he gives us a vivid description of the One who can keep us from that danger.**

Let's just look at the different expressions Jude uses in these two little verses and see how even they can help keep us in the love of God!

***"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling..."***

This tells us that God is sufficient...He is ABLE!!

Doesn't that give you assurance? Doesn't that give you confidence that we can keep ourselves in the love of God? God Himself is able to keep us from stumbling. **Is something or someone threatening to knock you off balance?** God is able to keep you from falling...even from stumbling!

Not only is He able to keep us from stumbling, but He is also able

***"...to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy."***

**Now, I might be able to stand before you today and I might make some of you believe that I am blameless...I could hide a lot of things from you. You only see what I want you to see and I only see in you what you want me to see...  
that's why we have so much respect for each other! ☺☺**

But, here Jude says we will stand **blameless** before the One who knows every **thought** that's ever come into our minds, every **attitude** we've ever had, every **deed** we've ever done and every **word** we've ever spoken...and not only to stand before Him...**but to stand in great joy!!** I mean, I know what I am and what I am not...I know what I've done and what I haven't and STILL, because of Him I will be able to stand before Him blameless and with great joy!! **Wuest says, "great rejoicing."**

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Then verse 25 tells us that God is our Savior, **but only through Jesus Christ our Lord**. God has chosen to limit our salvation to His grace through faith in His Son...and no other way.

***“glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time*** (the past), **and now**, (the present), **and forever** (the future).

Well, that just about covers it all, doesn't it? Jude ascribes glory, majesty, dominion and authority. And this is the God we serve!! **Not only is He sufficient, He is also sovereign!**

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I just want to ask you a couple of questions this morning before we have our prayer requests...

Are you in the love of God this morning? If you're a Christian, I know God loves you. But are you living in harmony with that fact?

Are you answering His love by the life you live? Are you in the love of God this morning?

Are you in a position where God can bless you to the fullest extent of His desire?

That's where I want to live! Because you know...most of the time Christians aim too low in their expectations. We settle for too little.

There's no telling what God would like to do for us. There is just no telling what doors of blessing He wants to open. There's no telling what God longs to do for us, but He can't, because we're not keeping yourself in the love of God.

May God give us the commitment to keep ourselves in His sweet love! It's not an impossible thing to do...**God will help us!**

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