

Kept & Ever Keeping — Delivery Transcript

Jude 1:20–21 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 7, 2025 · *The Contender*

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All right, well thanks to the team for leading us in worship. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in the book of Jude this morning. And as you're turning to the book of Jude, if you're new to Broadview or New to Bible study. It's in the very back of the book. And go to the very last book of the Bible, Revelation, and turn back one. That's the little book of Jude. It's easy to miss because it's one chapter long. And typically in our church we preach through books of the Bible and we've been preaching through the book of Jude, and even though it's only one chapter long, it's taken us a little bit longer than one week to do so.

It just keeps growing and growing and growing. And I've been really amazed by how relevant the book of Jude continues to be as I think about pastoring a local church and the challenges that are associated with pastoring a church. And then not just me as a pastor, but I'd even say you as a Christian, just a normal average everyday Christian confronting the things that you confront on a day-to-day basis. What was written thousands and thousands of years ago actually has some pretty direct relevance to what's going on in your life here and now.

And while it is certainly dated and there are cultural hurdles that we have to jump in order to understand what the book of Jude is talking about. It's worth the effort. The lemon's worth the squeeze because of its application to our life today. If you're new again to the book of Jude, let me give you a quick overview of kind of what's going on. Jude was a book or letter written by the half brother of Jesus. Jesus' other brother James was the leader at the Jerusalem church. He had died, and probably Jude had stepping up to kind of take a leadership role to the Christians who were becoming to the Jewish people, I'm sorry, to the Jews who were becoming Christian there in Jerusalem and Judea and the surrounding areas.

They were what was called second generation Christians, which means some time had passed between the resurrection of Jesus. The early preaching of the apostles, the kind of the worldwide movement that turned the world upside down of signs and wonders and the evidence of Christianity or the gospel of Christianity being verified through the evidence of signs and wonders. And a lot of the apostles had been martyred at this point. Some of the apostles had been thrown in prison or jail, whatever they called them back then. And there was a increasing level of persecution by the Roman Empire and their favorite target of persecution was Christians and Jews.

And as a result of Christians and Jews being targeted and singled out by the Roman Empire, a lot of Christians were struggling. And there was another group called the zealots, it was a Jewish group,

who thought the answer to the persecution of Rome was to just kill the Roman soldiers. Which it's certainly effective as far as killing people go. They don't bother you if they're dead, but it wasn't quite the application Jesus might have encouraged as he preached his gospel and how it would advance. Nevertheless, these zealot people had infiltrated a lot of Christian congregations, and they were gaining influence and pressuring these former Jews.

To kind of identify with their Jewish roots and join the revolution and take up arms and take up the sword and kill the Roman soldiers that were persecuting them and seek to overthrow the Roman Empire. And so Judah is essentially writing this letter to confront those people. And we don't know if it's exactly the zealots, it could be another group of false teachers, but the idea is that they were preaching a gospel that was different than the gospel of Jesus, even though they were claiming to be believers in God, believers in the scripture, but they were twisting the scripture and making it say things that it didn't necessarily say, and they were certainly taking the message of Jesus and turning it upside down.

And in some ways, according to Jude, denied Jesus was the true Christ and imagined that if we could just kill the Caesar of Rome. Then we could inaugurate the true Messiah and the final end of days and God's kingdom would swallow up the kingdom of Rome. And so Jude essentially says to these young believers, hey, be careful of the influence of these people. And he's telling mature believers, you've got to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Now he spends, I'd say, 70% of his letter exposing that threat, talking about what they look like and why they act and why they're wrong.

And then he spends the last 30%, or the first 15 and the last 15%, explaining how Christians should contend for the faith. And so we're in that section. We're in that final section. He's giving us an answer for how to contend for the faith that was once delivered and what to do when we see today people who claim to follow God. Who advance ideas that are contradictory to the scripture, even though they're saying they're speaking for the Lord. And if you think that doesn't exist today, you're just not listening, you're not paying attention because it is all over the place today.

People professing faith in Jesus, but teaching the opposite of what he taught. And so Jude's essential two-point application is this. We'll look at the third next week. The first one was to remember the truth. Remember your source of truth. And your truth is grounded in the apostolic witness. Jesus had his disciples, they saw him, they listened to him, they received his message, and then when God raised him from the dead, they were eyewitnesses to the resurrection. So persuaded by the resurrection that they gave their lives defending the gospel that he gave them.

Remember the source of truth. Don't buy into these alternative sources of truth. And the second application point, that's what we're looking at today, is to live it out. And I think Jude would tell us, and this is in your notes, the truth you live out shows me the truth you love. The truth you live out is the truth you love most. I'm not saying people don't believe things that they struggle to live out. We all struggle to live out the things we say we believe. But I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about what Jesus was describing when Jesus said where you put your treasure is where you'll find your heart where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Basically the idea is that your actions have a bearing on what your heart learns to love. And if you really want to learn to love what Jesus taught and preached and put forward as a solution to living, then you need to practice those things. Even when you don't feel like it, even when it's difficult, if you'll learn to live out the truths of Christianity, then what you live out will become what you love the most. You can change your thinking and change your life, sure.

But sometimes it's hard to change your thinking. So sometimes the best way to change your thinking is to change your living. And in changing your living, you'll change what you think and you'll change what you love. And that's what Judah is going to say this morning with his application to live out. The thing you know is true. Now let's read our passage in light of that. It's the very tail end of the letter we're going to start. Our text is verses 20 and 21, but we're going to start in verse 19 just to show you the contrast between the two people Jude is talking about.

Verse 19, he describes these rebels, these zealots, whoever they were, with the title of these people. These people create divisions. These people are worldly. These people do not have the Holy Spirit. Now the contrast, verse 20, but you, beloved. CSB says, dear friends, it's the Greek word beloved, but you, beloved, as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. For eternal life. Now there's a lot going on here and as you can see from this TV, all kind of different colors and it's broken down all over the place.

I don't do this just because I have ADD and I like to cover. I like to color. I'm trying to help you see some of what's going on in the original language. It'd be tempting to read that and say, well, there's four things Jude wants me to do, and I need to do those things and make God happy and be a better Christian. But that's not exactly what Jude's doing. And you know that because number one, he's creating a contrast between two groups of people. Those people. And the beloved. And you know that's not just because of this text, but because he's used those same words every single time he talks about these two groups.

He uses the phrase those people seven different times. I'm not going to go through all of them. And he uses this phrase, beloved, three different times. He does it in verse 3. He does it again in verse 17. And then finally in our verse this morning in verse 20. And he's using the word beloved, I think, to convey or remind these Christians that the determining difference between true Christians and those who are not, is that those who are in Christ truly are loved by God. That God loves them in a very special, unique way.

And because you are loved by God, there are certain things you ought to do as a result. If you're taking notes, those who are loved by God remain in God's love. That's the second thing I want to show you. If you'll go back to the text real quickly. You'll notice, like I said, you could look at that and go, oh, there's four things I got to do. I've got to keep myself in God's love. I've got to build myself up in the faith. I've got to pray in the Holy Spirit, and I've got to wait on the Lord's return.

But that's not exactly what Judah is saying. Even in English, you can see this if you have an ESV, you'll see the ending I-N-G, building yourself up in your holy faith, waiting on the Holy Spirit. Praying in the in the Holy Spirit, waiting on the Lord's return. Those are what's called participles. In Greek, they are really easier to see. And it's a contrast from what linguists would call an imperative, which just means a verb of command. I'm telling you to do something. And there's a difference between a command and a description of how to carry it out, right?

We can all agree on that. And in this text, the command is not build yourself up. The command is not pray in the Holy Spirit or wait on the Lord's return. There's only one command, and it's in yellow, and it's this command in verse 21. Keep yourselves. In the love of God. That's the one thing Jude wants to focus. I want you to remember the source of truth, and I want you to keep yourself in the love of God. So you say, well, why did he take about all the other things?

Those other three things, those participles to use a technical term, are ways to go about it. They are tools, they are blueprints, they're strategies for how to keep yourself in the love of God. And that's what I want us to do with the time we have today. I want us to understand what does even Jude even mean by the phrase, keep yourself in the love of God. And how do these three things enable us to do that? First, this idea of keeping yourself. What does Jude mean by keeping yourself in the love of God?

It's an interesting word choice. How do I keep myself? In God's love. This is especially true if you consider the fact that Judas used this word keep, not once, not twice, but four different times. He says it in verse 1, if you go to Jude chapter 1, when he's talking to the Christians, he reminds them of who they are and he says, you guys are the called. Those who are loved by God the Father, and notice the phrase, and kept for Jesus Christ. It's the same Greek word. Tereo. This is something not that we do, but that's something God does to us and for us.

God keeps us, and yet we're supposed to keep ourselves. He uses the word again in verse 6, talking about the rebellious angels who didn't keep their own position. But had sexual relations with women in Genesis chapter 6 verse 6 the angels did not keep their own position. But abandoned their proper dwelling, so now God has kept them in eternal chains and deep darkness for judgment on the great day. So again, same word. This is something they did, they didn't keep, so now something God does is he keeps. They didn't keep what they were supposed to do, so now God's keeping them in chains for judgment day.

The other time he uses the word is not to talk about angels, but to talk about these apostate rebels, and it's in verse 13. He gives all these metaphors of what they are and what they're like, and he says they are like wild waves, and then number two, they are like wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever. That word reserved is the word keep. Same Greek word. And so other in other words, God is keeping rebels for a day of judgment. He's keeping believers who are loved by God.

We are to keep ourselves in the love of God. And the angels did not keep themselves in God's order or God's design, and as a result, they're judging. So what does the word keep mean? It's something we do, we ought to do, and yet it's something God does to us. What does it mean? Well if you take all of those usages of the word keep, I would define the word keep kind of like we use the word keep today in English. If your house is messy, you need a house. Keeper, right?

If you manage a zoo and the animals are unruly, you need a zoo keeper. You can be a timekeeper, you can be a record keeper. You can be a bookkeeper. You can be a keeper of all kinds of different sorts. I think a good analogy is a prison guard. A prison guard keeps a prisoner. What does a prison guard do? Is he keeps the prisoner? Well he's looking after the prisoner, making sure that prisoner gets what he needs, doesn't do what he's not supposed to do, does do what he is supposed to do, and he does those until the appointed time when the prisoner gets set free.

He is keeping the prisoner just like you keep your oil changed or you keep your marriage happy or you keep your, you know, I don't know. You can keep a lot of things. You know what I mean by keep? What I mean by keep is you're taking responsibility for something, you're tending to something, you are guarding something, you are protecting something, you are seeing to it that a certain thing takes place, and that's what the word keep means. It means to look after. So we are to look after, take care of, tend to our relationship with God in that we keep ourselves in his love.

And yet at the same time God is looking after, keeping, protecting, guarding us because we're his. Now that's what philosophers call a paradox you've got a paradox of a responsibility that we have for perseverance. We are to persevere in the faith. And then you have the other side of the paradox, which is that God preserves those who are truly His. So if God preserves us, then why do we need to persevere? Why do we persevere if God is indeed preserving us? That's called a Christian paradox. Two truths that look like they contradict each other, but in the wisdom of God run parallel and make sense of his divine nature and our responsibility in light of who he is.

A lot of people don't like paradoxes. People don't like paradoxes because they don't make easy sense. And a lot of people look at a paradox and say we've got to fix that paradox, we've got to solve that paradox. How can Jesus be fully God and fully man? That don't make sense. Let's let's change it. He's fully God and a little bit man. That would be a heresy. Or he's fully man and a little bit God. No, that'd be heresy too. That's a paradox. He's fully God and he's fully man. Just like God is completely sovereign and we are truly free.

A lot of people don't like that paradox. No, we can't be really free for God to be sovereign. Or no, God can't be fully sovereign if we're truly free. No, the Bible teaches both Paul talks about this in Philippians. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Why? For God works in you to will and to work according to his good pleasure. So am I working or is God working? Paul would say, yeah. It's a paradox. You don't solve a paradox, you hold a paradox. Why? Because the paradox, as you hold it intention, drives you to profound, glorious Supernatural truth, and that is the case here in Jude's paradox of divine preservation and Christian perseverance.

If you G. K. Chesterton talked about this, he's my favorite Catholic, he wrote a book called Orthodoxy. He said the greatest thing the greatest paradox is the Christian paradox of the cross, because at the cross, at the center of the cross is a collision and a contradiction. You have the grace of God and mercy of God kissing the wrath of God and the justice of God. They meet together at the center of the cross. They don't look like they can go together, but in Jesus Christ they do. And he says, because the center of the Christian cross is a paradox, at the center of that paradox, lines can go infinitely north and south, east and west.

Infinitely in either direction, and yet it never changes its shape. Such is the nature of true truth, profound truth, God truth glorious truths that invite you into the character of God and nature of God. They're all paradoxes. And this is one of those paradoxes. And Jude is saying, I want you to keep yourself in God's love because God is keeping you. Now why does he say love of God? That's another thing I don't really understand. Why didn't he say keep yourself in the will of God? You know, God has a will, he has a plan.

You need to keep yourself in God's plan. He doesn't say that. He doesn't say keep yourself in the knowledge of God, you know, like God's a big God and you've got to think hard and long about what he's like and keep yourself in the knowledge of God, but he doesn't say that He says, keep yourself in the love of God. Why love? Is it because love is God's defining characteristic? God is love, just like God is holy. Or is it also because love uniquely explains this paradox of divine preservation and human perseverance?

I think that's what Judah's getting at. It's why he calls Christians the beloved. You are loved by God. It's the one thing that distinguishes you from the rebels and the apostates. It's that you are loved by God. And I want you to think about your responsibility as a Christian. Your primary responsibility is to know where the truth is, to remember it, and to keep yourself in the love of God. Now this is hard to kind of comprehend, but there's an analogy I came across this week that has really helped for me, and I want to share it with you.

I want you to imagine that the love of God is like the sun. That the love of God is like the sun. In your notes, God's love is like sunlight if you're in Jesus. Why? Because if you're in Jesus, you receive the love of God whether you want it or not. God loves you rain or shine. God loves you whether you deserve it or don't deserve it. God's love is unconditional. God's love is like the sun in that the love of God is the source of life. It's the source of warmth, it's the source of security, it's the source of vitality.

God's love penetrates the darkest night, God's love warms the coldest heart. God's love is like the sun in so many ways. That's why the Bible uses light and sun to talk about God quite a bit. God's love is like the sun in that it is unconditional and you can't keep the sun from shining. You can't help. But let the sun shine. But what you can do is keep your skin from the sun by shielding it. You can shield yourself from the sun. And some of you gringos should shield yourself from the sun.

You look like me, you get all red and when you shield yourself from the sun, whether it's sunscreen or a ball cap or you know people put umbrellas, even though it's not raining, they'll put an umbrella. To

cover themselves from the sun. What are they doing? They don't want to get burnt. Well, I think Christians do the same thing. Even though God's love is full bore, 100% unconditional. We pull out an umbrella of sin, or we put on sunscreen of idolatry and unbelief, or we put a ball cap of attitudes, actions, and dispositions that create a barrier between us and the Lord and Judas saying remove those things from your life.

Remove and avoid anything and everything that would keep you from living under the sun. Attitudes, actions, dispositions, behaviors, people, religions, ideologies, theology, insofar as it keeps you from living under the sun, you should avoid it. Another example of this is the parable Jesus gave in the gospel of Luke in Luke chapter 15. He gave the parable of the prodigal son. You guys remember this parable? Essentially, the father had two sons. One son, the younger son, said, you know, dad, you're dead to me. I don't want to be with you anymore.

Give me my inheritance early. And the father, because he loves the son, gave him the inheritance, and the son goes and he spends the inheritance out in the far country. Loose living and loose women, as pastor David used to say. Loose living and loose women. He spends all of his money. He finds himself at the bottom of a pig pen. Miserable and he comes to his senses and he realizes you know what my father's servants have it better than me I'm going to go back to my father's house and I'm going to say make me a hired hand I know I don't deserve to be your son but just let me have something better than this and that's interesting.

But what's most interesting in Jesus' story is as the son returns, Jesus says that the father saw him from a distance. What does that mean? It means the father had been looking for the son. The father every day went out to his front porch and said, is this the day my son comes home? Why? Because the father never stopped loving the son. And that's how God's love is. It's lavish, it's unending, it's unconditional. God is pouring out his love for us. And what happens is the prodigal son comes home to the Father.

And he gives a speech or tries to, Father, I'm not worthy of this and that. And the father says, no way, you're not going to be a hard hand. You're not going to be anything like that. You are my son. And you are home, here's the ring, here's the robe, here's the sandals, here's a party, come into the house and receive my love. And he lavishes blessings and he lavishes gifts onto the prodigal son because the son is now back in the domain where the father can bless him. You see the difference?

The father always loved the son. The love was always there. The love never changed. But the son's experience of the father's love depended upon his proximity to the father's house. His being exposed to the Father's love instead of being shielded from the Father's love. And that's what it is in the Christian life. You as a Christian, you want to learn to linger in those places where God can bless you because He wants to bless you. I really believe that God is eager to bless his children. And when you live in light of his love, it enables him to do things in you and through you and for you.

That he wants to do. He wants to give you peace and he wants to give you security and confidence and joy and all of the things that the scriptures say belong to the children of God. But you can only experience those things insofar as you're living under the sun. And when you shield yourself because

of people that you develop relationships with or actions or behaviors or addictions are on and on we could go, you're just like you're putting on the sunscreen, you're throwing on your ball cap, you're hiding beneath the clouds.

And it's not that God doesn't love you. It's not even that God is angry with you. And how dare you, and you're going to have to prove yourself if you want me to be nice again. That is not the vision of the Father that Jesus paints. No, the Father's love is unyielding, unending. He is brokenhearted. He wants to show mercy. He wants to display forgiveness. Of his blessing and his love. That's what Jude means. Keep yourself in the love of God. Not so that God will love you, not because you're afraid he might stop loving you, but because his love is unconditional, his love is like the sun, and the smartest thing to do is to live there.

Now then that raises the question, well how do we do that? How do we keep ourselves in the love of God? Those are the three actions. As you build yourself up in your most holy faith, that's number one. As you pray in the Holy Spirit, that's number two. And then as you wait on the Lord's return. That's the last one. So let's talk about those three things. Before I do that, Jesus taught this same basic principle to his disciples in John 15. He says it again in John 8. If you abide in my word, then you're truly my disciples.

You'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 15, he talks about the same thing. Abide in me, I'm the vine, you're the branches. Apart from me, you can do nothing. And then later on he says, as the Father's loved me, I've loved you. I'm giving you what the Father has given me, so remain in my love. How, Jesus? Keep my commandments. If you keep my commandments, you'll remain in my love. Just like I keep my father's commandments and remain in his love. Again, Jesus is not saying if you break God's laws, he's going to get angry and stop loving you.

He's saying the way to experience the fullness of God's blessing and the and the you know the joy of his love is to walk as he calls us to walk. Walk as ones loved by God so that you can experience the fullness of his love. So here's the things Jude would say. Build yourself up in the Holy Word. Pray in the Holy Spirit and wait wait for the mercy. Now again I put these in different colors. These are the verbs build, pray, and wait. And then you have different explanations of when and where and how.

The reason that I'm going to use three L's, labor in the Word, lean on the Holy Spirit. And look to the Lord's return. Those are all intentional. It's not just to make them match. Alright, this first word build, the reason I say labor, that you should labor in the Word of God. Is because the word that Jude chooses for build is a very interesting word. It's not the word like building something from scratch. Which I'm terrible at, by the way. On Blaze's last birthday, Addie Joe wanted to make him a special gift, and so she wanted me to help her build him a lemonade stand.

And I was like, well I can build a lemonade stand. That's you know I'm no Tim the toolman, but I can do that. So I tried to build him this lemonade stand. It is the saddest looking lemonade stand the top is all broken. The wind blew the day we were building it and just broke it to smithereen. So when my dad came over for Blaze Birthday party, I tried to hide it from him because I was so ashamed of my

work. So I'm not one of those people. But that's not what he's talking about.

He's not saying build something from scratch. The word he uses for build is the idea of bringing something to completion. Or building on top of a prior foundation or on top of a prior structure. And that's why I choose the word labor, because I liken it to what I do on my property every Saturday. In Friday it's time to labor on the land. Why? Because the land needs development. It needs to be brought to completion. There are things you got to do if you want it to be what it's going to be.

And it requires work. And I feel like it never stops. There's always something else to do, laboring on the land, but that's this word. You're always building, you're always building on top of something. But you're doing it to bring it to completion and fullness and perfection. And he's saying, I want you to do that with your most holy faith. So that's the second question. What does that mean? Well, when you hear the word faith, remember words don't get their meaning from the dictionary. Words get their meaning from the context. Can we say that together?

Words get their meaning from the context, not the dictionary, and not your personal experience. When we hear the word faith, a lot of people go, well, faith is what I feel about God, it's what I believe about God, and you have your faith and I have my faith, and we all have faith. That is not what Jude means by faith. Okay? We know that because Jude has used the word faith before in verse 3. He says, I want you to contend for the faith. What faith, Jude? The faith that was delivered.

To the saints once and for all. So he's talking about faith not even as a verb, he's talking about faith as a noun. He's talking about faith as a set of doctrines, a set of truths, a catalogue of truths about Jesus from Jesus that Jesus himself taught about himself and about his kingdom and he gave that faith to the apostles and he says I want you to take what I've given you and I want you to go and make disciples of all nations. And the faith that they preached is the faith Jude says we should contend for and the faith Jude says we should build ourselves up in.

So it's not subjective faith, it's objective faith. It's the faith of the word. Jesus' word. You could say Bible. I mean the word of Jesus is revealed in the Bible. But that's what we're laboring in and building one another up in and bringing each other into completion in. And that's why the exhortation from Randy this morning of exhorting one another, as long as this cult today is so apropos, that's what church should be about. Church should not just be about coming to church and listening to nice music and hearing a sermon and bouncing and living your life.

You should be integrated, you should be in community, and you should think of your role in a local church as I'm building other people up and other people are building me up and we're bringing one another into completion using the gospel that Jesus preached. Are you laboring in the word? At minimum, it should include like a regular time with the Lord, reading the scripture. I know this sounds so trivial and cliché. Like when I first became a Christian, my mom was like, you need to read the Bible every day and you need to pray every day.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes, you work your way up. This one's not recorded so I can do that. And I remember thinking to my mom, you know she used to pay me for reading the Bible? And

it's not a bad idea. I read the Bible. But I went to all the little books first. Philippians, 1 John, 2nd John, 3rd John. I got real rich real fast. I know it sounds trivial, I know it sounds cliché, but regular time alone with the Lord in the scripture is the secret sauce to persevering in the Christian faith.

I'm not saying once a week on Sundays. In fact, they've done studies on this. You know what it is? It's not once a week, it's not twice a week, it's not even three times a week. But when Christians go from three times to four days a week. If you will read the Bible four days a week, drastically lower divorce rates, drastically lower all kinds of things that you don't want to happen in your life, drastically lower if you just read the Bible. Not just to read the Bible again, you're wanting to build yourself up in the word that Jesus gave you.

So because I feel so strongly about that, I asked Taylor this week, would you create a reading plan, 21 days? So that it's doable. Okay, this is not a big ass. This is three weeks, and you don't even do Fridays and or you don't even do Saturdays and Sundays. And I said, I want you to pick the bangers. I mean the best of the best, the greatest hits passages. So that when you spend time in the Lord, it's like turnkey, ready-made. You cannot have, you cannot but have a great quiet time, okay?

With these passages. And I want you to try it. And see if God does not build you up and see if your disposition towards perseverance and I can do this and I and you know and I sense strength from the Lord. See if it does not revolutionize your life that's one application at an individual level, but again, he's applying it at a corporate level. He's wanting us to do this with each other. That's why small groups are really important, embedding yourself into a community of Christians. Labor in the word. Labor in the word.

Secondly, pray in the Holy Spirit. Pray in the Holy Spirit. And what does that mean? Some people read this phrase. Praying the Holy Spirit, and they think it means praying in tongues. And Paul does talk about praying in a tongue. That's different from praying with your mind. And so people describe a private prayer language as ecstatic utterance and etc. And whatever your view on tongues, I don't think that's what this is talking about. Because Paul is in 1 Corinthians 14 talking to all Christians, but he's narrowly, narrowly focusing on a subset of Christians who have the gift of tongues, whatever it is.

And so it's not applicable to every Christian everywhere, as Jude is doing. So I don't think it's like speaking in tongues. I think it's more like what Paul talks about in Ephesians 6, where he talks about spiritual warfare and that Christians have the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, and all prayer. Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer. Or another example is in Romans 8, Paul has this beautiful chapter about life in the Holy Spirit. And in living in the Holy Spirit. One of the things he talks about is praying in the Holy Spirit.

And in Romans 8, when he talks about praying in the Holy Spirit, he says the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, intercedes for us. With inexpressible groanings. He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. I think that's what it means. So it's I chose the word lean on purpose. You're leaning on the Holy Spirit in prayer because you believe real prayer isn't prayer if it doesn't come from the Holy Spirit. And we all know that kind of prayer exists, right? You can pray. And just talk, and it's not prayer

that's come from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus talked about this in the Sermon on the Mount. People who stand in the synagogues with their long robes and they say their prayers to be heard by people their prayer is not for the Lord. Their prayer is to be, look, look how awesome I am. Look at my nice religious vocabulary. That's not spirit prayer. Or he talks about the Gentiles who throw up their many, many words, their babbling, babble, babble, babble. Why? Because they have an underdeveloped theology and they think God won't know if I don't tell him. And he might not care if I don't really plead, so I'm going to talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, and plead, plea, plea, plea, plea, plea, plea.

And Jesus says that's not spirit prayer. Spirit prayer is prayer that comes from the Spirit. It's able to go to God because it comes from God. And I really don't have the best language for it other than to say I've prayed both kinds of ways. I've had spirit. Enabled prayer and I've had fleshly prayer, and there's just a difference. You just know it. And it's not a genre of prayer. I read a Charles Spurgeon sermon this week. Which is hard. He's so wordy. I feel for you guys with these long-winded preachers that say all these things.

But he talked about all these different prayers. You got deprecatory prayer, which is to turn away the wrath of God, and then you've got supplicatory prayer, which is to ask God for stuff, and you can have loud prayer and quiet prayer and private prayer and public prayer and vocal prayer and mental prayer and prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of confession and prayers of this and prayers of that, and he goes, None of those are spirit prayer. Spirit prayer can undergo all of those, but though all of those can also be without the Holy Spirit.

Spirit prayer is not a category or a genre. It is a disposition of the heart. It is a recognition, God, I need you. I can't live without you. Holy Spirit, would you empower me even in my praying? Would you lead me? Would you guide me? Would you help me discern the will of God? I want to pray in Jesus' name. This is why Jesus, in teaching us to pray, said, Father, Who is in heaven? It begins with God, not us. Your will be done. Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Yes, I have needs. But I'm presenting those needs from the framework of it's all about you and it's not about me. And that kind of prayer recognizes prayer is not fundamentally about us informing God about something he doesn't know, but rather prayer is some is us receiving from God that which we really need. That's why he's using prayer as the thing besides the scriptures and building yourself up in the faith as necessary for perseverance. Prayer is like breathing in the Christian life. You can't live without breath in your lungs, and neither can a Christian live or persevere without prayer in his life.

And yet even though it's like breathing, nothing fades so quickly as a Christian's urge to pray. Or am I the only one? It's the foundation of perseverance, and so many of us treat it like a last resort. I feel so convicted on this. I've as your pastor, you know, trying to lead our church into centering prayer and having prayer meetings and really Rethinking what it looks like to be a church that prays, and because of busyness and some of a discouragement and lack of attendance and lack of excitement. It just gradually becomes secondary, superfluous, important, but not urgent, and we've got to take care of the

urgent over the important.

And so many Christians become prayer less instead of prayerful. Or even when they pray, it's just rote, repetition, basic words. You could almost predict what someone's going to say before they say it because you've heard them pray that prayer a thousand times. And it's not spirit-born prayer. It's just them going through the motions. And you will not persevere with that kind of prayer. Build yourself up, labor in the word, and lean on the Holy Spirit. Make him the breath in your lungs. I cannot live without you. Enabling me even in my prayer and then finally look for the Lord's return look for the Lord's return.

I think your notes say four I should change it to two because the idea is not that you just look for the Lord's return and that you don't live in this world or care about this world. I can't wait till I die to go to heaven. No, we're called to live in the world. We have a job to do. There's evangelism. There's the saints. We're building one another up. But we're living in light of the Lord's return. That's what he's saying. And notice the language, waiting expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why does he say mercy? Why didn't he just say wait for the Lord's return? He says, wait for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's talking about the day of judgment. But he chooses mercy. Here's why I think that is. He's already talked about the day of judgment. He talked about the day of judgment earlier when he quoted Enoch's prophecy. And he talked about, from my view, that there will be a day we all stand before the Lord in judgment. But for the ungodly, the day of judgment will be a day of punishment.

It will be a day of wrath. But for God's people, it will be a day of what? It will be a day of mercy. It will be a day of no condemnation. And that is what separates true believers from the ungodly. And he's saying, I want you to welcome that day. I don't want you to be afraid of heaven. I don't want you to, you know, love the world so much that you hope Jesus doesn't take you before this or that. I want you to wait expectantly. You know what this word is?

It means, it doesn't mean passive resigned, watch the paint dry. This is eager. This is my first Christmas that I actually care about my present. This is my wedding day. This is my first child. This is I cannot wait. Bated breath. Because the mercy that will be revealed. Because there's here's how Jesus talked about it in the Gospels. If you go to the next slide, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me, in other words, if they believe I came from God, I'm the Messiah They have eternal life and they will not come under judgment.

So whatever judgment is on the judgment day, for believers, there is a sense in which our judgment is different and should not even be thought of as judgment. Because there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 1 Peter 1. 13, set your hope completely on the grace. To be brought to you. Wow, you're a Christian. So when Jesus reveals himself from heaven, you will receive grace upon grace. You will obtain mercy from him on that day. And all I'm asking is, do you live your life like that because it is really easy to get discouraged in this world because the wicked flourish and the world's a mess and you can get anxious and afraid and Judas saying, don't live in light of this, live in

light of that live in light that there will come a day where Jesus will come in glory and he will show mercy to his people.

He will vindicate the righteous. He will establish his kingdom here forevermore. And that's the life we live for. We don't live for the here and now. We live for the Sweet by and by. And so labor in the word, lean on the spirit, and look to the Lord's return. Now my question is. Are you living in the sun? Are you living in the sun? Not because I'm afraid that if you don't, God will stop loving you. But because your heavenly father loves you so much, he sent his son to live a life you couldn't live and die the death you should have died so that even though you'll never be good enough He will love you unconditionally.

When he sees you, he loves you because he doesn't see you. He sees the son whom he loves. God's love is like sunlight for those who are in Jesus. Are you living in the sun or are you covering up your heart from that amazing love of God? Maybe this morning you'd say I'm not even a I'm not even a Christian because I thought being a Christian was about doing this stuff so God would love me. And this morning the Holy Spirit is reminding you, Jesus has done the work, all you have to do.

Is living it. You have to believe it by faith and rest in the domain of his blessing. Repentance and faith, from faith to faith. If you're a Christian this morning and you'd say, you know what, I want to live in the love of God, but I've let laziness or depression or anger and bitterness keep me from laboring in the word and leaning on the spirit and waiting for the day of judgment. And if that's true, I just want to in a way encourage you're not alone. These three marks are what the church is not known for, unfortunately, in our day.

We're not known for biblical literacy. We're known for biblical illiteracy. We're not known for prayerfulness. We're known for Prayerlessness And we're not known for living for the kingdom to come. We're known for worldliness. There is no difference. But imagine a church. That labored in the word, prayed in the spirit, and looked for the day to come. That kind of church could change the world. And that kind of church would be a church you would want to show up to on Sunday mornings. It would be a group you would want to join because it's not just what you're doing for them, but what they're doing for you and it would be a sphere in which God pours out his blessing and his love and all of the joys that come from living in that place.

But it begins with every one of us repenting and orienting our life around these things. And so I want to encourage you to do that now as we enter into a time of response. If you'll bow your head and close your eyes. As Cheryl leads us, I don't know what this looks like for you. I know there's some specific things that the Lord has put on my heart. And so on your notes, there's some blanks. That you can write down specific things you sense the Lord putting on your heart in these areas.

There's some questions on the back. There's a reading plan. Would you allow this Sunday to be a little different than a regular Sunday in that you don't just hear a sermon and leave? But You allow the Holy Spirit to actually change what you're going to do tomorrow morning. Maybe even what you're going to do this afternoon instead of just bouncing and going to lunch. So you know what I need to get

connected. I need to plug in because I want to experience the fullness of the blessing. That God desires to give.

So would you just do that now, right there where you're seated? If there's a public decision you need to make and your connect card, you can write down your name and write down what the Lord's calling you to do. And in a moment we're going to take up an offering and you can put that off you can put that card in the offering plate I'll bet you do that now. After I pray, we'll give you time to respond to the Lord. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you for the little letter of the book of Jude, which is so small but packs a big punch and it's directly relevant to what we have going on.

We don't have zealots trying to overthrow the American government, but we have supposed Christians, celebrity Christians, deconstructing their faith, saying the Bible doesn't say what it clearly says. Leading other believers, especially immature believers, astray, leading them into beliefs about you that are wrong and leading them into lifestyles that are ungodly. And we want to contend for the faith. We want to be a church that is known for believing the truth and living the truth. Not a church that is cold or judgmental or self-righteous, but a church that lives in the sun.

A church that is filled with the blessings of God and people who live in light of the love of God, though they're undeserving. People characterized by mercy, forgiveness, gentleness, and peace. Lord, we cannot do that apart from your Holy Spirit there's no sermon I can preach that will create that kind of change. So we're asking you to use your word, to use your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, we're asking you to do what only you can do in changing our hearts, softening it towards towards the truth of Jesus. And we pray you do that now as we respond in Jesus' name.

Amen.