

## “Going Forward”

January 5, 2025

Jude 1:20-25

### I. Introduction

For the few of you that were wondering, yes, I remember that we didn't finish the Book of Jude before we switched to Advent, preparing for the birth of our Savior. So, **turn to Jude 1:20-25.** Jude wrote his short letter to “urge believers to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 1:3), But Jude's closing comments are also a good challenge to Christians as we go forward to a new year.

### II. Press On

If believers are going to be successful in standing against false teachers, if they are going to be successful in their Christian walk in the year ahead, Jude closed by writing that they need to press on. Let me give you an example: “If we don't continually take care of this building through cleaning and painting and minor and major maintenance, what would happen to it?” *It would fall down.* The same thing is true about our Christian life, if we do nothing about our Christian walk, we will fall down. There's an old saying that goes this way: “*If you're not moving forward, you're falling back.*” Tweaking another saying, “*The Christian life is like riding a bicycle, to keep your balance, you must keep moving.*” The point is that Christians can't stand still, they must move forward—we must press on. Jude gave 4 essentials so that one can press on.

**A. Build up your faith.** He wrote, “**Build yourselves up in your most holy faith.**” Build up your faith. **Turn to 1 Cor. 3:10-11.** The foundation of one's Christian life is faith in Jesus Christ. In Acts 20:32 Paul told the Ephesians elders, “**Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**” If you are going to grow as a Christian and be able to stand against false teachers, you must build yourself up. If you're going to resist the temptations this coming year, you need to build up your faith. You need to devote time to reading and studying God's Word—both in private and in groups where you can share and learn from one another; then you need to practice what you learn. You can read all about eating healthy even going to classes, but nothing is going to

happen from all that learning until you put into practice what you learn. Only then will you build yourself up. The same is true for growing as a Christian—you have to practice what you read. Build up your faith.

**B. Second: Pray in the Holy Spirit.** When one becomes a Christian, he humbles himself before God admitting that he is a sinner; unable to save himself. Prayer is one of the ways that we acknowledge this continuing dependence; we go to God for the help we need. When we pray “in the Holy Spirit” we submit to Him, we seek God’s will and trust in His Power. We don’t always know how to pray or what to pray for, but the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. **Romans 8:26-27** says “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”

Communication is important in any relationship. The relationship between God and one of His children will weaken and all but disappear if there isn’t any communication, any prayer. This is why Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, “Pray without ceasing.” Just as love grows in a marriage where a husband and wife spend quality time talking together; our love for God will grow only when we spend quality time talking with Him.

**C. Keep in God’s love.** If we are going to press on in this world against false teachers and the temptations all around us, we need to know and practice God’s Word, we need to keep on praying, and we need to “keep in God’s love.” This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> essential. **Turn to John 15:9-11.** If we are going to be able to successfully resist false teachers and their teachings, if we are going to be successful resisting temptation, we must stay obedient to God and not let anything come between us. Our love for Him will grow as we talk with Him and our love for God will grow as we study to His Word and obey it and delight in doing what pleases Him. **Psalms 119:24** says, “Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.”

**D. Wait for Christ’s return.** Finally, we press on as we wait for Christ’s return. We need to wait in anticipation for Jesus Christ to come and take us to be with Him. Some future day, everyone who has trusted in Him and has made Him Lord of their lives will experience Christ’s final mercy and enjoy the fullness of

eternal life in Heaven. In [John 14:3](#) Jesus said, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) says, “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever.” In His mercy and love, He will come for us and take us to be with Him. Our hope and anticipation of Jesus imminent return will be an anchor that holds us as we go through the trials and tribulations of life and as we confront apostasy.

**III. Reach Out** As they press on, Jude reminded believers in verses 22 & 23 that they must reach out to others. Not only are believers to recognize and oppose the enemy and his error, but they are also to reach out and evangelize them with the truth. This is just what Jesus did when He was on the earth. Jude identified 3 different kinds of people who need spiritual help.

**A. First, the Doubting ones** Like wolves stalking sheep, false teachers prey on weak people; immature believers who are not yet grounded in the faith. Those who are strong must “Be merciful to those who doubt.” Believers must show mercy and love to those who are torn between truth and error. Showing mercy does not mean ignoring the seriousness of false teaching or condemning the weak for their doubting. It does mean that the stronger Christians must disprove the false teachings with meekness and patience and God’s Word. As the truth is taught, there must be love—agape love—that assures the doubter that he is cared for and loved.

**B. The Burning ones** Jude then wrote to “snatch others from the fire and save them.” The 2<sup>nd</sup> group is those who need to be snatched—saved—from the fire—the burning ones. Sometimes fire stands for the fires of hell, but it also stands for judgment. [Turn back to 1 Cor. 3:12-15.](#) Those that need to be snatched are those who have been convinced and led astray by false teaching or temptation. They are already part of an apostate group. Just like Lot had to be led by the hand and pulled out of Sodom, they need to be rescued from the grasp of false teachers before God’s judgment comes upon them. [James 5:19-20](#) says, “My

brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

Snatching implies seizing or taking something by force. Jude saw the handling of this second group as having to be more direct than the first group. Jesus demonstrated these ideas during His earthly ministry. To those who were confused, unsure and filled with doubts, like the Samaritan woman in [John 4:1-26](#), He patiently and gently presented the Gospel. But to those committed to false teaching, such as the scribes and Pharisees and their followers, He bluntly warned them of their lost condition. In [Matthew 23:27-28](#) He called them “**whitewashed tombs.**”

**C. Finally, there are The Dangerous Ones** “**To others show mercy, mixed with fear.**” Using the phrase “**with fear**” Jude cautioned Christian to “*be on their toes*” or on their guard. This group is a dangerous group to deal with. When trying to help those who have been captured by false doctrine, believers must be careful not to get trapped or snared. If one isn’t careful in trying to save them, he may be stained or burned himself.

Jude was warning stronger believers that they must never think they are beyond satanic influence. Even while serving the Lord and seeking to rescue one of His children, a Christian can become defiled by those he wants to save. Believers must love and show mercy to God’s people, but they must also hate the sin and not get pulled in by it. Not every Christian is equipped to deal with false teachers or with those that have been influenced and captured by them. It takes a good knowledge of the Word, a faithful walk with God, an understanding of Satan’s devices, and the fullness of the Spirit of God to be successful.

**IV. Commit yourself to Jesus Christ** As he brought his letter to a close, Jude reminded his fellow Christians that through it all God is able to keep them safe. “**He is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.**” God will not allow His children to falling away—all we need to do is trust Him. Although our daily walk is full of dangers from Satan, false teachers, and the world, God will keep—really guard or watch over—believers to insure their safety during an attack. In [John 10:27-29](#) Jesus said, “**My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I**

give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.” Whether it's resisting Satan's attacks through the culture around us or Satan's attacks through false teachers who want to change God's Word to make it more acceptable, believers are safe—nothing can take you out of God's hand.

**V. Jude's Conclusion** Jude closed his letter by focusing on God who “so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jude wrote that He is “the only God our Savior.” God is **our** Savior. God isn't just a Savior; He is **your/my** Savior. Thinking of our salvation and our promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ, Jude reminded believers that we can praise God for 1. His glory, i.e., God's divine attributes, His splendor and radiance, Exodus 34:6-7 describes His glory this way: “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.” Second, His majesty; His greatness and magnificence. Third, His power; His ability to carry out His sovereign will. Fourth, His authority; He has the absolute right to use His power.

In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.” This includes authority over the powers of darkness. As we humbly yield to Him, we share His authority and accomplish His will. This divine supremacy over everything covers all eternity—before time, now, and forever.

As you are on your guard for temptation and false teachers, as you go forward into this new year, remember God's Word, build your Christian life in faith, hope, and love; practice what you read. Maintain a good relationship with God through prayer. Reach out to those who are unsteady and unsure. Commit yourself to Christ, and He will keep you from stumbling and keep you safe. But you must be alert; you must do your part. The enemy is subtle, and the dangers are great. But the only wise God, your Savior, will keep you safe and one day welcome you home to “my Father's house where there are many rooms” (John 14:2). In spite of the hard times that come our way, we can celebrate now and into eternity. Ephesians 6:10 sums it up well, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Let us go forward in victory in God's power.

## Communion Devotion – January 2025

*Matthew 26:17-20, 26-30*

Just like Christmas, the Lord's Table is a time to remember and celebrate what Jesus did for us. In **Philippians 2:8** we are reminded that “He humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!” **1 Timothy 1:15** says that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Jesus humbled Himself; He became a servant so that you could be redeemed—saved. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** tells how Jesus “redeemed” us, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” If you believe that Jesus died for your sins; if as **Romans 10:9** says, you have made Him your Lord and your Savior, then you are a child of God. If you have done this, then whether or not you are a member of TBC, we invite you to join us in this time of celebration and worship—a time for saying “Thank You” to God for His love and mercy and grace.

The Lord's Table is also a time for every Christian to take inventory of his or her life—again, like New Year's Day, to examine our lives. While the elements are being passed, look at your heart, look at your life. Living a Christian life—a sanctified life—a life not even dabbling in sin doesn't come easy. The world is constantly trying to get you to be like the rest of the world in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. Traits like humility, submission, and obedience are not particularly respected in the world. Are your priorities those of your Lord and Savior or those of the world around you? Is your motive in life to bring glory to God? Has your message of salvation—how to be saved—been perverted? Are you building up your faith, praying in the Spirit, keeping in God's love and looking for Jesus' return? Do your words and your actions testify to others that you are a Christian? Is your mission to bring sinners to Christ? In other words, can you say to God as Jesus did in **John 17:4**, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do?” Remember, a divided gospel—a gospel of grace and works is actually no gospel at all. If, by God's standards, your life and your message aren't what they should be, confess to God whatever is holding you back, ask Him for strength to do what you should be doing, and then come to the Table and worship our great Lord and Savior.