

Title: Him who is able  
Text: Jude 24-25  
Theme: What God does  
Series: Jude  
Prop Stmtnt: When we consider what God does, we want to worship him.

Read Text:

The book of Jude is full of warning and paints a dire picture of the condition of the early church yet, that is not how the book ends. This letter concludes with what is probably the most beloved benediction and doxology in the Bible. Jude's warnings to the church are not as strong as his confidence in the future and ultimate success of the church. And with good reason!

1. **God is able** – 24a

The Bible tells and retells and retells the story of God's ability, our disability and the complete and utter inability of other gods. No God is able, like our God because God is infinite. When we say that God is omnipotent or all-powerful, we saying that he is infinitely able.

**a. He is Omnipotent**

When God appeared to Abraham he said to him, "*I am God Almighty.*" Genesis 17.1. In Hebrew, God Almighty is translated as El Shaddai. One chapter later when Sarah laughed at the idea of getting pregnant in her old age, the Lord said, "*Is anything too hard for the LORD?*" Of course, the answer is, no. The omnipotence of God is God's infinity in relationship to power. He has no equal, no match and no rival. God, and only God is able!

*"To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy one. Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power no one is missing."* Isaiah 40.26 God is able.

*"The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them. The north and the south, you have created them: ... You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand."* Psalm 39.11-13 God is able.

*"Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you."* Jeremiah 32.17 God is able.

**b. He is Sovereign**

The ability of God is not only related to God's unrivaled and infinite power, but his ability is also related to his unrivaled and infinite control and oversight of all things. The exercise of God's omnipotence over his creation is called the sovereignty of God. God is over all things and because God is over all things he is continuously involved with all created things such that they exist and cooperate with his will in order to fulfill his purposes. In short, God is able to do his

holy will and he does his holy will. What is it then that God says that he is able to do, that is his will to do? Part of that answer is in Hebrews 7.25, where we read that he (Christ) *“is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”* Romans 16.25, *“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ...”* Another part of that answer is in Ephesians 3.20, *“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”* He is able to save (and he does) those who come to him. He is able to strengthen us according to the gospel (and he does). He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask and think (and he does). And, Look at v.24 again.

## 2. **God is able to keep you from stumbling.** v.24a

God is able to keep you from stumbling (and he does). Let’s start with the verb, “to keep.” In John 17.11, Jesus prayed for the Father *“to keep them in your name.”* And in v.15 he prays *“to keep them from the evil one.”* In 2 Thess. 3.3. Paul says that “the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.” There are several other passages that speak of God’s ability to keep us, including v.1 where the believer is described as being *“kept for Jesus Christ.”* The power of God and the sovereignty of God are put to good use for us. God is able to keep, that is to guard us. And one of the things that he keeps us from is stumbling or falling.

Stumbling does not mean a little trip or slight fall. Stumbling means to fall into a condition where you abandon the faith once and for all. God is able to keep you from eternal harm. There are people who are exposed to the gospel, may even make a profession of faith and for a time, look like a follower of Christ. However, as time goes on, it becomes apparent that they really do not follow Christ. When you witness someone walking away from the faith, it tends to rock your boat, especially if it was someone that you trusted, looked up to, or was helpful to you. Naturally, you look at your own life and ask, is that what I am going to do? Is that may destiny?

Your mom died from cancer at 53. What do you think of when you get close to 50? Your parents divorced before their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. What do you think about when you get close to your 14<sup>th</sup>? Your dad walked out on your mom when he was 45. Your uncle walked away from the faith and he was a pastor. If these sorts of things happen to others, do we stand a chance? That’s the idea that Jude is addressing. False teachers are people whose lives reveal that they have not only fallen away from the faith, but in some cases, they have crossed the point of no return. The word for that is apostasy. There is no going back. Now, if you are a genuine believer, God is able to keep you from stumbling. God keeps you from abandoning the faith. This does not mean that God keeps you from sinning, or keeps you from doubts, or keeps you from seasons of darkness and trial, where you want to throw in the towel, or even try to. This means that God will not let you stay there. Even if you, like Elijah run from your appointed post for a time, God will come and find you and will not let you stay under the juniper tree. If you like Jonah, run from your calling, God will send a storm, then a fish, to get you back on course. He is able to keep you from stumbling and he does.

You may mess up, but it won’t be fatal. Failure will not be the final word. God is able to keep you from stumbling and he does. A great example of this is seen in Luke 22. Jesus and the 12 are

in the upper room observing the Passover before they go to the garden of Gethsemane where Christ is arrested. Before, they left the upper room, Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold (pay attention to this), Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.” The word for “you” is actually in the plural. (v.32) I take that to mean that Jesus is informing Peter about something that has gone on in that world that we do not see yet. Satan demanded to have you all, that he might sift you all like wheat. (Peter is the representative of the group, if he goes down, they could all go down, but (v.32 – you is singular), Jesus has prayed for Peter and Jesus gets what he prays for and while Peter will deny Christ, he won’t stay in that condition. He will turn. The Lord will keep him from stumbling into apostasy. Jesus is so confident that Peter will turn back that he says, when you do, strengthen your brothers. – they won’t fall either.

The fact that Peter is kept from stumbling into apostasy does not eliminate Peter’s responsibility to turn back and help strengthen his brothers. Once again, do you see the beautiful relationship between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility? Jesus told Peter about his impending denial, even though Peter denied that he was going to deny Christ. Jesus also told Peter that this event would not be the last chapter of his story. Oh no, Peter would be restored. Peter would turn back and Peter has a necessary ministry in the lives of the other disciples. The promise of Christ and the prayers of Christ were motivation to Peter to act in faith and in confidence that forgiveness was real and restoration was real.

If I could lose my salvation, I would. But he keeps us from stumbling. Again, this does not mean that God keeps you from sinning, or from doubts, or from seasons of darkness and trial, where you want to throw in the towel, or even try to. This means that God will not let you stay there. A genuine believer will not persevere in sin. God not only keeps you from stumbling...

### 3. **God is able to present you blameless** – 24b

When you are driving through the mountains, there are places where you can stop for a scenic overview. It’s worth the stop because the view is magnificent. That is what the last half of verse 24 is like. We need to stop here for a bit. Look at the phrase. Can you identify the three parts of it? God is able to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. Let’s start with the second one (the presence of his glory) because it helps us understand the amazing nature of the first one (standing blameless before him) and why the joy is so great (the third one).

#### **a. The presence of his glory**

Raw power is intimidating. Stand before the thundering Niagara Falls or the tidal waves of a tsunami and you will have respect for the power of water. Watch as a forest fire consumes a California canyon in minutes, incinerating 200-year old trees and multi-million-dollar homes and you will be in awe and fear of the power of fire. Hide in a basement while an F-5 tornado shreds the floors above you into millions of toothpicks and tosses your truck 3 miles away and you will wake up in the middle of the night with panic attacks for years. But as overwhelming as those are, the most terrifying power to humans, is the power and holiness of God. The disciples witnessed both on the Sea of Galilee. In Mark 4, the disciples and Jesus were in a boat when a storm threatened to capsize the boat and drown them. The disciples were in a panic when Jesus woke up and stopped the storm. But, instead of being relieved, the disciples were now terrified.

The power in their boat was greater than the power that threatened their boat. And they did not know what to do. Later, in Luke 5, Peter and several others were fishing without success. Jesus told him to cast his nets on the other side of the boat (a ridiculous suggestion to a seasoned fisherman who has been fishing all night long with nothing to show for it, as if the other side of the boat would make one lick of difference). But Peter did, and while we may be tempted to be amazed at the number of fish that were caught, Peter became aware of the holiness of the one before him and pleaded with Christ to leave him be, since he (Peter) was such a sinful man.

At Christmas time we sing, “Veiled in flesh, the godhead see.” He had to be veiled. This is the God who spoke on Mt. Sinai and the resulting thunder and lightning caused sheer panic on the part of the people. You see, God’s word is like a two-edged sword that divides soul from spirit. It exposes everything there is about us and there is nothing more terrifying than that. That is why many people love the idea of Jesus because the idea of Jesus is Jesus from a distance. (Alexa illustration?) But how do you live with Jesus up close and in person, when his eyes see everything in your heart and his ears hear everything in your thoughts? Being in his presence is the last place we would want to be since his presence would be the devastating display of everything that is wrong with us. And what is worse? There is nowhere to hide! But Jude does not speak of the presence of his glory as a threat, but as a wonderful promise and as something that we should long for. And the reason for that comes from the first phrase. God is able to make us stand before him, blameless!

b. **Blameless before him** (the presence of his glory)

Note the contrast. God is not only able to keep you from falling into eternal harm (and he does) but God is able to make you stand blameless before him (and he does). To present has the idea of standing. Isaiah stood in the presence of God and was so overwhelmed by the holiness of God that he cried out in fear because he assumed that he was about to be destroyed. What hope did he have? What hope do we have? But, Jude says that God is able to present you blameless. God is able to make you stand before him, blameless. No blame. No one, can point to you and accuse you of guilt. You will stand before God without guilt. The God who knows everything about you has completely cleansed everything about you. But how? How can God, who is so holy and so righteous be able to present you blameless before him?

People do not usually ask this question. Most of us have a rather inflated opinion of ourselves. We see enough good qualities, especially compared to the many people on Facebook, that we are not all that surprised by God’s grace to save us. After all, we’re not really that bad. What surprises us is God’s justice. What surprises us is that God does not grade on a curve. If you miss one question, you fail the test. One sin makes you a sinner and sinners cannot stand in the day of judgment (Psalm 1). God’s justice is God’s justice, not man’s justice. God’s justice is an infinite justice, just like God’s power is infinite because God is infinite. How can God’s infinite justice that has been offended by our rebellion ever be satisfied? How can God say to all of us who are full of blame that we can stand before him, blameless? There is only one way. There is only one way and you are not the way. You cannot pay the infinite price for your sins. Think of the true nature of our position. When you compare our righteousness with God’s righteousness, our righteousness is actually unrighteous. Our attempts at making up for our sins only adds to our list of sins. We cannot save ourselves. Our attempts to save ourselves only add to our condemnation.

Only God can save us from God and that is what God did for us through Christ. Christ, the uncreated Son of God, 2<sup>nd</sup> person in the Trinity, humbled himself and was born through an earthly mother. As God, he took on a human body and added to himself a human nature. He was the God-man. As God, he was infinite. As man he was our representative. Everything that he did was perfect. Everything that he did pleased the Father. Everything that he did fully defined what it meant to live a perfectly righteous and blameless life. Every thought, every word, every prayer, every step, every gesture, every act and reaction was done in order to fulfill all righteousness. He, the, perfectly blameless one, the unblemished sacrificial lamb was offered up as the perfectly blameless and infinitely righteous sacrifice for our sins. His life was the payment that we could not make and his death was the sacrificial offering of that payment that we could not give. When you, by faith alone, trust in Christ alone, you are by grace alone, justified in the eyes of God. You are declared righteous because, in that moment you are credited with the righteousness of Christ. You are treated as and viewed as if everything that Christ did, you did. And your sin? Your sin is gone. Your sin is removed from you. Your sin was credited to Christ who by his death was treated as and viewed as if he had done everything that you had done. That is why he died. And what is more, he chose to die. He chose to die because that was the only way that you could live. That is the only way that you could be in his presence, blameless.

If you believe that, and you trust in Christ, you will stand in the presence of God blameless. There is nothing about you that can be found out. There is no secret that hasn't been revealed and dealt with by Christ. This is the grace of God. You, me, blameless! Some of you believe this, but you struggle to believe this. But on that day, you won't struggle to believe it. You will believe it perfectly which means your amazement and your joy will be exponentially greater.

### **c. With great joy**

And on that day, you won't be singing by yourself in the car or in the shower, you will be singing with millions of others who are just as amazed as you. You too?! He saved you, too! You made it too? We're done? We finished? We're here? What are people like us, doing in a place like this? I don't know, but it is strangely warm and right. And even though a Detroit party is not supposed to quit, this is the party of all parties, as the celebration of grace and the realization that we really are blameless and able to stand in the presence of God, with joy because in the presence of God is the fullness of joy which is a joy that is unspeakable and uncontainable. In verse 21, we are commanded to keep ourselves in the love of God and one of the ways we do that is by building ourselves up in the most holy faith (the gospel). Here, Jude helps us do just that by reminding us of what God does. He saves and he keeps what he saves. God is able.

*"God is able, from these stones to raise up children for Abraham."* Matthew 3.9

*"And God is able to make all grace abound to you."* 2 Corinthians 9.8

*"He (Abraham) considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead."* Hebrews 11.19

*"But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me."* 2 Timothy 1.12

*"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forevermore. Amen."*