

Title: No God like our God
Text: Jude 25a
Theme: The exclusivity of God's status and salvation
Series: Jude
Prop Stmtnt: Only God can save because only God is God

Memory work

Read Text:

This beautiful blessing/benediction is one sentence. If you were blessed with a good English teacher who taught you how to diagram a sentence and you had enough sense to pay attention (something I finally did by my junior year in college) then you can look at this sentence and whittle it down to this. "Now to him (God) ... be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority." It is statement of praise. Jude is saying that we should give God worship, and actually Jude is giving God worship. But, there is more to this benediction.

It's like this. If someone tells you to do something, you may wonder "why" or, if you are not in the army, you will probably ask "why." In this concluding prayer, this benediction, this doxalogical explosion, Jude is expressing worship to God in such a way that he starts with "why" we worship God. Here he gives us 3 reasons why we should ascribe glory, majesty, dominion, and authority to God. Jude could have just said, "Now to him be glory, majesty, dominion and authority." But, he gives us reasons why that is so true.

We looked at the first one last week. We ascribe worship to God because of what God does. God is able. God is infinitely able. Therefore, God is omnipotent. God can do anything that he wants to do. In fact, God does. God carries out his perfect and sovereign will. So, what is it that God wants to do? What is it that God is able to do and does? He is able to you from stumbling and he is able to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. That's pretty amazing, isn't it? Since God is omnipotent and sovereign, he can choose to do anything that he wants and he chooses to keep you and he chooses to present you blameless. Beloved, that is awesome news because on our own we wouldn't choose that for ourselves and besides we can't do that for ourselves.

So, let me ask you this. If you were able to do anything that you wanted, what would you do? Think about that for a second. The way that you answer that depends on the type of person you are. In other words, who you are determines what you do. Whoa, stop the bus for a minute. Did you get that? Who you are determines what you do. That comes from God. Who God is determines what God does. Therefore, if we are going to be a people who genuinely follow God we are not going to be in a religious system that focuses exclusively on your behavior, right? Does God care about how you behave? Sure! But why? Your behavior is a reflection of your belief. The fruit of your life is the expression of the root of your life. If there is bad fruit on the tree of your life, the solution is not to pull off the bad apples and gorilla glue good ones on. That won't last. If the tree is producing rotten fruit, you need a new tree. The fruit of God, that is what God does, reveals the root of God, that is who he is.

This benediction is so rich because it not only tells us that God uses his omnipotence to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before him, but it tells us why. Why does God do that? God does that because that is the kind of God that he is. That is his root, his core, his character and he doesn't change. Who he is determines what he does. And how does he do this? (3rd "why") He does this through Jesus. Therefore, our worship of God is through Jesus. So, who is God? He is the only God. He is the only God who saves. He is our God who saves. Those are the 3 points of this sermon. There is no God like our God.

1. He is the only God.

As God, God is eternal, infinite, sovereign and self-existent. There can be only one sovereign. There can be only one whose will rules all other wills and whose plan is accomplished. God is sovereign because he is the only God. And, God is self-existent. That is, God is not dependent upon anything or anyone for anything. God needs nothing and he certainly does not need us. This is really a beautiful truth to consider. If God needed us, then we would have reason to be suspicious of him when he says that he loves us. Many of you know what a relationship like that is about. Your kid totally ignores you unless he wants something from you. Hey dad, can we talk? You know the drill. He butters you up and then asks something from you.

My son loves NASCAR. Every summer he says, "Hey dad, I think it would be great if we went to a race together." I know what that means. That means, hey dad, will you buy the tickets, pay for the food, the travel, the accommodations all for the pleasure of hanging out with me?" Now, would he still want to hang out with his old man if there was no NASCAR? Now, am I being a little hard on him? Probably, but you get the idea. But God does not need us. God's love for us is not a bribe or any form of manipulation so that we can make him feel better about himself. Oh, no. We need God. We need this good God. We need this good God whose glorious presence is characterized by joy. To insist that there is only one God, is not only factually correct, it is loving.

The Bible declares that there is one God and only God. All other gods and goddesses are frauds, imposters and figments of the imaginations of those who dreamed them up. Dreaming them up, making up stories about them, crafting images to display them, naming them, building altars, shrines and systems of religion do not make them valid. In the end, it is a lot of trust that is placed on something that simply is not real. The Bible declares that there is one God and only one God because that is what God says. But, we live in a pluralistic culture. We live in a time when it is considered to be a capital offense if you say that other gods are fraud, unless you are attacking Christianity, then it is considered to be your civic duty. In fact, it is considered to be arrogant to claim that your truth, your God is exclusive. But, we are not making the claim. God is. And to believe anything differently would be the height of arrogance and folly. We declare and we embrace the exclusivity of God. There is one and only one Creator. There is one and only one Law maker, law giver and source of absolute truth and that is the rub. I think everyone would be pretty chill with God as Creator if he "minded his own business" and didn't give us laws. Wait a minute! Just because you make us, does that give you the right to tell us how to live? Actually, it does. But, why is that such a problem? We consider that to be a problem only if we are idiots. We think that we know more about our lives than God does. We think that we

know what is good for us and better for us and therefore we accuse God of trying to stifle our creativity and enjoyment of life.

But, God is not like that. God is a good God. God is wise, compassionate, and full of joy. God pursues his glory by pursuing your joy and your satisfaction. You will not find joy or satisfaction by pursuing any other god. God is not being stingy because he tells you that there is no other God but him, he would be lying to you if he pretended there was. The history of our world is the story of many people groups who have their own gods, traditions and religions. It sounds so narrow-minded and bigoted to say that your God is the only true God. But believing a lie is actually being narrow-minded. The fact is, as the creation, we were made dependent upon God. In him we move and have our being. He puts air in our lungs and a pulse in our hearts. We are dependent upon him whether we realize it or not, but we were made in order to realize it and we don't function well unless we do recognize it. For the very fact that God is God and the only God means that he is deserving of our worship. But our worship is to be more than fearful submission. Our worship is to be loving, trusting and joyful because the only God is Savior.

2. **He is the only God who saves.**

The Bible recognizes and interacts with two perspectives on the existence and reality of gods. In the minds of people, there are many gods. But, in reality, in the mind of God, they are not real. God's Word speaks of these and says, "there are no other gods." But God's Word also acknowledges that gods are real in the imagination, religion and practice of many and God's Word exposes the folly of that, which of course gets some people pretty upset. But, it's true. The fact that there are no other gods, means that God's ability to do whatever it is that he wants to do is never challenged. No one can oppose God and win. (Romans 8) And the fact that God is the only God who saves establishes two very, very important truths.

A. **God is a good God who can be trusted.**

This text is like a stethoscope that enables you to hear the heart of God beating. This text is like a heart catheterization that enables you to look inside the chambers of God's heart. What you hear and what you see is a God who loves to save. God loves to save. In fact, God wills to save. God chooses to save. Saving sinners and keeping them saved is part of God's sovereign plan because saving is part of who God is. God saves because saving is part of his character and since the glory of God is the display of his character, God is glorified in the saving of sinners. Do you see how good God is? Saving, rescuing, redeeming, pursuing the lost, caring for the broken, loving the hopeless is part of the very nature of God. God is awesome in power, but he exercises that power for our good. Therefore, God is a good God who can be trusted, and he must be trusted.

B. **God is a good God who must be trusted.**

No other god can save you because (see point 1), there are no other gods. Only God can save you because only God has provided the way for you to be saved. To trust in anything else will betray you. If you want to be rescued from a meaningless existence, you have to acknowledge and submit to God. But that is good for your soul!

Isaiah 44.9-23

We could summarize this by saying, the creation is trusting in the creation for meaning and for help. It will never work. When the creation trusts in the creation, the creation is simply trusting in itself, which is flawed and bound to fail.

What do you trust in for your happiness? What do you look to for your security and joy? Food, drink, the approval of people, the acceptance of your kids, a weed-free lawn, acceptance by friends, good grades, what is it? Everything that you set up as your savior will fall. Only God can save you and God is not stingy with that, he is our Savior.

John Frame wrote a wonderful book called the Knowledge of God in which he talks about “the logic of unbelief.” He says, “If the biblical God does not exist, there are two alternatives: either there is no god at all, or something other than the biblical God is god....if there is no god at all, then all is chance, all thinking is futile, and all ethical judgments are null and void....On the other hand, if the unbeliever chooses to deify something in the world, something finite, then a kind of rationalism results. Man’s mind either is the new god or is considered competent to discover it autonomously, which is the same thing....Both rationalism and irrationalism (of unbelievers) are futile and self-defeating, as sin must always be. If irrationalism (the no god position) is true, then it is false. If all thinking is the product of chance, then how can it be trusted even to formulate an irrationalism?” Frame goes on to describe the failure of rationalism to defend itself. (pp. 60-61) You see this all of the time. Ask someone if there is such a thing as ultimate truth, and the prevailing thought is, no. Ask them are they certain. And the answer is generally, yes. Then ask if their certainty is ultimately true? The exclusivity of God is not only true, it is a good truth that we should never be hesitant to embrace and declare. But, this is not just truth for the public square, this is comforting for our souls.

3. **The only God who saves is OUR Savior.**

Now, it is true that God does not need us and it is true that God does not answer to us. It is also true that the universe is centered around God and not us. God is centered on God. God’s self-centeredness is beautiful and true. For us to be self-centered is ugly and flawed. But God’s God-centeredness means God is committed to revealing his own glory, which is the unveiling of his character and person. And as we have noted, part of God’s character is Savior.

We all have to face what appears to us to be the tension of the existence of evil and the existence of a Sovereign God. Why did God permit sin to exist? Why does God permit sin to still exist? Why did God allow Adam and Eve to sin? I cannot explain the secret things of God because I do not know them. But, I think part of the answer to this question is because everything that God does, he does for his glory. Everything that he does, he does to make himself known. And, God is our Savior. And the salvation of God is not only part of his character, it is what he wants you to experience him as. “to the only God, OUR Savior. Do you realize the implications of this?

A. **The only God is personal.**

God is known to us and God is known by us. He is real and personal. Therefore, God is relational. The salvation that God offers is personal. He will rescue you. He will save you. He will forgive you. He will help you. He will keep you. He will guard you. He will deliver you. He will redeem you. He will justify you. He will bring you home to heaven, where you will live with him forever. He knows your name. He hears your prayers. He even knows the number of hairs on your head. What is the point of that? The point of that is this. If he knows the details that are not all that important, then you can be assured that he knows the details of everything that is. The salvation that God offers to you is offered to you. The promises of God that are given to you and for you. He really knows you and he really loves you. Yes, there are billions of people on the earth, but God does not get overwhelmed. He is personal. He is our Savior.

B. The only God is ours – we share in him.

God is our Savior. You are not the only one he has saved and you are not the only one that he will save. He is our Savior. Part of the joy of our salvation is the fact that we enjoy this with others. How much grace does it take to save a self-righteous hypocrite? An infinite amount. How much grace does it take to save a sex-addict? An infinite amount. How much grace does it take to save a Christian-raised, church-attending, dean's list, clean-living, law-abiding, sermon note-taking respectable kid? An infinite amount. We are only here by grace and we all have an equal share because we all have an equal need.

When I initially surveyed this benediction, I thought that “through Jesus Christ our Lord” modified “the only God, our Savior.” In other words, Jesus is the means by which God is our Savior. And that's true. The only way we can be forgiven of our sin is to realize that Jesus died in order to pay for your sins and when you by faith alone, trust in Christ alone, then your sins are forgiven and you are declared righteous by God. That is true. The NT talks a lot about Jesus being our Savior, but it also refers to God the Father as our Savior as well and here is one of those places. After all, it was the Father's plan to save us. He was the architect of our salvation. Jesus was the builder. He accomplished it. And the Holy Spirit was the real estate agent¹. He sold it to you for free and put you in it. Again, all of that is true, but the point that Jude is making is what we will pick up with next week and that is this: Our glad worship of this one and only glorious God who saves, is through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, while Jesus is the means by which God is our Savior, this benediction emphasizes that Jesus is the means by which we worship our God who saves.

Without Christ, without the life, death and resurrection of Christ, there can be no true worship of God. Therefore, if we are going to worship God as we ought, if we are going to fulfill the very reason for our existence, if our lives are going to honor God, then it is only by means of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the curtain that was torn, the offering that was given, the blood that was shed so that God and man could live together and he has accomplished that.

¹ Terry O'Brien said this in a conversation in my office this week.