

Who is able

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- [0 : 0 0] Oh, I guess I was waiting for the hand, but hey everyone again.
- It's great to be up here. It's great to be here at the end of four powerful G's. No, I'm kidding. I wouldn't offend you all like that.
- I know that you're not all G's. It'd be great if you could grab an outline. You heard from Sandra that the outline's on Church App or the church website.
- Your Bible. Great to have your Bible so that you can check. We talked a bit about having your own Bible last time. Great to have your Bible. And how about I pray?
- Our Father, thanks that we can spend some time in your word. Finish off Jude together. Would you be with us in our heart and mind? Help us to focus, listen.
- [1 : 0 0] Would you guide us by your spirit so that we understand the truth? And so that we know how to put it into practice. Amen. What do you often get told?
- You are not able. You are not able to go on that ride. You can't play with us. You're not going to be able to lift that.
- When I was a kid, as the youngest, the smallest, the weakest. I know that it's hard to imagine. You know, throw in a bit of sickness as well.
- I feel like I was always being told, you're not able. When we went water skiing, we had a boat just free boarding.
- Ah, no, sorry. Maybe next time. When we went to theme parks. Oh, sorry, Jeff. You have to be this tall. My brothers and I were invited to a new youth camp.
- [2 : 0 7] Ah, sorry, Jeff. Not you. Even at my wedding. I was told, yeah, we didn't think that was going to happen. Ouch.
- You think I'd grow up with a chip on my shoulder. As I was thinking about tonight's passage this week, I wondered if Jude's readers might have felt a bit like this, considering the people who slipped among them.
- Josh gave us a bit of context, didn't he? The kind of people who were there. Did you take note as he was reading? Let me remind you.
- Blemishes at your love feasts. Shepherds who only feed themselves. Wild waves of the sea foaming up their shame. People who divide you.
- Following merely natural instinct without the spirit. Ouch. Can they be able to protect themselves?
- [3 : 2 0] Well, this week, Jude finishes his letter with a short, sharp challenge to his readers. But what community is able to function with people like this among them?
- Well, firstly, Jude writes. Let's remember, he writes to a people who are believers.
- So remember how the letter began. He's writing to people who are called, who are loved by God, who are kept for Jesus Christ.
- And secondly, remember, Jude doesn't write to a letter of community. Sorry, doesn't write a letter to a community of believers who have no capacity to fight for the faith.

And so when Jude gets to verse 20. And so when Jude gets to verse 20. He's finished warning about the dangers of these people, just as we've seen. And he turns to challenge and remind his readers about what they do have.

[4 : 32] And that is a responsibility to themselves and to each other. And what he says is, despite these evil people.

You are able. To keep yourselves in God's love. Take a look. Point one, verse 20.

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Now, this might sound strange to some of you, but just what it says is keep yourself in God's love.

How? Well, he mentions two things that perhaps some of you haven't thought about before. Firstly, building yourself up in your most holy faith.

[5 : 40] And secondly, praying in the Holy Spirit. Okay, so, hmm, building myself up in my most holy faith.

Okay, so, I've got a Bible. So, I guess, I guess that builds praying in the Spirit.

I wonder where the Spirit is. Do you think about spiritual growth in this way? In the way that Jude has mentioned it?

I don't reckon I do. What do you think Jude is on about? Firstly, what he's doing is, he's giving the believers a wonderful reminder.

That is, you have a most holy faith and that is nothing to sneeze at. It can't be bought.

[6 : 44] It can't be taken. It can't be lost. It is given by God and it sets you apart as his own. How does that feel?

You have a most holy faith. Hold on. That's true for them as believers.

That's true for me. I believe. I have a most holy faith. My faith can't be bought. My faith can't be taken.

Can't be lost. Given by God. Sets me apart as his own. It means this world is not my home. Heaven is my home. When I fail, God still loves me.

By speaking the truth to ourselves, we can build ourselves up in our most holy faith.

[7 : 45] I am a child of God. Called before creation. Loved by God the Father. Kept for Jesus Christ.

Nothing can change that. And so build yourself up. Speak the truth to yourself. Don't let any doubts tell you otherwise.

And praying in the spirit, Jude says. Who can pray in the spirit? Well, anyone who has the spirit.

I know it's a strange way to talk about prayer. And your prayers may not feel spiritual sometimes. But you can be sure that if you trust Jesus, you have the spirit.

And without the Holy Spirit. You're not speaking to God at all. And so Jude is reminding his readers.

[8 : 46] How special their prayers really are. And so a reminder you're praying in the spirit. It could lift your focus and your mind in prayer.

A reminder you're praying in the spirit could raise your expectations in prayer. A reminder you're praying in the spirit. Could remind you that God is nearer than you think.

I wonder if sometimes when you read this.

Something like this. Oh yeah. Build yourself up in holy faith. Pray in the spirit. It's easy to think. Okay. Okay. Prayer and Bible reading.

Yeah. So by prayer and Bible reading. Keep yourself in God's love. Yeah. I hear that. But after 250 days in lockdown. Yeah. Not so easy.

[9 : 46] Right. But. I don't think that's simply what Jude is saying. Not to say that. Reading your Bible and praying are not going to build you up.

But Jude isn't suddenly telling his readers. That their salvation or perseverance is. Dependent on their godliness. On what they can do to themselves.

In their good times and their bad times. What he is saying is that through personal spiritual growth. Speaking the truth about your faith.

Drawing near to God in prayer. Will keep yourself in God's love. As you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. To bring you to eternal life.

Friends. This is a comfort to the believer. This is a comfort to the believer. And what is expected for their life. Because they know they live in a sinful world. It's a comfort because they are in God's love.

[10 : 50] And they know how to stay there. The mercy to come. Is theirs. They are expecting it. They are just waiting for it.

I wonder if it's a bit like our current lockdown situation. Freedom is coming. And we all know it. It's going to happen. Freedom. No matter what.

And we're living a certain way now. Expecting that freedom to happen. We're keeping indoors. We're wearing our masks.

We're checking in where we go. We're getting our jabs. We all know that we need to live a certain way. So that the day comes. It's very unlikely.

That tomorrow in Victoria. Everyone suddenly changes their life to pre-2020. Even if some may want to. Jude with this challenge.

[11 : 55] Has not put an unbearable weight on the believers. As though their perseverance is entirely up to them. Their salvation is coming.

And they can continue to grow in godliness. They can keep themselves in God's love. Until that life is finally theirs.

Of course this is not all that he's left them with. He challenges and encourages them to protect each other. Point two. Verse 22. He says.

Be merciful to those who doubt. Save others by snatching them from the fire. To others show mercy mixed with fear. Hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

The suggestion from Jude in these verses. Is not simply that the individual is able to sustain themselves. But the community is able. But the community is able.

[12 : 59] You might get the impression from these verses. Verses. That all kinds of people are among Jews readers. Who are able and should help.

And who need help. For instance. For instance. You might be finding. Building yourself up. Not really coming that easy. You might be finding.

Feeling like. Praying in the spirit. Is something that you've never really been able to do. Maybe someone in your Bible study. Or group of friends.

Just persists. Group of Christian friends. I mean to say. Just persists. That they don't have the spirit. You might have the spirit.

I know what you're going to say. I know what you're going to say. The Bible says. I just feel like I don't have it. Okay. I just feel like it. How can I keep myself in God's love?

[13 : 54] How can I? I know. I know. I know. I know. I understand. I know what it says. But how can I help what I feel? What does Jude say?

Argue endlessly. No. He says be merciful to those who doubt. Doubt comes at all times.

Doesn't it? And to all people. It's not the affliction of some. Is it? And mercy is a gift. Of a loving sister or brother.

Isn't it? Much more than a thought. Thoughtless word. No you idiot. Were you listening? Mercy.

Merciful to those who doubt. However. Sometimes. A direct action. Is called for. Because of the danger.

[15 : 02] Some are in. As a kid. I jumped in front of a ferry. As it was pulling up to a wharf. Do you think my parents were looking on going.

That Jeffrey. What a scallywag. He'll be right. No. They dived in. Distraught of impending death. So we too must at the appropriate time.

Be ready to dive in. Yet not abandoning love and mercy. Understanding that. Many situations. Are born out of doubt.

In order to save. A brother or sister. To use. Jude's language. Snatch them. From the fire.

And so let me ask you friends. Where is your sister or brother. That they may need saving. I wonder.

[16 : 12] Have they. Redirected their sacrifices. Because a divisive voice. Has challenged their values. Or maybe.

Have they. Reshuffled their relationships. Because a divisive character. Has challenged their value. Friends.

We have a responsibility. To our own. And so I ask you. Are you aware. Of the spiritual health.

Of your brothers and sisters. Are you aware. Of. Your friend. Who is hanging out. Near the fire. What questions.

Are you asking each other. Don't let your friends. Wander away. Finally.

[17 : 20] Show mercy. Mixed with fear. What does this mean. What means that. Among the believers. There are people. Who very much. Been led astray. By these divisive.

Shepherds. Potentially. Potentially. Even becoming. Becoming. Disciples. And that's dangerous. It makes sense. For Jude to add fear. Not necessarily afraid.

But vigilant. Because of what's become. Of these people. People. And so what is remarkable. As well as challenging. About this. Is that when we see someone.

Begin to walk away. Seduced by heresy. And become. A danger. Within the community. What's the impulse. With a person like this. Get out.

Don't be a danger here. But what is Jude's warning.

[18 : 22] What's a reminder. Of Christ and mercy. Isn't it. That we are all here. Undeservingly. Because of his mercy. And so in such times. We should extend.

Mercy. But with fear. Hating even. Clothing. Stained by corrupted flesh. Or essentially. Understanding. That if you are spending time.

Extending mercy. You are aware of. The dangers of sin. Just like that person. Wasn't. Last week.

I put my gum boots on. In the first time in forever. And got muddy. If I came back in the house. Without thinking. Well that would have been dumb. I spent a good amount of time.

In the laundry. Banging and washing. And drying. And they had to stay outside. A bit like that passage. That. Jillian read for us.

[19 : 17] They had a defiling mold. And they needed my purification process. I thought Jillian did such a good job with that difficult passage.

Thanks Jillian. But if I or any Christian engage with such and such a dangerous idea for the sake of mercy.

Without reflecting. Considering. Talking through. Not treating this seriously. Well who knows. You might begin. To walk all sorts of strange ideas.

Through your heart and mind. Jude writes this challenge and encouragement to the community. Because.

They together are able to help each other along. To be merciful to each other. To even save each other from the edge. But doing so with wisdom and fear.

[20 : 16] To be merciful to each other. So is that it? Look after yourself. Look after each other. Well no.

Jude finishes the letter. With what I think. Is. The best. Doxology. In the whole Bible. Doxology is like a.

Song of praise to God. When I was in youth group. That's literally what it was. Song of praise. I hope you're ready for this. Now unto him who is able to keep.

Anyone? Able to keep you from falling. And present you before his glorious throne. With exceeding joy. To the only wise God.

A savior. To the only wise God. Be glory and majesty. Dominion and power. Both now and forever. Amen.

[21 : 16] Amen. If only Michelle Price was here to help. We sang that song often.

And could you blame us. What awesome words. Some of the most encouraging in the Bible. I think. I think. To those keeping themselves in God's love.

By building themselves up in faith. And praying in the spirit. To those showing mercy. To brothers and sisters. Wrestling in the faith. Tempted by dangerous voices.

To those worried about their own godliness. Jude finishes deliberately. For the sake of confidence. For the believer. Cast away fear and worry.

Bring back to heart and mind. What has already been established. Called. Loved. Kept. Look to God with whom there is no chance.

[22 : 13] No guess. No wondering. Praise God who is able. To keep you from stumbling. Praise God who is able.

To present you before his glorious presence. Without fault and with great joy. Praise God our Savior. To whom be glory. Majesty. Power and authority.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Before all ages. Now and forever. Well now's the part where I usually say.

So what's this got to do with us? But I hope you know that already. Because their God is our God.

Their Savior is our Savior. And we've seen that their dangers. Though different contexts. Are dangers that we need to keep our eyes open to.

[23 : 13] We are living in a different time. But a similar era. Listening to teachers of the apostles. Teaching of the apostles. Sorry. And waiting for the mercy of our Lord.

To bring us to eternal life. So in these days. So in these days. And in light of these challenges. And warnings. Remember that you are able.

To keep yourself in God's love. Remember that we are able. To continue to show mercy.
To those who are struggling.

And drifting off. And always remember him who is able. To keep you from stumbling.
Present you before his glorious presence.

Without fault. With great joy. And so how about I pray. That we will remember this. Would
you join me? Gracious Father.

[24 : 13] We praise you. Because you are able to keep us. Who believe in you from stumbling. Give
us strength alone and together. Amidst these challenges and lessons.

To keep ourselves in your love. And show the mercy of God to each other. So that we will
have the eternal life. We are waiting for. To your honour, praise and glory.

Amen.