

“To God be the Glory”

Jude 24-25

August 22nd, 2021

Six year old Angie came home from school with a blue ribbon she said she had won for knowing an answer in natural history: “I said a giraffe had three legs.”

Her mother responded, “But, honey, a giraffe has four legs.”

Angie agree, “I suppose so, but I was the closest of anybody in the class!”

Some mistakes are pretty funny, like that one. Other slip-ups are more unfortunate.

Stephen Pile has written a book titled *The Book of Failures*. It's got unbelievable stuff in it. Like a time in 1978 during the firemen's strike in England. It made possible one of the greatest animal rescue attempts of all time. Valiantly, the British Army had taken over emergency firefighting.

One mid-January day, they were called out by an elderly lady in South London to rescue her cat. They arrived with impressive haste, very cleverly and carefully rescued the cat, and started to drive away.

But the lady was so grateful she invited the squad of heroes in for tea. Driving off later with fond farewells and warm waving of arms, they mistakenly ran over the cat.

As I pointed out with the children a few moments ago, today's sermon text speaks about God keeping us from “stumbling.” Another word for stumbling is “falling.” God is able to keep His children (those who believe in Jesus Christ) from falling away from Him ultimately. Once God has placed us in His saving grip, no one (even ourselves) can snatch us out.

Today we conclude our several week Sunday morning sermon study on the New Testament book of Jude. It's among the shortest books in all the Bible, merely 25 verses in length. It is the second to last book in your Bibles, just before the Bible's concluding book, Revelation.

We're going to look at the last two verses - verses 24 & 25 - and we'll see they teach us some of the things **God accomplishes for us**, and some of the things **God receives from us**. The theme of these verses is the need for God's people to contend (to assert, profess, affirm) for the Christian faith. *What we believe matters, and it matters eternally.*

Nothing else on God's green earth comes close to doctrine in importance. God's Word (the Bible) is the most precious asset we have from Him.

Jude 24-25:

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, **25** to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, *Be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

Thousands, if not millions of Sunday gatherings for public worship of the living God, are concluded with these words as the benediction ("Good word"). You've heard me use them often in that way over the last almost 20 years.

These two verses teach two very important things **God accomplishes for us** - He keeps us from stumbling and He presents us faultless. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling..." The last couple of times I went to the hospital recently (as a patient, not as a chaplain), I was asked if I had a problem with falling. Not physically, but maybe spiritually, I do!

For the better part of this letter, Jude has been telling us about those who appear to start out in Christ, but who stumble and fall along the way.

In Jude, we studied men like Cain, Balaam, and Korah who fell headlong into hell when their earthly lives came to an end. We may wonder if these people could fall, perhaps we could as well. That all depends upon your relationship with Jesus Christ. If you are trusting in Him, then He will never let you fall away. If you are not trusting in Him, then you very well could. Only a fool thinks he has no chance of falling away.

A story is told that the once-famous circus acrobat Philippe Petit was rehearsing in Bayfront Auditorium in St. Petersburg, Florida, when he fell about 30 feet to a concrete floor. According to a witness, Petit rolled over on his stomach and began to pound the floor with his fists, crying, "I can't believe it! I can't believe it! I don't ever fall!"

Mature Christians know they are capable of falling. Chapter 17 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* describes what Scripture teaches about our persevering in Christ. It teaches Christians may commit serious sins and continue in them for a time. In so doing, we displease God, we grieve the Holy Spirit, we have some of the fruit of God's grace and His comforts taken away from us. We will also have their hearts hardened, our consciences wounded, and we will hurt and offend others. (para. 3) God doesn't fumble or drop the ball. But, that doesn't mean our sin, especially serious sins, will have their consequences removed. These are what I call scars.

Jude's letter comes full circle here. It began back in verses 1 & 2, "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved (another word for "kept") in Jesus Christ:" Jesus guards those He keeps. *Isn't that wonderful news?* Talk about comfort, both now and for eternity!

God not only keeps us from stumbling; He also presents us faultless. "(He) presents (*us*) faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy," So, God is presenting us (blameless, without blemish, spotless) before Himself. There is coming a day when all believers in Jesus Christ will see Him face-to-face. Theologians call this "the beatific vision." When our time on earth comes to an end, we will have nothing between us and our Lord Jesus - we shall see Him as He is, and that not merely by faith, but by sight! To be in that position, we must be without fault. Thus, the Lord Jesus when we appropriate His work accomplished for us on the cross outside Jerusalem that first Good Friday, will usher us into the glorious presence of God and we stand with confidence in the judgment.

This refers to the absence of scars. Despite our spiritually skinned and scared knees, God is able to remove our spiritual wounds and present us without fault.

A point is in order here. *Does God need anything from us?* No, God doesn't need anything from us. He is totally self-existent. We, on the other hand, need everything from God. We are totally dependent upon Him, even to each breath of air. Even so, there are things that God receives from us. **This passage shows there are at least two things God receives from us** - glory and majesty.

"Glory is the sum total of all that God is and all that God does. Everything about Him is glorious! The glory of man fades as the mown grass, but the glory of God goes on eternally (Wiersbe, 562). As the *Catechism* notes, our chief end - our primary purpose - is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Writing in this month's issue of *Tabletalk* magazine, Dr. Steve Lawson notes our ascribing glory to God - "God's ascribed glory is the only rightful response to beholding His intrinsic glory. This is the glory we must give to Him (God)." It's the same glory the Psalmist David wrote of in **Psalm 29** - you'll sometimes here me use these first two verses of **Psalm 29** as a Call to Worship.

"Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness."

“**Majesty** means “greatness, magnificence. Only God is great. When we praise God, we praise the most magnificent Person in the universe. He is not simply King; He is King of Kings. He is not simply Lord: He is Lord of Lords!”

Majesty comes in the doxology of **I Chronicles 29:11**:

“Yours, O Lord, *is* the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*;
Yours *is* the kingdom, O Lord,
And You are exalted as head over all.”

We give God glory and majesty because He is our Savior as verse 25 notes. “The corporate worship and everlasting praise of God will be the eternal privilege of all who through Christ have a share in God’s good salvation. On that day, God will finally receive the fullness of all the praise that is due His name.” (Helm, 358)

Who is wise? God, our Savior, is wise. So says the Apostle Paul in **I Timothy 1:17** - “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

And, Jesus IS our wisdom. This is from Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth - “God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.” (NLT)

Two other attributes of God are provided for us in verse 25 - “dominion” and “power.” God has all dominion (another word is ‘sovereignty’). **Daniel 4:34** teaches us that God’s dominion is an everlasting dominion.

Synonymous with “power” is “authority.” Jesus has all authority over the heavens and the earth because God the Father granted it to Him. He answers to no one else.

And, God in Christ is all of these attributes both now and forever. To God be the glory forever and ever!

Matt Redman has written a very nice song on God’s glory - this is the refrain:

“All glory to the Father
All glory to the Son
All glory to the Spirit
The Spirit of our God

As it was in the beginning
And will be in the end
All glory to Your everlasting name.”

If none of this moves you, you are in serious trouble. We need to talk. Soon.

Fanny Crosby was born in a cottage in South East, New York, in 1820. Six weeks later, she caught a cold in her eyes, and a visiting doctor prescribed mustard poultices, leaving her virtually blind for life. Growing into childhood, she determined to make the best of it, writing these words at age 8: “O what a happy soul I am! Although I cannot see, I am resolved that in this world contented I will be!”

In 1851, Fanny met her greatest friend, the Lord Jesus. She wrote her first hymn when she was 44. But by the time she reached heaven 50 years later, she had written 8,000 more!

Among her most famous hymns is one that shares a title with this message - “To God be the Glory.” Let’s stand and sing all three stanzas to the glory of God in Christ.