



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 1319

Jude 24 "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy"

Jude doesn't get a lot of attention. I suppose because it is such a short book, we often toss it in with other short books and have an odds and ends study of short books. There are great lessons in this book. The "contend earnestly for the faith," found in verse 3, is probably the most famous verse in Jude. Many sermons have come out of that one expression.

I like our verse today. It is almost the last thing found in Jude. It shows what God does for us. God is mighty. God is active. God is engaged. God is wanting the best from us. God keeps you and God makes you

First, God keeps you from stumbling. The how of this is important, but before even that, the very fact that He does this shows that we might, we could, we can stumble. If we couldn't stumble, never, ever, then there would be nothing for God to keep us from. We do stumble. We take our eyes off of Jesus. We listen to Satan. Temptation gets the best and most times, the worst of us. We can toss in our faith and we can be conquered by sin. It happens.

God is able to keep that from happening. The obvious question is, then why doesn't He do it? It seems that some are always messing up. This is where the "how" comes in. God keeps us from stumbling, but it's in conjunction with us. He doesn't do it independent of us. He doesn't keep us from harms way as we are kicking and screaming to jump into sin. In 2 Peter, when Peter listed the "virtues," you remember, add to your faith...a whole series of adding to. That section ends with Peter promising from God, "as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble." There it is. God is able to keep us from stumbling as we walk with Him. He warns us of dangers. He points things out to us. He strengthens us. This way keeps us from stumbling. It's not the strong, but the weak that stumble. It happens when we turn off our spiritual radar, we back down from God, we start thinking more of self and Satan comes knocking. He is always knocking, but when we are not sharp, we open the door and invite him in.

Second, God is able to make you stand in the presence of His glory. Jesus said that He would return in glory with His angels. The presence of Jesus in all His glory is enough to make all of us hide. He is so holy and we are not. He is always right and we are not. He is so God and we are so human. His glory will manifest what He is really like. He won't look like the carpenter walking down the dirt streets of Judea. He will look like God. The transfiguration was a peek. There, the face of Jesus was as bright as the sun. His clothes were bright. He was manifesting His holiness and glory.

(OVER)

Jude tells us that God will make you stand in the presence of His glory. This implies that God will remove fear that we may have. God will make things right. Come boldly to the throne of grace is what the Hebrews were told. Not hiding like Adam, not running like Jonah, not up a tree like Zacchaeus, but standing, standing in His presence.

Jude adds a couple of other thoughts. God makes us stand blameless. That means grace. That means forgiveness. That means hope. That means love, acceptance and faith. The guilty are no longer guilty. The wrong have been made right. The blamed are now blameless. This is because of Jesus. Blameless. No past. Not finger pointer. No wagging tongues.

Then, we stand, not just blameless, but with great joy. Not standing in fear. Not standing with tears running down our faces, but rather, standing with smiles. Standing with great joy. Not proud. Not puffed up. Not with a big head. Not because we are the poster children of Heaven. Standing blameless with joy because of the saving blood of Jesus. Having been washed with Christ, we now stand with joy. We stand justified, righteous, redeemed, and saved. We can stand because of Jesus.

Great joy because God says, "Well done, good and faithful." Great joy because God invites us into His home. Great joy because the battle is over, the journey is completely, we made it.

It is God who is keeping us from stumbling and making us stand. This is God's work with us. This is how our story ends, with Him, in His place.

God's not retired. He's busy. He's doing things right now, for you.

Don't fight God. Don't walk away from Him. He won't do these things without your cooperation. But, my what He will do for us, if we allow Him.

Great is our God!

Roger Shouse