

## Remembered and Remembering Jude 20-25

It doesn't take long to forget. By the time you get out to the garage, you can't remember why you went out there in the first place. Just three months after the chaos surrounding the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan we seem to have forgotten all about it. Though you know you are baptized into Christ, it's a daily battle to remember who you really are—a child of God. It's easy to forget the Bible book, Jude. You may remember where to find it – tucked in between 3 John and Revelation – but remember nothing of what it says. It's just one chapter with twenty-five verses.

But Jude has a very important message for us—especially on this Last Sunday of the Church Year. Jude is about not forgetting. Jude teaches us that the Church remembers Jesus because Jesus remembers His Church. It is easy to forget. It's happened before; the church has forgotten Jesus.

Jude wrote his letter around AD 68, about 35 years after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Most of the apostles had died by then, and Jude, who was not an apostle, was compelled to write to the Church in their place.

He explains his reason for writing: *Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*

The church had forgotten Jesus! They had forgotten His promised return. They had forgotten that He will come as both Savior of those who believe and Destroyer of those who do not believe, just as it happened in the exodus from Egypt.

Having forgotten the true Jesus, some Christians perverted the grace of God into a pursuit of fleshly desires. They turned forgiveness into a freedom to do whatever they wanted. They denied the only Master and Lord, Jesus. Jude is a call to remember who Jesus is and what He has said both as Savior and as Destroyer.

What happens when you forget that Jesus will one day return as the Savior of those who believe? When we take our eyes off of Jesus, they tend to focus on the things of this world. Instead of seeing sin as our main problem, we are distracted by troubles of this world. The answer to our problem then becomes getting back to the good old days – making life here and now like it used to be. That's not a bad desire, but it is short-sighted. This world will come to an end. There is nothing wrong with trying to make this world a better place, but as we do so, we can never forget that Jesus alone is our Savior and the Savior of this world.

He has saved you from sin and death by His death and resurrection. He saves you now by His Word and Spirit through the Means of Grace, where He does not remember your sin but forgives it. He will save you finally and fully when He comes again in all His glory and fills you with joy.

What happens when you forget that Jesus will also return as Destroyer of those who do not believe? You see yourself as secure. You are tempted to be comfortable in your ways, even in your sins, living the way you want to live, falling into patterns of thinking and doing what you know is against Word of God. You convince yourself that you do not need to worry about it or change anything.

Remember instead that Jesus truly will return someday as your judge. He calls you to repentance. He calls you to trust in His

forgiveness. He calls you to live a new life according to His Word. And He calls you to remember that those who do forget will be destroyed in eternal, never-ending punishment.

As frightening as that is, how comforting to remember that Jesus never forgets you!

God addresses our forgetting that Jesus is the Savior and the Destroyer by reminding us the same way He did the Early Church through Jude: preparing us for the future by pointing us to the past:

Reminding you that God has called you to faith, has loved you, and has kept you in the faith.

Reminding you that God has promised *to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless* on that day of His glorious return.

Reminding you that He hears your prayer that echoes the thief on the cross, *Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom* (Luke 23:42). He does. Jesus remembers you.

Reminding you that He always has been and always will be mindful of you. He who has all *glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever* remembers you by calling you, loving you, and keeping you with His Church.

He has called you through the waters of Baptism, where He joined you to Himself and to all other believers in Him. He continues to love you by feeding you with the fruits of His cross. He promises to keep you in the one true faith by His Word and Spirit until the day you see Him face-to-face.

In our Collect for the Last Sunday of the Church Year, we prayed, “Lord Jesus Christ, so govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your glorious return, we may persevere in both faith and holiness of living; for You

live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.”

Jesus does live and reign. He hears your prayer. He answers you. He remembers you. And so, we remember Him today and forever.

Jude shows us what it looks like to remember Jesus: *[B]uilding yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garments stained by the flesh.*

Jude tells us what we can do to for ourselves to remember Jesus and stay encouraged. He also instructs us in ways to live in our relationships with others.

Both lists are good to remember, but above all, remember Jesus. Remember what He has done. He gave His life for you. He conquered death for you. He sent His Spirit that you might believe His promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation. He has promised to return in glory for you. He has promised to destroy those who do not believe, but He has also promised to save those who do.

Jesus remembers you. That’s how you remember Him.

*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 forever. Amen.*