

INSPIRED TEXT MESSAGES – Part 4

TEXT MESSAGE FROM JUDE

Dr. Derek Morris

- Preaching passage: Jude
- Subject: What the heart of the text message was that Jude sent to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ
- Complement: no matter what challenges they face, God is able to deliver them and to save them.
- Exegetical idea: Jude told those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ that no matter what challenges they face, God is able to deliver them and to save them.
- Preaching idea: God is able to carry you through!
- Purpose: To remind my hearers that God is able to deliver them and to save them.

More than 50 years ago, a young evangelist named Paul Paino was holding meetings in a rural community on the island of Jamaica. That's where he first heard a song that he would take with him for the rest of his life, a song that would impact the lives of millions of Christians around the world. It sounded like this: "He's able, He's able, I know He's able. I know my Lord is able to carry me through!" If you know it, sing along. "He's able, he's able, I know He's able, I know my Lord is able to carry me through. He healed the broken hearted and set the captive free. He made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see. He's able, He's able, I know He's able, I know my Lord is able to carry me through." Paul Paino never discovered who wrote that song, but I'm fairly certain that the unnamed songwriter had also read the inspired text message that we are going to study today!

This is part 4 in our series on Inspired Text Messages. We have studied a text message from Paul to Philemon, and we learned that since God has shown such grace to us, we should show grace to one another! We studied a text message from the elder John to the chosen lady and her children and learned that walking in love and walking in the truth go hand in hand. Last time we studied a text message from James to the twelve tribes scattered abroad and we learned that God wants us to have a living faith that comes from a living connection with Him and changes everything.

Today we are going to study an inspired text message from Jude, and we'll discover that God is able, He's able to carry us through! I invite you to take the insert from your bulletin as we ask our first question: Who? Who is the author of this inspired text message, and who are the recipients? Let's take a look at the first part of verse 1. "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." I understand why Jude would begin by saying that he is a servant of Jesus Christ but why would Jude mention his brother's name? Any ideas? Why would he say "a brother of James"? Apparently, his brother James was well known in the Christian community. For example, when the apostle John records the story of Andrew's first meeting with Jesus, he says in John 1:40, "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus." And again in John 6:8, "Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up." When you have a very famous sibling, you might mention his name, you might mention her name!

So who is the famous "James" in the Christian community? You say, "We

studied about James, the brother of our Lord, in part 3 of this series on Inspired Text Messages! James, the brother of our Lord, was the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem. Matthew tells us that James had a brother named Judas, which can be shortened to Jude. If that's the Jude, brother of James, who authored this inspired text message, then he was also a brother of our Lord—but Jude didn't need to say that. When he said, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James" everyone in the Christian community knew who he was! This inspired text message was probably written between 50-60 AD. We'll discuss the dating of this text message a little more in part 5 of our series when we examine a text message from Peter.

This inspired text message from Jude, brother of our Lord, was intended for a general audience. Notice how Jude addresses the intended recipients of this inspired text message: "to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ." I believe that the entire message of Jude is summed up right there! Loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ! Wasn't that the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? John 17:11, 15 "Holy Father, protect them, keep them, by the power of Your name....My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." This inspired text message is sent from Jude, brother of our Lord, to those who have been called, that's the church, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.

Verse 2. "Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance." What a wonderful greeting! I don't know much about Jude, but just from this greeting I want to meet him! Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. That's a lot warmer than what his brother James said: "Greetings!" Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance!

What about our second question? What? What is the content of this inspired text message sent by Jude, the brother of our Lord, to all believers? Verse 3. “Dear friends,” or perhaps a better translation would be “dearly loved ones”—agapetoi, from the verb agapao and the noun agape—“Dearly loved ones.” Let’s keep reading in verse 3. “

Jude says, “I would prefer to just write to you about the salvation we share!” I’d like to just sing “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.” But Jude is impressed by the Spirit of God to urge believers to “contend for the faith”. That’s a strong word—“contend”. Do we have any other translations? This verb is only used one time in the entire New Testament—right here. It’s the Greek verb *επαγωνιζομαι*. Doesn’t that sound intense to you? *επαγωνιζομαι* That sounds like the English word “agonize”.

Why do the saints need to “contend for the faith”? Let’s keep reading Jude’s inspired text message. Verse 4. “

Do you remember that John the elder reminded us that walking in love and walking in the truth go hand in hand? It sounds like Jude is aware of godless men who are also saying “all we need to do is love each other—we don’t need to walk in the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Jude continues: Verse 5-11. “

You might do some further study this afternoon. I’ve told you before that it’s important to know the great stories of the Bible. Read the Bible stories to your children. Read them for yourselves. Read

about the way of Cain. Read about Balaam's error. Read about the rebellion of Korah. They have one thing in common: they all wanted to go their own way rather than follow God's way.

Jude continues to describe these godless men who have come in to the Christian community. Verse 12-19 "....."

Such godless people were present in the Christian community in the 1st century, and such godless people are present even in the 21st century. They slip in among true followers of Jesus and try to lead people astray. What should we do? Jude gives us some solid counsel, inspired by the Spirit of God. Verse 20. "But dear friends, dearly loved ones,"

Practical counsel. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith—study God's Word for yourself, get involved in an interactive Bible study group, go to church where Jesus is lifted up and the Word of God is clearly taught—build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit—we're studying about the ministry of the Holy Spirit at our House of Prayer every Wednesday evening. I was so blessed this past Wednesday evening. Showers of blessing fell as we prayed in the Holy Spirit. You can pray in the Holy Spirit at all times, in your personal devotions, in your family worship time, as you drive to work, as you wait on hold for the next phone call. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life—set the Lord always before you. Stay focused in the midst of all of the distractions of this world. Keep yourselves in God's love. Make your next DVD the Gospel of John rather than a Sci-Fi action movie. There are

so many distractions. Stay focused on the love of God. Verse 22-23 “Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”

That’s some solid counsel, isn’t it? Read that again later today. Read it again this week. But don’t stop there. You might feel overwhelmed by the thought of what those godless people might try to do to you, dragging you away from your most holy faith.

Let’s read on, because we’ll discover that God is able, He’s able, I know He’s able, I know my Lord is able to carry me through!” Verse 24-25

“.....”

A year and 7 months ago, God worked a tremendous miracle in Kevin’s life. This church family had the privilege of being used by God to snatch Kevin from the fire. It’s been a journey since that Wednesday evening, 19 months ago, but Kevin has agreed to share his testimony today that God is able to carry us through.

Kevin, tell us about that Wednesday, 19 months ago when you came to the campus of the Forest Lake Church?

What are some experiences that you’ve been through that have demonstrated that God is able to keep you from falling?

What message would you give to those who are listening today?

That unknown songwriter in rural Jamaica spoke the truth, my friends. He’s able, He’s able, I know He’s able, I know my Lord is able to carry me through. He healed the broken hearted and set the captives free. He made the lame to walk

again and caused the blind to see. He's able, He's able, I know He's able, I know my Lord is able to carry me through.

Do you know that He's able? Have you experienced His keeping power in your life? Then praise Him today. Bless the name of Jesus today. Give thanks to our Father in Heaven today. Express your appreciation to the Holy Spirit today. Thank God that He is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy!

If you haven't yet experienced this truth in your own life, that God is able to carry you through, that God is able to keep you from falling, I urge you to cry out to Him today, cry out to the God who loves you, and just see what He will do.

Stay connected with a Christian community, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit at all times, keep yourselves in the love of God, extend mercy and peace and love to those around you, and most of all rejoice that God is able to carry you through!