

A Study of the Book of Hebrews

Jesus is Better

Sermon # 3

“Dangerous Drifting!”

Hebrews 2:-1-4

“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. (2) For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, (3) How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, (4) God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will”

In chapter two the writer pauses in his presentation of Jesus as superior to every thing and everyone to give one of the five great warnings (danger signals) in Hebrews). These six danger signals can be likened to highway markers to warn the reader. These danger signals are as follows:

Peril of drifting, (2:1–4)

Peril of doubting, (3:7–4:2)

Peril of dullness, (5:11–6:20)

Peril of despising, (10:26–39)

Peril of (defying) denying, (12:15–29)

[J. Vernon McGee. *Thru The Bible Commentary*. (electronic ed. -1997). (Nashville: Thomas Nelson: Nashville, 1981)]

If (lit. since) the message of Angels is not to be ignored, how much more so, that which is received from the Son! Having

established the clear superiority of Jesus over the Angels he urges his readers to pay more careful attention to what they have heard What have they heard

We have learned that God's final revelation has been given by his Son Jesus Christ. If we could boil down all of chapter one and the first four verses of chapter two into a single statement it would be, "In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son... for this reason we must pay close attention to the word He has spoken."

The writer begins Chapter two with the word "therefore" or "for this reason." He is tying the subject of the last verse of chapter one to that which is to follow. The last verse of Chapter one stated, that the angels are "...ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation"(1:14). It is the importance of this free gift of salvation that he wants the readers to focus their attention on! Some in the church of that day were in danger of being blown away from their moorings and drifting away from the truth of Christ.

There are two points of application. There are two groups to whom this has a special application.

First, to those who have never taken the time to accept the gift of salvation or The Danger of Rejecting Salvation.

Having established that Jesus is superior to everything and everyone, that He is the exalted one, that it was He that purged our sins, that He is the Creator and that He is worthy of worship, it as if the writer could go no further without an invitation to respond. It is as if he is saying, "Jesus is all of this and more, now what are you going to do about it"

The writer is appealing to the ones who have heard the truth about Jesus and who know it is true, and they know they need Him but who have not yet made a commitment.

Jesus once told a parable speaking to this very problem in (Luke 4:16-24) "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, (17) and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' (18) But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' (19) And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' (20) Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' (21) So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' (22) And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' (23) Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (24) For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

Just imagine, too busy to accept the invitation of the king. They all offered excuses. "When I get passed this hurdle, when I get over this struggle, I would love to but, I have other more pressing things right now! Someday! When the time is right! When I get older, but

right now I am looking forward to enjoying my life. I will some day. But not today."

I don't suppose that anyone ever really intends to miss out of God's invitation to heaven. Surely no one willful walks away from God's free offer of forgiveness. But drifting along through life is so quiet, so easy and so damning. All that one must do to go to hell is continue to do nothing.

We can in our sanctified imagination see such a man or woman standing before God upon their death saying, "But God, I always have believed you existed. I have tried to live as good life as I could! I never hurt anyone intentionally, at least not very often." To which the Lord will reply, "Depart from me for I never knew you" (Matt 7:23). Unfortunately it will be just another case of too little, too late.

Secondly, it has application to those are in danger of neglecting the salvation they have received or.... The Danger of Neglecting Their Faith. This passage not only has application for the man who has not accepted the gift of salvation but for the one who is neglecting their faith. In fact this passage is primarily addressed to believers. (v. 1) "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."

Verse three states, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation..."

Therefore we take the remainder of our time to look at the question, "When am I guilty of neglecting my Faith"

First, I Am Guilty Of Neglecting My Faith When I Continue Hearing Spiritual Truth Without Allowing It to Impact My Life. (v. 1)

"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."

This vivid warning is written in the language of the sea, suggesting the image of a ship whose anchor has broken loose from the ocean floor and is dangerously drifting away. This process is not dramatic, nor sudden but insidious and quiet. Drifting is obviously a besetting sin of our own day. The problem is not so much intention as is carelessness and inattention.

The problem is not lack of knowledge, it not a hearing problem it is a heeding problem. In (Matthew 7:24-27) Jesus says, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: (25) and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. (26) "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: (27) and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

A good example of careless inattention to truth is seen everyday on board any commercial airliner. Before the plane leaves the runway the flight crew goes over the safety instructions; how to fasten the safety belts, how to don the oxygen mask, how to use you seat cushion as floatation device, etc. I already see some of your eyes glazing over. Why is that Two Reasons. Well if you have traveled by airliner very much, you have heard it all before, many times. And

secondly, the need for that information seems too remote to merit our interest.

William Barclay's translation of this verse is, "Therefore, we must the more eagerly anchor our lives to the things that we have been taught lest the ship of life drift past the harbor and be wrecked."

[William Barclay. The Letter to the Hebrews. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) p. 21]

When I was in college I had a job with the Corp of Engineers at one of the Lock and Dam's on the Arkansas River. Several times a year some fisherman's boat was sucked through one of the gates on the dam simply because they either ignored the posted warnings or they simply drifted too close to the gate to be able to get away from the undertow. No one in their right mind would allow that to happen to them selves deliberately. They simply got busy doing something else and drifted too far to be able to retrieve themselves. The result was almost always complete and utter destruction.

We must keep in mind that there is no such thing as standing still spiritually. Life is not a lake it is a river and it constantly flowing pulling us away from the things of God. We are either moving forward spiritually or we are drifting backward, away from God and the things of God.

I Am Guilty Of Neglecting My Faith When I Continue Hearing Spiritual Truth Without Allowing It to Impact My Life And...

Secondly, I Am Guilty Of Neglecting My Faith When I Begin To Think That My Sin Is No Big Deal! (v. 2) "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward."

The argument is that if the law given by God's messengers the angels proved reliable and brought judgment on those who disobeyed. How much greater must the consequences of disobedience be to those who neglect the message of salvation made through his own son.

Warren Wiersbe tells of hearing the story of "a pastor who preached a series on "the sins of the saints." He was severely reprimanded by one of the members of the church. Who said, 'After all sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the lives of other people.' 'Yes.' replied the pastor, 'it is worse.' " [Warren Wiersbe. "Be Confident" (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1982) p. 26]

How did we ever get to the point in the Church of today where we think we don't need to confess our sin anymore 1 John 1:9 still says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What does it mean to confess our sins Literally the word "confess" (homologeō), means "to say the same thing." You are to say the same thing that God says. When God in His Word says that the thing you did is sin, you are to get over on God's side and look at it. And you are to say, "You are right, Lord, I say the same thing that You say. It is sin." That is what it means to confess your sins. This is God's way for a Christian to deal with sin in his own life.

Go and tell God about it. He wants you to come to Him. Tell Him you have failed. Tell Him you have been wrong. Tell Him that you want to say the same thing about your sin that He says about it. Seek His help. He is your Father. You are in the family. If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins."

After we confess our sins, what does God do He cleanses us. When you have confessed your sin, it means that you have turned from that sin. It means that you have said the same thing which God has said. Sin is a terrible thing. God hates it and now you hate it. But confession restores you to your Father. Tell Him your problems. Tell Him your sins. Tell Him your weakness. Confess it all to Him. And say to your Father that you want to have fellowship with Him and you want to serve Him. My, He has made a marvelous, wonderful way back to Himself!

I Am Guilty Of Neglecting My Faith When I Begin To Think That My Sin Is No Big Deal And...

Third, I Am Guilty Of Neglecting My Faith When I Forget Ending Well Is As Important As Beginning Well.

Robert McQuilkin in his poem "Let Me Get Home Before Dark" states what should be every Christian prayer when he says,

"I fear the Dark Spectre may come too soon-

or do I mean, too late

That I should end before I finish

Or finish, but not well.

That I should, stain your honor, shame your

Name, grieve your loving heart.

Few, they tell me, finish well...

Lord, let me get home before dark."

[Robert McQuilkin. "Let Me Get Home Before Dark. 1981]

Let me close today with - The Three R's of Response.

- 1. Repent of any known sin.*

*So where do we go from here? What if I have already drifted
Composer Robert Robinson was saved under the mighty ministry of
George Whitfield and he wrote the song "Come, Thou Fount of Every
Blessing" which says in part*

*"Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee.
Prone to wander—Lord, I feel it—
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart—O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above"*

[Logos Hymnal. 1995 (1st edition.). Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA]

*In the case of Robinson these words proved very prophetic,
because he later drifted from his relationship with the Lord. "He had
been greatly used as a pastor, but neglect of spiritual things led him
astray. In an attempt to find peace, he began to travel. During one of
his journeys he met a young woman who was evidently very
spiritually minded.*

*"What do you think of this hymn I have been reading' she asked
Robinson, handing him the book. It was his own hymn! He tried to
avoid the question but it was hopeless, for the Lord was speaking to
him. Finally, he broke down and confessed who he was and how he
had been living away from the Lord.*

*'But these streams of mercy are still flowing,' the woman
reassured him and through her encouragement, Robinson was
restored to fellowship with the Lord."* [Wiersbe. pp. 26-27]

2. Remove those things that hinder our spiritual growth!

3. *Return to our first love. (Rev 2:4)*

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. (5)Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works..."