

SERIES: **BETTER- Hope from the book of Hebrews**

TEXT: **Hebrews 2:1-4** (Stand to read)

HOOK- ridiculous warning labels: wheelbarrow, pepper spray, iron, stroller

We are used to getting many warnings, but that doesn't mean we always heed them

We are starting Ch2 of the book of Hebrews- Ch1 not a single command... Ch2, BOOM a warning !

TITLE: **The Warning Every Christian Needs To Hear**

In the Christian life there is no such thing as neutral- you just don't see that in scripture.

As a Christian, you are either growing or drifting; there is no parking.

Left to ourselves we are like unanchored ships out at sea

The writer of the book of Hebrews knew our propensity to go off course and so....

¹For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.

'for this reason/ therefore'.....whats the therefore there for?/ for what reason?

Ch1 told us: Since Jesus is the Son of God who deserves and demands all honor & one day will destroy his enemies and renew the world....because of that:

Pay Attention to the gospel because there is a real danger presented to us: *DRIFTING AWAY*

Apparently, every Christian is susceptible to this. Here's why:

Drift happens by default; it's what happens when nothing happens.

It happens subtly not suddenly

Michael J Kruger- *"Many things can lead us to drift. It could be suffering, which derails our faith; or opposition, which makes us want to give up; or busyness, which distracts us from our spiritual life. It could be holding on to sin instead of repenting. These things can draw us away from God."*

It's not just those who row in the wrong direction who miss their mark, it's also those who fail to row at all!

No one drifts closer to God (no one drifts closer to anyone or anything- you have to nurture)

There is a part of us that because of sin, tends to be drawn to things opposed to Jesus- **the natural pull**

-lust; self-righteousness; the intoxicating thrill of anger; laziness; judgmental; unholy pleasures

From a sermon I preached back in 2021 on this verse (won't unpack in detail, but thought it may be helpful)

These are some of the tides that drift us away from God:

TRENDS of culture that compromise character

ISOLATION from the church

DIFFICULTIES through the lens of fear instead of faith

EXPOSURE that overindulges the flesh & starves the soul

SIN that's unrepented

²For if the message spoken through angels was legally binding and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, ³how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

As stated last week, the message (Old Covenant= Law of Moses) was mediated by the angels
(Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19)

God holds people accountable for their response to His message

He always has (e.g. Exodus 32:35; Leviticus 10:1-3; Numbers 11:33, 14:20-23; Joshua 7:1-26)

Deuteronomy 30:19 summarizes this principle that every sin deserves just punishment:

I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live

The message was simple: obey and live, disobey and die

V2-3 present an '*IF-THEN*' argument (if = lesser, then= more severe)

If they ignored the Old Covenant that was mediated was angels (God's messengers) they would be physically punished, what do you think will happen if we ignore this 'great salvation'- the SON Himself!

If we reject the New Covenant, we are more guilty than those who rejected the Old Covenant

We're more guilty than those of the past because we have received the gospel **clearly** and **fully revealed**.

Michael J Kruger, *"Not only this, but we are even more culpable for rejecting Jesus' message than people were for rejecting the Old Covenant. The author contrasts the 'message declared by angels', which revealed God in types and shadows, with the 'great salvation' of Jesus, in whom God's glory was fully displayed. If God was upset when the prophets were rejected, how much more do you think he will be upset if the Son is rejected?"*

When we had no hope, Jesus offered Himself as the solution to our sin

How will we escape if we pass THIS up? We can't....this is the only way

Apart from Jesus there is NO ESCAPE from the guilt of your sin

Don't neglect- where else are you gonna go????

I can understand *rejecting* (U don't believe it, you're wrong, but I get the logic there)
but *neglecting*! (you believe it's true but still you put it off???)

The gospel is great news for those who repent and surrender their trust to Jesus.

It is terrible news for those who do not.

Look at this description of Jesus' second coming:

Revelation 19:15 NLT From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress.

This salvation had its beginning when it was spoken of by the Lord,

Let's get something straight, salvation was God's idea. It was God's desire & delight.

When Jesus came, it was His mission and His message.

He didn't come to you threatening judgment (John 3:17);

He came overflowing with love and absorbed your judgment in your place.

If you won't listen to that; if you reject that, what hope is there for you?

What are you waiting on? ***What else could God do?*** God became man and died for you!

and it was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

It's referring to those who directly heard the message of Jesus themselves.

The Word of God is trustworthy, in part because it is documented, verified, eyewitness testimony!

How was it confirmed by them?

- They were there with Jesus so they could correct when some goofy counterfeit gospel came out
- They believed Jesus was so worth following- they went on to horrible deaths

According to tradition:

Matthew Killed by a sword.

Mark dragged by Horses through the streets until he was dead.

Luke was hanged in Greece.

John was boiled in huge Basin of boiling oil but miraculously survived. He was then sentenced to the mines on the prison Island of Patmos.

Peter was crucified upside down on an x-shaped cross because he told his tormentors that he felt unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus Christ had died.

James the leader of the church in Jerusalem was thrown over a hundred feet down from the southeast pinnacle of the Temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ. When they discovered that he survived the fall, his enemies beat James to death with a club.

James the Son of Zebedee was beheaded at Jerusalem. The Roman officer who guarded James watched amazed as James defended his faith at his trial. Later, the officer walked beside James to the place of execution. Overcome by conviction, he declared his new faith to the judge and knelt beside James to accept beheading as a Christian.

Bartholomew was lashed to death by a whip.

Andrew was crucified on an x-shaped cross in Patras, Greece. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. His followers reported that he continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he died!

Thomas was stabbed with a spear.

Jude was killed with arrows.

Matthias (who replaced Judas) was stoned and then beheaded.

Paul was imprisoned and then beheaded

But not only did the Son of God take on flesh to deliver this message to us, not only did the eyewitnesses collaborate Jesus' message with their own words and with the laying down of their very lives, but also:

⁴At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to his will.

Sidebar: Signs, Wonders & Miracles do not exist for their own sake, they do not point to themselves- they point to Christ, and more specifically, His redemptive work.

Same with gifts. If you have the voice of Frank Sinatra and only sing in the shower and your car because your shy, you are depriving the church of the gift God gave you to use there.

And it's important that we use our gifts in the church because according to this text, it attests to the message of Jesus!

When people look at a gathering of imperfect people, united & gifted by the Holy Spirit, it speaks something to them about the message of Christ.

God Testified... He has been shouting it from the rooftops, as if He's been saying-

"LOOK AT WHAT I HAVE DONE!!!! THOUGH GUILTY AS YOU ARE, HOPELESS AS YOU ARE, BROKEN AS YOU ARE, UNDESERVING AS YOU ARE- I HAVE SENT MY OWN SON, I HAVE PAID YOUR DEBT, I HAVE WIPED AWAY YOUR GUILT, I HAVE MADE A WAY... DO NOT NEGLECT IT! PAY ATTENTION TO IT!"

These verses are a loving warning

The Warning: If we are not growing closer to Jesus, we are drifting away from Him

I'm a firm believer in the assurance of salvation, but I am also a firm believer that the bible teaches that some have abandoned and even shipwrecked their faith-

I'm not as concerned with reconciling those two truths as I am concerned that no one I know ends up turning their back on Jesus

Main Takeaway- The currents of life will relentlessly pull our affections away from Jesus, unless we routinely bring our awareness back to the message that freed us.

This warning given two millennia ago still carries today into our context-

Young moms raising children- in the midst of the chaos remember your need for Jesus

Dads- in the midst of wondering if you're good enough, remember your need for Jesus

Parents with adult children- in the midst of frustrations and heartbreaks remember your need for Jesus

Blue collar workers- in the midst of the ungodly work environment, remember your need for Jesus

White collar workers- in the midst of the meetings and demands, remember your need for Jesus

Students- in the midst of the fear & confusion about the future, remember your need for Jesus

Single people- in the lonely seasons, remember your need for Jesus

Married people- when the romance is fading, remember your need for Jesus

Those who are hurting physically, emotionally, mentally- remember your need for Jesus

William Barclay- *“the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin. There are few people who deliberately and, in a moment, turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from him.”*

Here’s some self-reflection questions to identify the currents that (the answer is usually 3 q’s deep):

- **What part of my life do I have to pay attention to?**
- **Where are you prone to drift towards?**
- **What is your next most likely sin?**

It may be one of the “big” ones, or it may be worry, pride, etc.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Dr. Al Mohler- *“We avoid spiritual drift by dropping the anchor of our souls in the deep waters of the word of God”*

Challenge: 3-2-1

3- Read the Bible for three minutes

2- Pray for two minutes

1- In the first hour of your day

C. H. Spurgeon – *“It may be hard going forward, but it is worse going back.”*

Even if you find you have drifted away, we worship a God who draws near

******CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

COMMUNION

We approach reverently- as we examine ourselves

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 So, then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

This is the moment to bring to God whatever you haven’t yet

This cup and this bread remind us of His sacrifice for us- and that He’s coming back once more

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

BULPEN-

Hebrews 6:19a We have this hope as an anchor for our lives, safe and secure.

Our anchor, our hope, our assurance is Christ!

But drift happens when a ship isn't *anchored*, and the tides pull it away

-The issue for some here is you have no anchor because you do not know Christ as savior

-For others it's not that you don't have an anchor, you just have too much slack on the line

Not one command in chapter 1- simply God has spoken in Jesus and He's better than angels

Pay attention- you can't live your Christian life on default/ autopilot

The Danger: it is a very real possibility that you may drift away

The tension/ contrast:

Pay Attention (V1) – Neglect (V3)

Drift Away (v1) – Escape (v3)

Punishment (V2) – Salvation (V3)

This message-

Imparted by Angels (V2)

Proclaimed by Jesus (V3)

Confirmed by Witnesses (V3)

Attested by God (V4)

V1 what we heard- V2 the message= the great salvation

N.T. Wright: *"How can you live with a terrifying thought that the hurricane has become human, that the fire has become flesh, that Life itself has walked into our midst? Christianity either means that or it means nothing. It is the most devastating disclosure of the deepest reality of the world; or it is a sham, a total nonsense. Most people, unable to cope with either of those two things, are condemned to live in the shallow world in between."*

If you find yourself loving any pleasure more than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of the Lord, any table better than the Lord's table, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven—be alarmed. - Thomas Guthrie

We must hear with our hearts

Matthew 13:13b looking they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand.