

Hebrews 2:1-4

“Don’t Drift...Anchor Deep”

The writer of the book of Hebrews has spent what seems to be an exorbitant amount of time (though it only takes about a minute to read there’s enough material to spend hours) developing and detailing throughout this 1st Ch the superiority of Christ. He’s superior to Moses, to the law, to the prophets, even the angelic hosts. Remember God has at various times and in various ways spoken in time past to the fathers by the prophets but in these last days He’s spoken by His Son. It’s His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom He made the worlds, it’s His Son who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...

There they were (John Ch 14) Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure. He said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” That’s when Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” and “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” and Then, “*Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’*” John 14:8-10 Jesus is the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power, He by Himself has purged our sins and has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He’s superior to any thing, or anyone, in fact He is God Himself come in the flesh, the 2nd person of the holy Trinity.

That’s really what Ch 1 drives home, that Jesus is above any man, He’s above the angels, because He’s God. The angels worship Him, they belong to Him, we read in the scriptures where God the Father refers to the Son as God, God calls Jesus “God.” There is an acknowledgment of mutual divinity between them, the bible displays Christ as the Creator, eternal in nature, sovereign and unchanging, we see Him sitting upon the throne at the right hand of the Father. Who but God has such attributes? There are none but God who are eternal, only God is a creator, sovereign, unchanging, only God receives the worship of the angelic hosts. So at the risk of sounding repetitive, “Jesus is God!” Now look at Ch 2.

Vs1-4

As we prepare to dive into and dissect this just a little bit it's important that you notice the very 1st word of Ch 2. Because as a general rule the word, "Therefore" serves as a pivoting point that brings us out of a principle into something practical. It's like a hinge upon which the door swings that takes us out of the realm of information into the realm of application, we've been given illumination, now for the exhortation. It's instructive in its nature and it should serve as a signal in your heart and in your mind that makes you want to pay attention to the point of application to which it points you. Ch 1 has given us all this information, we've been given illumination and revelation regarding who Christ is. Now as we come to Ch 2 he leads us into an exhortation, a life changing application if we'll but take it to heart. Here's the principle we're working with; "Jesus is superior." Superior to what, to who? To *anything* and *anyone* we've developed that; the word He spoke wasn't mediated through angels as was the law. God has spoken to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ directly because Jesus *is* God.

"Therefore," (and here's where we get practical) "we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard," the 1st thing I want you to see is that this is a non-negotiable absolutely imperative thing that we *must* do. This word "must" is found in the present tense speaking of an ongoing, never relenting action. It's a word that indicates a command, it speaks of something that behooves you, something that is right and appropriate for you, something that is absolutely necessary and non-negotiable. Now that should make your ears perk up, if someone starts talking to me about something I "have to do" in regards to my position being proper, or my relationship being right with God I'm all ears. We've spoken before about Divine initiative and human responsibility, God has initiated a relationship with you, He made the 1st move, now you have a responsibility *in* that relationship. and So I'm speaking here with regards to the realm of human responsibility in maintaining a spiritually healthy and vibrant relationship with God. If I want to maintain a healthy relationship with God I must give the more earnest heed to the things I've heard, that is, the things spoken by God through Christ.

We're still keeping with in the context of the 1st 4 Vs of Ch 1, even more specifically the 1st 2. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son," "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things *we* have heard." Or to understand that another way, the things communicated *to* man *through* Christ are paramount. What does it mean to give the *more earnest heed*? We're talking here about paying close attention in an "above and beyond measure" kind of a way. But not only paying attention in a hearing kind of a way, but taking heed in an "acting upon it" kind of a way, with a "my life depends upon it" kind of sincerity. We're talking about giving excessive attention, the word can even speak of being addicted to. Our lives are to be hinged on what Christ had to say to us.

What *are* some of the things Christ said? He said, *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”* John 6:51 He said, *“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”* John 12:26 and Again, *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”* John 7:37-38 We read in Matt’s gospel, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”* Matt 11:28-30 In Ch 7 He said, *“...whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 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. 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: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”* Matt 7:24-27 I’ll give you one more, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”* John 6:63

This is just a small handful of the things we’ve heard, and yet weighing in the balance based upon the way we respond is the difference between spiritual/eternal life and death. He spoke of denying ourselves, He spoke of serving others, He spoke of abiding in Him, and letting His word abide in us, of coming before God in His name through prayer and supplication, and on and on we could go.

We’re to give the more *earnest* heed to the things we’ve heard, and if we don’t there are ramifications, this is a warning, a “do this *or else*” kind of a caution. Because if we *don’t* give the more earnest heed, pay even closer attention to what Jesus has to say, what’s the danger? “Drifting away,” and this is the 1st of 6 warnings we find written in the book of Hebrews, the danger of drifting. We’ll find as we make our way through it the danger of doubting, of dull hearing, of departing, of despising, and of denying. But as for now we have the danger of drifting.

Obviously what’s in view here is a nautical term, drifting is something that happens quite naturally if you’re vessel isn’t anchored to anything solid. and The idea here is that if we’re not anchored in the superiority of Jesus Christ and His word to us we’ll begin to drift with various currents that are pushing us in different directions. and There are all kinds of currents out there that desire to carry you off into dangerous waters. There’s the current of the world, the current of the flesh, the current of the devil, and anyone of those currents can take you subtly down the stream of life if you’re not anchored in Christ and in His word.

Think about what drifting is, it's not a *sudden* departure, it's a *subtle* departure, often times it's not even noticed unless you're keeping your eye on the situation. You get out on the lake and lay down on a raft, it doesn't take long and you won't notice it at all, but if you're not careful you'll look up and find yourself several hundred yards from shore, you weren't towed out forcibly, you drifted out subtly, but you got away from the safety of the shore nonetheless. and That's the way most backsliding takes place in the life of the believer, it's not by a sudden swift current that takes you forcibly against your will, you don't generally wake up and simply decide to start sinning, there's no sudden departure. But you drift out subtly into dangerous waters. You aren't really spending time in the word like you used to, you come to church now and then but hey we're free in Christ so you're not going to get "legalistic" about it. Prayer is important but you're always in such a hurry and at night you're too exhausted...you're drifting.

To me it seems that this warning is all the more prevalent in the lives of us who've walked with the Lord for a bit. Because certainly there are currents of carnality, of covetousness, of pride, of religious legalism, or liberalism, all sorts of things. None of which should be taken lightly and all of which are very dangerous. But I believe that there's one which is more subtle and perhaps more dangerous than all the others in the life of the believer and that's the current of *familiarity*. That current of overconfidence, "I've heard it all before, I've walked with the Lord for a while, I know what He said, I've heard all the illustrations and applications that the preacher has to make, been there done that, tell me something I don't know, I'm going to drift on out to the lake this weekend and do a little fishin." and We can buy into this mentality that it's a good thing, and it's definitely a needed thing for new believers, but it's kind of old hat for me. and The bible says, "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" 1 Cor 10:12

For those of us who've walked with Christ for a few yrs, this is an especially subtle yet dangerous current to get caught in. All the more reason to be constantly evaluating and re-evaluating the degree to which I'm taking heed, having ears to hear, contemplating, and meditating on the word of God. As if I've arrived, that's called pride, and the one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. "*We must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*"

Vs2-4

So he begins to weigh out the gravity of the situation by using a contrast/comparison sort of an approach. "If the word given through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward (speaking of proper penalties) how shall we escape (proper penalties) if we neglect so great a salvation which at the 1st began to be spoken by the Lord and then was confirmed through those who heard Him, God Himself bearing witness through signs, wonders, miracles, various gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?" It's a rhetorical question, meaning a question phrased in such a way as to imply the answer, the answer is, "We won't escape."

Now before I get too far into that let's back up to Vs 2. The word spoken through angels is a reference to the law (we developed that briefly last week). But the idea here is that if the law (which came by God through the mediation of angels) proved steadfast, or unalterable, trustworthy and true, and every transgression and disobedience was readily administered the appropriate disciplinary procedures... Now when we speak of *transgression* we're speaking of sins of *commission*, doing something willfully and knowingly against God's word; you weren't supposed to do it, you knew it and did it anyway. When we speak of *disobedience* we're speaking of sins of *omission*, not doing something that you were supposed to do. and When either one of those lines were crossed there were ramifications, some were light, some were severe, some resulted in even a premature death, they were capital offenses.

Now; if God's word through angels proved to be straight and true, non-bending, non-compromising, non-negotiable, and if you stepped outside those parameters you were dealt with accordingly. What do you think will be the result if *we* neglect so great a *salvation* spoken *not through* angels, but by the mouth of His own Son, and then those who heard Him, God Himself bearing witness through supernatural means? You think we're going to somehow slide by or be overlooked? Not even in your dreams. You see the idea here is that a greater word, brought by a greater person, having greater promises, will bring about greater ramifications if it's neglected. Remember these words, "...to whom much is given, from him much will be required;" Luke 12:48

You see there are those who'd have you to believe that this is a warning to the non-believer. I personally don't submit to that particular point of view. Why? Well, because who is it that won't escape if they neglect so great a salvation? The writer uses the words "we" and "us," he doesn't make any transition or seek to make a distinction saying "but to the unbelieving" or anything like that. The flow the context is clear. and The letter to the Hebrews in general wasn't written as an evangelistic tract but rather as a source of encouragement to down trodden believers contemplating a return to ritualism through the law. So the exhortation is to you and me as believers.

Now are we talking about losing our salvation? No, that's not what the context speaks to. But what we are saying is there can be some radical ramifications in neglecting so great a salvation. You see the warning isn't in *rejecting* so great a salvation, if that were the case we'd realize it was a warning to the nonbeliever. The exhortation is against *neglecting* so great a salvation. What does it mean to "neglect" our salvation?

Bear in mind all this is tied to "drifting," you begin to neglect your salvation and the natural result is that you'll drift. So then what does it mean to "neglect" so great a salvation? Well one of the ways we neglect it is by simply doing nothing, all one has to do to begin to drift is to do nothing and the current will carry you along quite naturally. and Sometimes people think they're doing ok when they're doing nothing because they're coasting on harvest of seeds planted earlier on.

If you were on an old train that was powered by shoveling coal into the burner and you got a pretty good head of steam up so you decided to take a break you'd coast for quite a while and it's probable that most people wouldn't even realize it when you began to slow down because the changes would be subtle. But next thing you know the thing has come to a stop and now you've got a problem. But in reality the problem didn't begin when the train came to a stop, it began when you quit shoveling coal into it. It just had enough momentum built up that it took awhile to see the net effect of the decision you made a long time ago. When your life is a train wreck having come to a grinding halt because things are out of order spiritually.

Sin is dominating your life horrendously it's not generally because of something you just did a minute ago, but it's a culmination of things that began when you made a certain decision a long time ago that lent itself to neglecting your salvation. In Matt 22 Jesus said, *"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business."* Matt 22:2-5 That phrase, "Made light of it" is the same word translated in Heb 2:3 "neglect" they just didn't consider it serious or important. Had the opportunity but ignored it, disregarded and neglected it. It kind of reminds me of the attitude displayed in Ananias and Sapphira, they didn't take their calling in Christ seriously. Thought they could ignore the principles of honesty, integrity and Christ-like living and escape the penalty. But God called them out and took them home, they died prematurely. There are ramifications to neglecting our salvation, taking it lightly, thinking it's no big deal to do "this" or be apart of "that" that lends itself to worldliness or ungodliness and somehow thinking that God's not going to chasten us or deal with us.

If people weren't above the word mediated through angels, don't think for a second we'll slip under the radar neglecting the words and the salvation (and all it's implications) found in Christ. Don't drift, anchor deep in Jesus Christ Abide in Him, let His words abide in you.

Now having said all of that there certainly is an application to the unbelieving world as well. Because people sit passively by hearing the gospel, coming into the awareness of what Jesus Christ has done in taking their sin upon Himself that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him, that forgiveness is available if they'll but turn to Him and trust in Him. But they neglect the message and the means to salvation, don't think you'll escape the ramifications of that. Jesus is the door through which we're given eternal life; exclusively.

Don't neglect so great a salvation; what makes it so great? Well 1st of all we're told that it's great because of the very means by which we're made aware of it. Jesus Himself has spoken

of it to us, sure the message was foreshadowed in the OT, but it was hazy, bits and pieces of it here and there. Given by God, but through men, the prophets, mediated (the law) by angels. The gospel message came directly through Christ Himself. Jesus Himself told us that by believing in Him we'd never perish but have everlasting life, that by following Him we'd be where He was, that by His sacrifice upon the cross we could all be rescued from serpent of sin that has bitten all of humanity leaving death an immanent reality. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, it's great because He told us the good news Himself.

But not only did He bring us the message, He became the means (and we'll talk about this more next time) we're the ones guilty of sin, yet He took our place, took our penalty and gave us His privilege. This great salvation takes a life that's headed for hell and seats them in Christ in the heavenly places, we were headed down the broad road that leads to destruction but in Christ we've been placed on the narrow path that leads to everlasting life. Salvation takes us out of darkness and places us into light, it takes us from being enemies of God and puts us in the favored position of friends of God. Even the very sons and daughters of God. It's so great because it does for us what we could never do for ourselves. I was lost and there was nothing I could do about it, or to in any way change it. But Christ came and in the flesh condemned sin that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in me by faith in Him.

He did it all and by simple faith He will impart and impute to me His very righteousness, and we become accepted before God in Him. Don't neglect so great a salvation, you've been saved. Set free from the chains and bondage of sin, Jesus Christ has freed you from the *penalty* of sin, He's freed you from the *power* of sin (the one the Son sets free is free indeed) and the day is coming when you'll be delivered from the *presence* of sin, don't neglect that, don't take it lightly, don't take it for granted, don't place your priorities on the things of this world. Don't "do nothing" about your walk and relationship with the Lord, seek Him, live *for* Him. God commended David because he was a man "after His own heart." He persistently pursued the heart of God. and When he ceased, even for a minute it was disastrous, the ramifications were horrendous. When you begin to neglect it leads to drifting, receive the warning, search your heart, be encouraged...anchor deep in the word of God and the person of Christ Jesus.

Prayer Points:

God may we receive the exhortation of Your word, to give the more earnest heed, the more earnest devotion and dedication to Your Word, spoken through Your Son, confirmed through the apostles, You bearing witness in so many wonderful ways. I pray Lord that if there be any of us who stand guilty of neglect, who've begun to drift that we'd give ear to what Your Spirit is saying to us today. To remember from where we've fallen, repent, and repeat those 1st works, returning to You, our 1st love. May we anchor deep in You that we might walk steadily in You, not drifting with the currents of this world.

Maybe rather than drifting with the currents of this world, you're in the free flow of this world having never received Christ into Your life. Why sit passively by and neglect so great a salvation that's extended to you? Don't neglect it any longer, don't reject it another day, receive it. Why not let today be the day of salvation. with an everlasting love God has loved you, but He won't force you to come to Christ, that's a decision you have to make, if you're willing Jesus is waiting, and He'll make you brand new, give you new life...just open your heart, call upon His name, He'll forgive your sin and you'll never be the same.