

DANGEROUS DRIFT

Hebrews 2:1-3

INTRODUCTION: The joy of preaching through the New Testament in a year is just that. I have the privilege of proclaiming some of the principle texts of Scripture from every book of the New Testament.

The disadvantage is that no book of the Scriptures can be covered in a single sermon. This week we are in Hebrews and I have twice as much time for this book that I have had with the last several. So, I get to preach two whole sermons out of Hebrews. But I tell you, it is like opening a treasure chest and only being able to pull out two items to examine. No matter how beautiful the items you grab and hold up to see in better light, there are so many other jewels sparking back at you from the chest.

Hebrews is one of those books. Every chapter is rich, and each chapter filled with many precious gems. From the first seven chapters of this marvelous book, I have chosen the first of the five exhortations given in the book in Hebrews, chapter 2, verses, 1-3.

Hebrews 2:1-3 1 **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*,

Hebrews 1:1-4 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

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The main exhortation is built around a question: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Actually, all that we read this week and all the rest of the verses in chapter 1 was merely a preface to this question. Everything said about Jesus and about the angels was leading up to this question.

There are three very important things to note here.

I. THIS EXHORTATION IS ADDRESSED TO BELIEVERS.

A similar question is appropriate for unbelievers:

- How shall you escape if you ignore so great a salvation?

- How shall you escape if you reject so great a salvation?

But that is not the question here. The question the writer poses to us is

- How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

- A. The author of the epistle says, "God has spoken to us (the writer and the recipients) by His Son."

Hebrews 1:1-2 God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, ...

- B. The "we" and "us" in 2:1-3 (six times) includes the author of the epistle who is unquestionably a believer.

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- C. The Holy Spirit clearly inspires the saved human author of the book of Hebrews to ask his fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Dear brother and sister in the Lord, this question is for us.

This exhortation is for us!

II. HOW CAN BELIEVERS NEGLECT THEIR SALVATION?

By drifting away from what our Savior taught us.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

The danger described is not intentionally disobeying, but carelessly drifting.

The picture here is of Christians in a boat in the middle of the river of life. The warning is not about using the powerful engine of the Holy Spirit to motor us the wrong direction or to take us to the wrong destinations. The warning is about not using the motor at all. The warning is about not going any place purposefully or with power, but just drifting along wherever the currents of life carry us.

- A. In what ways do Christians sometimes drift away from what the Lord tells us in His Word?

By drifting away from the reading, studying, and meditating upon the Scriptures.

By drifting away from fellowship with God's people.

By drifting away from witnessing.

By drifting away from stewardship.

By drifting away from service to the Lord through His church.

B. The place most churches and most Christians are in danger of drifting is in drifting away from the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*"

St. Andrew Baptist Church, I commend you. And what is more important than that by far is that I am confident that the Lord commends you. As to the church at Philadelphia, the Living Lord says to us, "I know your works."

Let me tell you some of the reasons I commend you and reasons I believe the Lord commends you.

- You **fed the hungry and clothed the poor of Bay County** five days a week all year.
- You **provided** our neediest citizens with **free medical care and prescriptions**.
- You **helped pregnant women and young mothers** who needed help and someone to care.
- And while you did all of that, last year you **led 263** of them **to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**, and some of them are active in our own church today.
- St. Andrew Baptist, you **presented the** greatest story ever told, the story of our Lord Jesus Christ, with a clear presentation of the gospel to around 5,000 people through our **Panama City Passion Play**. You not only presented a Broadway quality presentation, you paid for it, so that it was a ticket free event to all who wanted to attend.
- Last year, you **were among the top 100 churches in Florida in giving to the Cooperative Program** out of our tithes and offerings.
- Through our Global Outreach you **gave over \$74,000 to Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong** offerings for international and North American missions.

- You **helped rebuild a church damaged by hurricane Harvey in Texas.**
- You **helped two churches in Baltimore and one in Portland** grow and develop, and this year, one of those churches is planting a brand new church themselves, and we helped them do that also.
- And while busy in your Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, you did not forget the ends of the earth. You **discipled leaders among an unreached people group in Mexico.**
- You **strengthened one mother church and planted 2 new churches in Brazil** in places without an evangelical witness and helped train pastors and church planters without access to seminaries or Bible colleges.
- You **planted 3 churches in the African bush** in villages that had no worship but the worship of idols before your team came.
- In addition, **you helped build a new building to expand a Christian school in Ghana** that is not only discipling young African Christians, but is reaching young Muslim children and teens, and some of their parents, for Christ as well.
- You **led people to the Lord in India, helped train pastors and missionaries, and assisted in the rescue of trafficked women.**
- And **all of this you did empowered by the Holy Spirit, who worked in and through you.** And I think we ought to say a big Praise the Lord and give Him glory for great things He has done!

For all of this and more, St. Andrew Baptist Church, I commend you; and I am confident the Lord is pleased and honored by your Kingdom service.

But let me point out something about the doing of all these things: **St. Andrew Baptist did not do it by drifting. People were intentional!**

- You prayed for it.
- You planned to do it.
- You prepared to do it.
- You paid to do it.
- And then by the grace and power of God, you did it!

None of this just happened because you or someone causally drifted by.

But that does not mean that we are immune from drifting. Drifting is a natural tendency, and we are all very much tempted by it. **We can be especially vulnerable to this temptation when we have been charging ahead at full steam in times past.** The devil makes it sound so good.

“Oh you deserve a break.” “You need to slow down.” “You need to take it easy.”

That is not what we need. We need to hear and to heed the exhortation from the risen Christ that we read in our text this morning.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must **give the more earnest heed** to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Right now, in spite of the wondrous things God has done by His power in and through St. Andrew Baptist Church, **we are being tempted to drift away.**

- **From prayer** – I will tell you church, I am concerned that some of our prayer times as a church family are some of our least attended meetings we have. And your staff and I keep occasionally changing the format of some of these prayer times in case that is the reason most of you do not come. But I am afraid that the format has little to do with it. I am afraid that the reason is that we are drifting from our conviction of the importance of prayer and the need for it in our personal lives and the life of our church.
- **From growing in the Lord** – You know, none of us stay in the same place spiritually very long. Either we are growing in Christ or we are drifting away from His likeness.
- **From servicing** – As I just mentioned in an incomplete summary of what all you as a church are doing, there are a lot of opportunities to serve the Lord in connection with the ministries of our church, and no one can be a part of all of it. But everyone can be a part of some of it! And I am speaking to those of you who call St. Andrew Baptist home, but your service to the Lord takes little or none of your time and energy. If that is the case, you are drifting in neglect of the service of the Lord!
- **From giving** – Oh, I don't like this or that, so I will not give to the Lord.
- **From going** – I've been before. Let somebody else go.

Are these five things some of what the Savior teaches us as His followers to do? We could all add to this list, but can we take anything away?

In which of those areas does the Spirit convict your heart right now that you are drifting?

- Is it one or all five?
- Is it one I have not mentioned, but is the clear teaching of our Lord?
- So today, **will you decide to quit drifting** and crank up the engine and let the Holy Spirit help you do what the Savior has taught you to do?
- **Will you quit neglecting** the wonderful salvation that Jesus has purchased for you on the cross?

If you have trusted Him, He has given you that salvation as a gift, by grace through faith. You cannot and do not earn that salvation by praying, growing, serving, giving, or going on mission.

But having received our glorious salvation from the Lord, will we not today give more earnest heed to these things we have heard from the Lord through His Word?

The last verse of our text asks **How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Heb. 2:3**

And so I raise the question:

III. FROM WHAT SHALL WE NOT ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT OUR SALVATION?

My friend, **We will not escape the consequences of drifting.**

A. Drifting by neglect causes us to fail to arrive at God's intended destination for our earthly lives. Our lives end up far short of what God had purposed and desired for us.

B. Drifting by neglect causes us to get stuck on some of life's reefs. A reef keeps us from moving forward.

The reef of **worldliness**

The reef of **carnality**

The reef of **complacency**

The reef of **lust**

The reef of **selfishness**

C. Drifting by neglect causes us to drift past some of God's greatest blessings.

The blessing of **spiritual growth**

The blessing of **maturity**

The blessing of **fruitfulness**

The blessing of **fulfillment**

D. Drifting by neglect causes us to get in other people's way.

Ever been in a boat stuck on a reef or a mud flat or drifting in the current without a working motor? Such a boat not only does not arrive at its intended destination, it hinders other boats who are trying to travel also.

So do our lives when we neglect our great salvation!

E. Drifting by neglect causes us to lose rewards that would have been ours when we appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

F. When we neglect the great salvation that we have received from the Lord Jesus,

- **we end up shipwrecked**
- **with little blessing for ourselves**
- **and little glory for the Christ who saved us with His own blood.**

CONCLUSION: Dear saved brother and sister, the Spirit of the Living God is speaking through His Word to our hearts this morning. This is not a message to your lost neighbor. This is for us. This is a word to me. This is a word to you. Because of who Christ is, we are to give the more earnest heed to what He has said, or we are in danger of drifting away through neglect.