

Neglect

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[0:00] Music At Hebrews 2 verse 3 it says, That's the verse that started me on this journey of this message, if you like, on the theme of neglect.

Neglect. Neglect. It's the opposite of care. In Ecclesiastes 10 verse 18 it talks about slothfulness is how a building decays.

Things fall apart by neglect. Now the roof falls in because of idleness it says there in Ecclesiastes 10 verse 18. Now we've heard of child care, child abuse and there's also a reality of child neglect.

Child neglect. It's the opposite of care. Neglect is the opposite of care. Now I for one know about neglect. I take a look at my garden and I see neglect written all over it.

I need to get Mr. Click in I think. And neglect. It's embarrassing. It's embarrassing isn't it? Spider webs. Creeping vines. Strangling my fruit trees. Neglect.

[1:31] It's costly. It's dangerous. I used to be in the Army Reserves at one time and neglect can be lethal. It can be dangerous because soldiers have to clean their weapons. You know?

I thought that was women's work. Oh, I should have said that. No. Cleaning weapons. Cleaning weapons is important for a soldier. Because if your weapon gets rusty and clogged, it could be life or death.

Neglect. Neglect. Neglect. There's some things we should be careful about neglecting. Neglect.

Decay. Rust. Rot. Corruption. It sets in. Imagine it sets in. Even that flash car you've got in your driveway there. It's just rusting away. Rusting away.

Bit by bit. And I saw you got a nice new car. It's going to be a rust bucket one day, brother. It's gone. It's just going to be a rusty piece of junk one day. Because neglect.

[2:25] Decay. Corruption. There's some important areas that we must not. We dare not. Neglect. We ought to take special care of. And I'd like to put that to you today.

That the danger of neglect is very real. And in Hebrews 6 verse 11 it talks about having diligence. Having diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It contrasts diligence with neglect. I'd like to think that this message is not just me rabbiting on.

But this is a really, a solemn word. I earnestly pray that this will be a serious word. This is not something to take flippantly.

But that God's authority is stamped upon it. Because God talks about diligence. God talks about slothfulness. God talks about neglect. The word says to the preacher, these things, command and teach.

[3:29] I'd like this to be a word from God. As much as I am just a channel. That it will be a message from him. A strong message. A message against neglect. A message against neglected areas.

In lives. And in the assembly. As I looked at this word neglect. I saw some references to it.

And it was kind of almost coincidental. That Acts 6 verse 1 contains the word neglect. We've commissioned some deacons this morning. There's more to come.

That's just the first stage. Acts 6 verse 1 it says. The number of the disciples was multiplied. There arose a murmuring. Because the widows were neglected.

Neglected in the daily ministrations. Neglect prompted the church to take action. People were being neglected. People matter to God. Our Lord does not neglect people.

[4:27] That's why we've appointed servants of the people. In Acts 6 they were overlooked. They were disregarded. The church was growing. And there was murmuring. People were grumbling.

We've had a few grumbles. We've had a few grumbles in this church. Believe it or not. As much as you're all saintly people. And you're all becoming more Christ-like day by day.

There's some people that have a bit of a whinge now and again. Why is that? Because we're growing. Because people are sandpaper. And we rub up against each other now and again. You know, even, I can be irritating sometimes.

I'll confess that this morning. Sometimes we can make the mistake of neglecting people. Neglecting people. Neglecting fellowship. Neglecting worship.

Neglecting people. Neglecting our own brothers and sisters. You know, our brother read a reading of the poor. There's people all around us that need care.

[5:23] That need the opposite of neglect. It's care. And neglect can become a habit for us. Can't it? Like my garden. You know, it didn't get in such a pristine condition by any effort of my own.

It just unfolded over time. As the cobwebs grew. As the vines strangled the trees. It just saps away. Doesn't it? Neglect. And it does that with your spiritual life and mine.

Neglect, brother. Neglect, sister. Take a look deeper, deeper today. At your own life. That's my challenge today. Will the words of this sermon be heard or neglected?

Neglect them at your peril, dear saint today. Don't neglect to be challenged. The psalmist cried, examine me, O Lord. And prove me. Try my reins and my heart.

Psalm 26, verse 2. Ask the Lord, brother, sister. Ask the Lord for renewed desire. Renewed love. Wisdom.

[6:25] Listen. To overcome the problem of neglect. Recognise. Neglect of people. People. People matter. And we need to recognise this area of neglect for what it is.

Sin. In Acts 6, the neglect of the widows was a shameful thing to the church. Murmuring.

Grumbling. People getting neglected. We don't want that as a church. That's why we've got deacons and those deacons will harness the energies of all of us. I trust.

I pray. Neglect of people. Secondly, neglect of ministry. Ministry can be neglected. Ministry can be neglected. In 1 Timothy 4, verse 14, again, it's in the context of people being responsible and people being ministering.

And this applies to every one of us. Every one of you. You all have a gift, brother. It says in 1 Timothy 4, verse 14, neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery.

[7:34] Neglect not the gift. Don't be careless, brother, about your gift, sister. This verse speaks to us of how a gift can be neglected. Now, I got a gift not long ago.

A few weeks ago, someone bought me a shed light. I don't know what the occasion was on our Father's Day. And it's still there. Still in the box. I haven't even taken it out of the box. It's a neglected gift.

It's one of these fancy solar lights to put in my tool shed. I'll get to it one day. It's neglect of a gift, isn't it? Amen. Come on. I often get that. Birthday or Christmas, you get useless things generally, don't you?

Let's face it. So don't give me a gift. I usually don't like them. But no. But the gifts that God gives us, we ought not to neglect those gifts, brother. Neglect those gifts, sister.

And I was encouraged. Last week, someone came to me after the service. In part, I was talking about Christians burying their talents. And a sister came up to me and she said, I want to be used of God.

[8:33] I've got a gift. I've got an ability to minister. And I want to be used of God. And she offered to minister in an area within the church. And that blessed me.

That blessed me to see someone challenged. Someone, she was challenged. I want you to be challenged too. So think of the gifts that you have. To not sit back, but to stand up.

And answer the call. In 2 Chronicles 29 and 11, it says, My sons, be not now negligent. For the Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, that you should minister unto Him.

And burn incense or worship. People can neglect their gifts. Gifts can be buried. Gifts can be put on the shelf. Gifts can grow cobwebs and dust. And rarely see the light of day.

Say it of God today. If God has gifted you. If God has gifted you. Do not neglect it. He's given it for you to use it.

[9:33] To exercise it in the assembly. For the serving of others. For the serving of the Lord. In James 4, 17, it says, Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

That's serious, isn't it? That is serious. If you neglect the gift that is in you, that's a tragedy. Neglected responsibility. Now I'm not preaching a works-based gospel here, or wanting to put anyone under a yoke of bondage.

I'm wanting to release you. I'm wanting you to be released from the bondage of inactivity. From the shackles, from the chains that hold you back. From serving God. In some capacity.

Neglect. The opposite of neglect is care. Think of your gift. Maybe get it out and dust it off a bit. Amen. Get it out and use it. There's a solemn trust to having a gift.

A gift is given by God. It's given by God to be used. It's given by God to be used for the building up of his people. He's not given it to you to put it on the shelf.

[10:33] He's given it to you to use it. To use it. Don't quit being who God has called you to be. We read in 2 Timothy 1 verse 6, Stir it up.

Stir up the gift. Fan it into flame. It's got a sense of bellows on a fire. Of fanning it. Of kindling it. Of stirring it. Engage the gift that God has given you by his spirit.

And get off the bench. Get in the action. Some may be less noticed. This is not to say there's giftings that may not be evident or seen. Some will be praying.

That's a gift. That is a gift. There's prayer people here today. People who pray. People who give. There's people who fast. It's people who give. And minister.

In ways that others will not even know about. But there's gifts given too for the profit of all. As we see 1 Corinthians 12 verse 7. It's for the benefit of the whole body.

[11:29] So brother, sister, do not be careless with your gift. Do not neglect your gift. But employ it. The health of the body needs you to function.

It means you and me. Now if you think you've got it hard so far. I want to close with a rebuke. This is the last point. That's quite a long point actually.

I want to drive this home today. Drive it home. Prayerfully drive it home. We're living in dangerous times. Brother Richard was saying. These are the end days. Amen brother.

It's closing. The chapter of earth's history. And it's dangerous times. Times of deception. Times that are calling for men. Calling for men. Calling for women.

They'll take a stand. For God to raise up an army. People can be neglected. Gifts can be neglected.

[12:25] Souls can be neglected. Souls. Salvation. We can neglect it. It grieves my heart. People. I know there's many. Many.

Many. Christians. Who are not in fellowship. It's sad. I know that.

It saddens me. It grieves my heart. To see. God's people. Neglecting. To fellowship. How I long to see people.

Established on the foundation. For souls. Not to be neglected. And. The question for every one of us is. Spiritual neglect. Am I suffering from it?

Amen. Am I suffering from it? Ask yourself. Where's the joy gone? The enthusiasm. The fire. Amen. The fire. You know. I almost get Pentecostal.

[13:20] Amen. But we don't want it. We know that's a lot of hogwash. But we need the fire. We need the real fire. Not the false fire. Amen. We need the real thing. Not the strange fire. We need the real fire. Amen.

Amen. Where's it gone? I think some of you. It's a little bit snuffed out. Maybe a bit of a smouldering candle. We need the fire. Amen. Some have quit.

Some have quit. Let's face it. Maybe some of you even here today. You've quit. You might be here but in body only. You've quit. Some have got proud. Spiritual neglect.

Some have lost it. Let's face it. Amen. It's like Samson. He lost it and he didn't realise it. He didn't realise God had departed from him. Some have lost it. There's a preacher I heard.

Some of this is slightly copied. I must confess here. You've quit your post. There's some people that have quit their post. You've quit praying. You've quit singing.

[14:17] Amen. You've quit witnessing. Amen. It's gone. Amen. God forbid. Some are here but inside they have quit. They're not doing anything for the Lord.

Church or their Christian commitment is turning up on a Sunday morning if you're lucky. That's it. That's the extent of it. Maybe just for some spiritual recreation.

Just get some ear tickling. Just get a little bit of a buzz. Do what seems to be the right thing to do. To show my face now and again at church. So just get some light and entertaining moments. Some kind of a show of Christianity. Jeremiah wrote, For my people is foolish. They have not known me. Jeremiah 4.22 There is many in church.

They know more about what's on TV and the movies than what is in their Bibles. Amen. They know more about sports statistics than Bible statistics. They have more songs memorised than Scripture.

[15:18] They know more about popular novels and books than the Bible. It's spiritual neglect, people. Spiritual neglect. Apathy. Laziness.

Many of you have quit. It's time to quit quitting. Quit quitting and start over again. Take an honest assessment. Bible time.

Prayer time. Fellowship time. Time in God's presence. Take stock today. Saint of God. Don't quit. Get back in the action. Get back in the fight.

Are you in danger of neglecting your own soul, your own salvation, your own spiritual life? I think I'm about halfway through now. Where does your loyalty lie?

Your allegiance? His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his world doth he meditate day and night. Psalm 1-2. Study your Bible. Stay in the Word. Stay in fellowship.

[16:10] Often. Often. Do a reality check today. I challenge you. God forbid that there's people here. It's just another sermon. It's just another meeting.

It's just something that you get a bit stirred up about and then you forget about it until we meet again. Do a reality check. Be honest with God today.

In Jeremiah 2-32 it says, Can a maid forget her ornaments? Or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me. Days without number.

Yet my people have forgotten me. Days without number. What a reproach. What a judgment that God's people would forget him. Friends, rather let's care for us all.

Let's consider him who by the grace of God should taste death for every man. I believe he did. Just that. He cares. He cares for souls. And so should we.

[17:03] That's why we've got people interested in witnessing. We've got some people down and run to more. Getting lambasted and cursed and spat upon and mocked for the gospel's sake.

And yet souls are being won. Thank God. I've heard good reports of that witnessing. Praise God for that. Are you neglecting your soul and the souls of others? Neglecting to study.

It says study. It's not optional. Study. 2 Timothy 2.15. Yet the sad reality is we've got malnourished Christians today neglecting their spiritual life.

One old time preacher said, What folly to pamper the body, the dying body, and neglect the eternal soul. Do we care more about the perishing fabric of our body and neglect the immortal soul?

I know there's some good looking people here today. You know? Tom must have brushed his hair just nice. Put a bit of... He must have the hair gel on it. His body looks pretty good considering what he's done to it over the years.

[18:02] But thank God it's more than your body, people today. It's more than your body. I know Stuart's a handsome looking man. But it's more than that body there, brother. It's your soul. It's your soul.

It's your spirit. It's your spiritual life. And we need to consider and not neglect the soul. Not neglect. And have that biblical sense of priorities to consider there should not be a let-up in this spiritual conflict that's being weighed for men's souls.

So, I'll say to close, but it might go a bit longer. How is your soul? How is your soul? That is the question. And only you can answer it prayerfully, honestly, before God.

I trust. How is your soul? Is it in a state of ruin? Is it in a state of neglect? Of carelessness? What is the condition of that relationship that matters most?

Your relationship with your Lord and Saviour. If you're saved. And thank God, it says in Luke 15, verse 10, the salvation causes the angels to rejoice.

[19:09] In heaven's dimension, there's angels jumping up and down with glee and joy when one sinner bows his head and heart and repents.

Thank God for that. I trust that will happen. I trust you'll be a part of that. So, consider the vital signs for you, for our fellowship. There's an awe. There's a reverence. There's a repentance I trust.

In the word it says, To this man will I look. To this man will I look, saith the Lord. Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 66, verse 2. Be a God-fearing man, a God-fearing woman. Do not neglect that which matters, but face it in high regard.

Proverbs 15, 16. And better is little with a fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Something is wrong in the church. And I'm not saying in all the other churches.

[20:11] Oh, the church down the road is a flaky church or whatever it is. You know, the problem is all about them. It's here. In this assembly. There's Christians who aren't.

Caring for their soul. There's Christians who aren't. Caring for people. There's Christians who aren't caring about their gifts. And we all need to be rebuked.

And urged on in the race. Not by condemnation, but by exultation. Don't quit, saint. Rise up, saint. And avoid neglect.

Be where the doers of the word are. Psalm 119, 63. It says, I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

I want to be in companionship with those who fear God. How shall we escape if we neglect?

Neglect. Neglect.

[21:10] Salvation. The ultimate and absolute question is, are you saved? I'm talking to people, this is a message to Christians really. But, are you saved?

Truly saved? That must be the question that matters most of all. And make your calling and election sure.

It's real. Heaven and hell, it's real. It's not make-believe. It's not some airy-fairy legend or fairy story. Hell and heaven. It's real. And it's time now to press towards the mark. Brother, sister, get in the race. Get off the bench.

It's time to press towards the mark. And consider, is it care or neglect in my life? We want to care for people. Like the church of Acts 6.

[22:10] They didn't want people to get neglected. That was the whole point of the servants, the deacons being appointed. They want to be careful people, not neglect them. You know, I've heard stories, people coming to this church and they didn't get a hello.

Thankfully, I've heard some better reports lately. They said, wow, people came. Visitors have been telling me people did take the time to say hello. Woe to you if you don't say hello to a visitor today.

I mean, that's a bit strong maybe. But no, seriously, we don't want people who come here. Now, you visitors might want to brush out the back door because you've got to get hounded. We don't want that either. But, I want this church to be a church that cares about people.

We don't neglect people. We care about people. We care about people from different countries. We care about people from different backgrounds, from different walks of life. We care and we do not neglect people.

We care about our gifts. You've all got a gift. Every Christian has a gift. Amen. Multiple gifts. That's why I've given out that little questionnaire. Please fill it in. Then I know where you want to serve, where you can serve.

[23:20] It helps me and it helps the deacons too to know who they can ask to help in different areas of service. Don't neglect your gifts. Use them.

And lastly, souls. Care for souls. We want to be a church that cares for souls, that cares for souls enough that we want to speak the message of salvation. Enough that we care about our own spiritual growth and life.

We are accountable. Amen. We are accountable. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we thank you. Lord, we're not under a yoke of bondage but a yoke of glad service.

It's a yoke that you carry for us as we're in harness with you. Help us, Lord, to not neglect our soul, to not neglect salvation. If there's any here yet, to trust you.

That they'll seek counsel today. They'll speak to someone and ask, how can I be saved? And God willing, the man or woman who they speak to will be able to tell them scripturally how to do so.

[24:24] Lord, that we'll care about people in this church. We'll care about our gifts and ministries. We'll exercise them. We'll dust them off and put them back into service for you and your glory.

And we'll care, Lord, about souls that we want to see want. We'll care about salvation and the preaching of it. We'll care about what really matters, our spiritual relationship with you and our Father and our God, our Lord.

We repent. I speak on behalf of those who wish to agree with me. We repent of our neglect. And we ask you, Lord, to refire us to serve you more.

To live by your grace and by entirely your own equipping and enabling for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Music Music Music Music Music Music