

# Drift Prevention

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you open up your Bibles to the book of Hebrews? We're making our way through the book of Hebrews. We'll be in the book of Hebrews for a few months here. Hebrews chapter 2, verses 1 through 4.

It's going to start on page 1187 of your pew Bible. So let me read these four verses. This is God speaking to us. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.

May God bless the hearing of His word. Imagine you are sitting across from your doctor in his examination room, and He says to you, we've got back the results of your blood tests, and they confirm what I've been telling you for the last three years.

[ 1 : 28 ] Your lifestyle is compromising your health, and your life is in danger. And then He goes on. If you don't heed my words, if you don't stake your life on what I'm telling you, you will have a triple bypass in three years, and you will be in the ground in seven.

He goes on to say, you're adrift. You're neglecting yourself. And if you don't stop, it's not going to go well for you.

What would you do? Would you heed your doctor's prescriptive words? Will you stake your life on what He is saying?

Will you pay much closer attention to His words? The book of Hebrews is one long exhortation, and it's an exhortation again and again not to drift from Christ, but to hold fast to Christ all the way to the end.

And what's interspersed throughout the book of Hebrews in a beautiful way are five warning passages. And this morning, we're looking at the first warning passage in chapter 2, 1 through 4.

[ 3 : 00 ] And these warning passages in the book of Hebrews are warnings against apostasy. Apostasy is when someone who has professed to be a Christian seemingly changes their mind and rejects Christ and the salvation He has accomplished.

So, apostasy is having to do with those who have claimed to be Christians turning from Christ and rejecting Him. It's not talking about a season of doubt.

It's not a season of disobedience and you're coming back to the Lord. It's about someone who has rejected Christ. Someone who's professed to be a Christian. The author of Hebrews is seeing some kind of spiritual illness in the church, the original recipients of this letter.

And do you know what he's concerned about? He's concerned that he is seeing early onset apostasy in the church. And so, he addresses it.

And in Hebrews 2, 1 through 4, he diagnoses a problem. And then he gives a prognosis of what will happen if this goes unchecked.

[ 4 : 18 ] And then he finally, he gives us a prescription of what to do. Of how not to drift. How not to neglect this great salvation of Jesus Christ.

Are you going to listen to the great healer of your soul this morning? Are you going to listen to the very words of God that he is addressing to you?

Don't drift from the sun. Stake your life on this great salvation in the sun. Don't drift from him.

Stake your life on him. So let's look at the diagnosis first. Diagnosis is this idea of this is what the problem is.

And the diagnosis begins in chapter 2, verse 1. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it.

[ 5 : 31 ] That's getting at this sense of the problem. Notice, verse 1 starts with a therefore. And like any good kind of student of the Bible, we ask when we see a therefore, what's the therefore therefore?

And it's connecting to the argument that the writer of Hebrews has just made that Jesus is greater, that the Son is greater than the prophets. He's the full and final revelation of God. He's greater than the angels because he is God.

Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard about Jesus, this great salvation, lest we drift away from Jesus, this great salvation.

You know, when we read those words, lest we drift away, we're talking about something becoming unmoored, unbound, disconnected.

And maybe in your mind when you hear the words drift away, they don't strike you as that concerning. Maybe you go, maybe you're like me, you hear drift away and you start imagining floating in a lazy river up in the dells.

[ 6 : 41 ] It's kind of drifting. What you're going to see in the book of Hebrews is his use of drift away is far more serious than that.

In fact, if you look down at verse 3, he uses a word in the place of drift away. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

This drifting away from what we've heard is a kind of spiritual neglect. And I hope you're getting kind of this sense of this is a serious spiritual condition.

As we make our way through the book of Hebrews and as we start looking, we'll come across these other warning passages and the language shifts. The language shifts from drifting away and neglect and it moves into much more weighty language.

It starts to show you the pastoral concern this writer has for this church. He's concerned that what he is seeing and hearing about is early onset apostasy. In chapter 3, verse 12, he moves from drift, negligence language to falling away from the living God.

[ 8 : 01 ] in chapter 6, verses 4 through 6, he says, it's impossible to restore those who have fallen away from Christ. In chapter 10, verses 26 through 29, he talks about this drift, this negligence, this falling away as trampling the Son of God underfoot.

He's speaking of those who've professed to be Christians. in chapter 12, verse 25, it's a rejection of him who warns from heaven who's been exalted on high at the right hand, seated at the right hand of God.

This drift away language that we see in chapter 2, verse 1 right here, it may not sound serious when in fact it's very serious.

It could be early onset apostasy. It could be the metastasizing of unbelief. Maybe you're starting to ask this question, well, how do I know if I'm drifting away?

How do I know if I'm neglecting this great salvation found in Jesus Christ? Well, do you know how you go to, theoretically, you go to your doctor once a year for an annual checkup?

[ 9 : 24 ] Imagine you're sitting on the examination table. He pulls out that little tool with that little windshield on it and it has a little nose on the end with a little light on it. Do you know what I'm talking about? He puts it into your ear and he's looking into your ear.

Do you know why? He's checking your hearing. It's a diagnostic. We can ask a similar question diagnostic, brothers and sisters.

It's not just are you hearing God speak through His Word? Are you heeding His Word? Are you obeying and believing what He's saying in His Word?

So it's an ear check. There's another kind of check. Do you remember you're sitting there and your doctor pulls out that little rubber mallet and He kind of taps just below your kneecap?

He's checking your reflexes? When you encounter sin, what's your reflex? When you're tempted to grieve God, what's your reaction?

[ 10 : 34 ] Is it like, ooh, give me some of that? Or are you like, no, no. this isn't pleasing in His sight? What's your knee-jerk reaction to when tempted by sin?

There's another kind of check. It's the breathing check. It's when your doctor pulls out the stethoscope and he puts it on your back and he says, okay, take a deep breath, breathe in, breathe out.

I was on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ and the founder of Campus Crusade is a guy named Bill Bright and he taught all the staff this idea of spiritual breathing. It's where you inhale God's Word and you exhale sin by way of confession.

When was the last time as a diagnostic check on how you are doing, when was the last time you confessed sin on your own between you and God where you said, Lord, thank you for making me aware of that grievous thing in me.

I confess it to you as wrong. You're exhaling toxic air by way of confession. Ear check, knee check, lung check and then he takes that stethoscope and puts it on your chest and he's listening.

[11:55] He's listening for your pulse. Let me ask you, Christian, what is your heart beating for?

Is your heart beating for God's Son? If a stethoscope was put on your heart, would we hear, God's Son, God's Son, God's Son, your heart pulses for the glory of Jesus?

Or is it myself, myself, myself? These are just diagnostics to check how we're doing.

We're sitting on the examination, we're in the examination room of God and he's using his word to get at stuff in us to see if there's any hint of us drifting away, of neglecting him.

It could be early onset apostasy. So we take the time now to ask these hard questions. Do you know what these hard kind of questions are getting at? What's at the very heart of these kinds of drift and negligence?

[13:10] It's in 312. Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God. These are diagnostics to check your heart and the health of your faith in Christ.

And expose any kind of unbelief. The diagnosis that this writer of Hebrews is showing us is a kind of unbelief.

It's a drift. It's a negligence. And he moves from diagnosis to prognosis. A prognosis is a prediction. It's a prediction of what a disease, of what an injury, of what a virus will develop into if it goes unchecked. checked. And the prognosis that we're given is in verses 2 through 4 of chapter 2.

It's a prognosis of unbelief. What happens when an unbelieving heart is unrepentant? Unrepentant. And what we see here is a prognosis that is not good.

[14:30] What we have in 2, 1 through 4 is essentially a warning. The writer of Hebrews is elegant.

He's sophisticated. And he argues with complicated arguments. And he's going to warn us this morning with a kind of an argument that moves from lesser to greater.

He's going to go something like this. Hey, if those people living in the old covenant under the law of Moses, if when they rejected God's word and they received a just retribution, how much more will we who profess Christ in the new covenant not escape a judgment if we reject Christ?

That's going to be the argument here. He's moving from lesser to greater and it's a warning. So let me show you three elements in the comparison, okay? There's the message.

In chapter 2, verse 2, we read, for since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable. That's the lesser of the argument.

[16:03] It's talking about a message that was declared by angels. What's being referred to here is the law of Moses. The angels served as an intermediary in bringing forth the law of Moses.

You can look up Galatians 3.19. And so this message, this law of Moses, you can sum it up in the Ten Commandments. You won't have any other gods before you.

Observe the Sabbath, honor your parents, don't bear false witness, don't covet. The thing about this message is it doesn't save.

What the law of Moses does and does well is it puts forth the standard of God's holiness and it exposes our sinfulness. It shows us that we fall short. That's the message.

The lesser message. The greater message is in verse 3. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord.

[17:07] It's what we have heard. It's the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ. It's what he's been saying all up to this point that the Son is greater than the prophets.

In verse 2, he's the full and final revelation of God. He's greater than the angels. He is God. He has brought about salvation. Angels serve him. He's declared this message.

It's the gospel. And what we see going on here is the gospel is greater than the Mosaic law because the Mosaic law can't save whereas the gospel one believed does save.

The other comparison is between messengers. So we have a comparison between Mosaic law and gospel and now we have a comparison between the lesser angels declared and the new covenant

messenger, the Lord.

for since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, these angels were intermediaries of the Mosaic law and it was, it proved reliable.

[ 18 : 25 ] It was binding. It was the truth of God's word and that's the lesser of the messengers, these angels.

The greater of the messengers is in verse 3. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord. And if you look up at verse 10, it's the last reference to the Lord.

You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning. Do you know who that's referencing?

The Son, Jesus. What's being said here is that the message of the gospel, the messenger, the first messenger, the first declarer of this great salvation was Jesus himself, the Son.

The messenger is the message. Chapter 1, verse 2, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.

He is the message. And not only just Jesus, I mean, we see it in Mark chapter 1, verses 14 and 15.

[ 19 : 47 ] Jesus says this. Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee. This is the first thing he says in the gospel of Mark. Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. Who was the first declarer of the gospel? In the new covenant, it's Jesus. But it's not just Jesus.

Look who else attests to this salvation. It was declared at first by the Lord and it was attested to us by those who heard. So, there's another group of people who heard the Lord Jesus kind of proclaim this gospel and they were ear witnesses and eyewitnesses were talking about the apostles.

And they attested to this message. They proclaimed it. Did you know, aside from Judas, 10 of the 11 apostles died martyrs' death proclaiming this great salvation about Jesus?

That Jesus, the Son, was fully God, fully man. That he died on the cross for our sins. He was raised on the third day. He ascended on high to the right hand of God where he's reigning on high and then he will come back and return and judge all things.

[ 21 : 09 ] They died. It gets at this attesting to the truthfulness of the message. But there's more.

Four. While God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles all throughout the gospels, all throughout the book of Acts, you see signs and wonders and miracles being done.

All pointing to the truthfulness of this great salvation. in Christ. It's God bearing witness to the gospel.

And we also have and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. The Holy Spirit in Pentecost, he came down and poured out gifts upon all of those who believed in Jesus.

It was the beginning of the new covenant age where God's people themselves become the priesthood of all believers. believers. It's a new era bearing witness to the truthfulness of this gospel salvation.

[ 22 : 18 ] Here's what I'm trying to get at. the messenger of the old covenant, these angels attesting to the Mosaic law, that was good, it's true, but it's this message of salvation that was proclaimed first by Jesus and then attested to by the apostles and was born witness by God and the Holy Spirit, that's better!

That's better! It's a lesser to greater argument. And this is where it gets to the crux of the matter.

This is now where the warning comes in. The new covenant brings a greater retribution. This gospel message, when rejected, it has a greater punishment.

It has a greater punishment. In chapter 2, verse 2, we read, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution.

This Mosaic law that was brought in by angels, anyone who transgressed it, stepped over the line of God's word, anyone who disobeyed it, were unwilling to listen to God's word.

[ 23 : 34 ] It brought about a just punishment. Just think of that generation of Israelites who wandered for 40 years in the wilderness and were not allowed into the promised land because of their unbelief.

A just retribution. And then we move into the new covenant. Verse 3, if they didn't escape, how shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation?

salvation? How shall we escape if we drift and neglect this great salvation in the sun?

If you reject the great salvation in the sun, you will face the great retribution of the sun. That's how serious this is.

God is not indifferent to those who have professed to be followers of Jesus and then trample him underfoot. It's a warning of God's impending wrath.

[ 24 : 53 ] It's a serious business in the book of Hebrews. If there are signs that could be early onset apostasy, you must take them seriously.

Now you may be sitting in your pew wondering, hold on Pastor Mike, I thought that once you're saved, you're always saved. This doesn't sound like that.

Well, let me just kind of tweak that for you. What the New Testament actually teaches is what's called the perseverance of the saints.

A saving faith, a genuine saving faith, is a persevering faith. It's what Jesus talked about in Matthew 24, those who endure to the end will be saved.

The proof of the genuineness of one's faith is ultimately demonstrated in being faithful to Jesus all the way to the end of your life or His return. So you may be asking this question, you know what, I've been hearing about ex-evangelicals, it seems like every three to six months there's another pastor who's walked away from the Christian faith.

[ 26 : 18 ] What about them? What do you think about them, Pastor Mike? I've come to the conclusion that they were likely not Christians to begin with.

Because the work of God's Spirit in regenerating someone's heart in the justifying grace of God is irrevocable. Genuine faith perseveres all the way to the end.

And that's what you're going to hear in the book of Hebrews over and over again. It's called up to something. Now let me just make one comment here. If you find yourself in a situation, maybe you've grown up in the church and you're asking the question, do I believe all this stuff?

Maybe you're reflecting on some things and you're like, have you heard the word deconstructing the faith phrase? This is a very helpful book if you're in that situation. It's called Before You Lose Your Faith.

We've got four other copies at the Connect Desk out there. I read this two years ago. This would be very helpful for anyone in the room who is like, is this true? Is this Christianity thing true?

[ 27 : 32 ] This is a great book to read. Come find me after the service if that's you. Here's what's happening in 2, 1 through 4. It's a lesser to greater argument warning us not to drift.

Who likes greater than, less than, or equal to? I love it in elementary school. I loved it! So you tell me, who's greater?

The message of the gospel or the message of Moses? The gospel! Because the gospel saves. Greater than, less than, or equal to. The messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ or angels?

The Lord Jesus Christ. What is the greater retribution? Rejection of the son or rejection of Moses? It's rejection of the son. And so this lesser to greater argument, well, it's a prognosis of what will happen if you've professed Christ and then you go full-fledged apostasy.

Serious business. the prognosis. Anybody in the room looking for a little hope at this point?

[ 28 : 53 ] maybe you're sitting in your pew like, good doctor, would you prescribe something, please, by which, by which I can assure myself that I will not fall away.

doctor, Lord Jesus, would you please prescribe something to me so that I won't drift, that I won't trample you underfoot, that I won't reject you, that I won't fall away from you, would you please give me something?

And he does. It's in verse 1. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard. If the diagnosis is drift, it's neglect, and with the possibility of this early onset apostasy, if that's what the diagnosis is, if it's drifting from Christ, do you know what the prescription is?

pay much closer attention to Christ. Draw near to him. Your great salvation. It's drift prevention.

[ 30 : 22 ] He is our drift prevention. It's the opposite of neglect. It's at the heart of holding fast to Jesus all the way to the end.

It's fixing your eyes on him, paying much closer attention to him. Let me just point out three things. What we have heard. We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.

The what we have heard is the gospel of Jesus Christ, this great salvation. He is the message, the Son, the radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of God's nature.

He humbled himself, taking on flesh. He offered himself on the cross, a sacrifice to pay for our sins once and for all, purifying us from sins.

And then he sat down at the right hand of God. This is the gospel. This is the good news. It's like a priceless diamond. I just happen to have a priceless diamond with me.

[ 31 : 25 ] I brought it here under lock and key. It's worth trillions. See that? Don't rush the pulpit. Do you know what makes a diamond valuable?

It's rare. It's unique. It's useful. It's the hardest substance on earth naturally.

That's why you have diamond-tipped cutting blades. And it's beautiful. It refracts light and glorious splendor.

You know, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest diamond of all. It's rare. Who else do you know that is totally God and totally man and one person?

That's rare. It's useful. Not for cutting hard substances. What the gospel does, it delivers us from our sin. It rescues us.

[ 32 : 33 ] It's the message of salvation. There's nothing else. There's no other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved. And it's beautiful. The gospel is beautiful.

It's God's grace on display. Him loving sinners in their sin. What a beautiful, beautiful thing. What this gospel is, it calls for paying careful attention to it.

We don't want to devalue it. We don't want to neglect it, drift from it. We're to pay much closer attention to it.

It's the opposite of neglect. It's the opposite of drifting away. Have you ever seen a jeweler examining diamonds?

Pulls out that black monocle magnifier and he's examining a diamond. He's looking at the clarity of it.

[ 33 : 47 ] He's looking at the cut on it. He's looking at the carat size. He's looking at the color. And when they all match up, he's like, wow! Now, that's a diamond.

It's a beauty. It's incredible worth. What we're being called to do here, and paying close attention to the gospel message, this great salvation, is to make our hearts happy in Jesus.

It's to treasure him. It's to treasure Christ and what he has done. To delight in him, to gaze frequently in an unrushed fashion upon Christ and his finished work.

That's the glory of this message. You know what? We live in a over-hurried, over-extended rush culture.

And what we're being called upon to is to gaze upon the greatness of our salvation in Christ frequently in an unrushed fashion.

[ 35 : 00 ] This is the prescription. This is what wards off drift and neglect. You may be asking, how do I do that?

How do I pay much more closer attention to this message of salvation? Well, you don't look inside yourself. You don't look for it in an experience.

You gaze upon the glory of the Son in the pages of Scripture. That's where you will pay close attention to Jesus. In this book, if you haven't started reading through the book of Hebrews, I would encourage you to for one reason, the glory of the Son.

Again and again and again we are given these glimpses of the glory of the Son. It is a, it makes your heart happy in Jesus.

It will help you treasure Him. This morning I was in the book of Revelation. I had my socks blown off because of the glory of Jesus in chapter one.

[ 36 : 11 ] The Gospels, these are glimpse after glimpse of the Son in action where you can gaze upon His glory and be amazed.

Treasure Him. Pay close attention to Him. What is He doing? What is He saying? How is He interacting with people? That's your King. It's finding a time.

It's finding a place. It's having a plan and it's having a goal. And the goal, when you look to gaze upon Jesus, is to glory in Jesus, is to delight in Him.

We must pay careful attention to this gospel message with which we've heard again and again.

There's one word in verse one I just want you to see.

It's the word must. therefore, we must pay much closer attention. It's not a maybe.

[ 37 : 20 ] It's not a suggestion. It's a must. Do you not want to drift? Do you not want to neglect this great salvation in the sun?

You must pay much closer attention to what we've heard about Him. It's God's prescription to ward off early onset apostasy.

Do you know how to keep from drifting from Christ and neglecting Him? Big daily doses of Jesus. Big daily doses of Jesus. Don't drift from Him. Stake your life upon Him. Pay careful attention to Him. Here you are in God's examination room. The diagnosis we've seen this morning is one of unbelief.

[ 38 : 29 ] Drift, negligence of the sun, moves into falling away, trampling Him underfoot, rejecting Him wholesale. We don't want that. The prognosis is very sober.

When this kind of drift and negligence goes unchecked, unheeded, you don't listen to the doctor of your soul, there's no escape from the wrath to come.

God will come. And for those who've professed faith in Christ, who persist in their rejection of Christ, they were likely never Christians to begin with.

But the prescription, whether you are a non-Christian in the room, you need to treasure Jesus. And if you're a Christian in the room, you need to treasure Jesus.

it's to pay much closer attention to this great salvation in the Son that he, I mean, we celebrated at the table this morning.

[ 39 : 34 ] He gave himself for us. He died for you. Brothers and sisters, where are you at?

will you heed God's word? Will you stop drifting from the Son and start staking your life on him?

It's what we call around here treasuring Jesus above all else. All the way, all the way, all the way to the end.

Will you pray with me? Father God, would you pour out your spirit upon us that we would see the glory of the Son throughout the pages of Scripture, that you would wow us, that we would treasure the gospel diamond, and that we would press on out of joy in Jesus, even if that means suffering, even if that means hardship.

God, unite us around the Son. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I