

Don't Let It Slip Away

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[0 : 00] So the past couple of weeks have been an introduction into a letter that firmly establishes the superiority of Jesus as the mediator of a greater covenant between God and man.

As we covered at the outset of chapter one, God took the initiative to reveal himself at many times and in many ways to his people. And after God brought them out of Egypt, known as the Exodus, he established a covenant with them through Moses.

And for hundreds of years, God's people operated under the old covenant system. They had daily sacrifices for sins, either intentional sin, the premeditated sins, or the unintentional, the ones that they committed and realized later that they had committed.

You had voluntary sacrifices of burnt offerings and grain offerings and peace offerings. There were seven annual feasts that took place. Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement.

And the Feast of Tabernacles. Day in and day out, year in and year out, God's people attempted to operate under the law. And day in and day out, year in and year out, they realized they could not perfectly keep it.

[1 : 33] Thus God sent his son as the superior revelation of himself to establish a new covenant. And as such, he's a greater messenger than the angels who delivered the law to his people.

Now we pick up in Hebrews 2, verse 1. Excuse me. 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.

With the reality of Jesus' superiority over all things that the Jewish people held dear and revered for hundreds of years, the writer is expressing a deep concern for his audience, that they would take to heart the very things that have been revealed through the Son.

[3 : 04] We must pay much closer attention, is what he's saying. We must pay attention to the detail, to the commands, and seek to live it out, is ultimately what he's expressing in this verse.

There's concern that the audience will go down the same path that the Jewish leaders did while Jesus was still on the earth. Remember in John 5, verses 39 and 40, where Jesus confronting the Jewish leadership, he says, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. Jesus rightly pointed out that the Jewish leaders who were very familiar with the revelation of God in the Old Testament were refusing to follow where it was clearly leading them to him.

The writer of Hebrews is concerned that those who have been exposed to the greater revelation of God, that is Jesus Christ, they risk drifting away from him if they're not actively attentive to his words and respond accordingly.

This would be like a boat sailing past warning signs to meet destruction and ruin on a rocky shore. The receivers of the teaching of Jesus Christ are in danger of disastrous consequences if they do not pay attention to the dire reality that awaits those who ignore it.

[4 : 43] The writer of Hebrews is on to something. He said, look, I can tell you, I can wax eloquent theology and teach you and tell you these things, but the reality is if you do not pay attention, it's not going to end well for you.

In his commentary on Hebrews, Charles Spurgeon remarked of this passage, basically saying, do not let them be like the driftwood which goes floating down the stream.

Don't just let them drift away and be gone away from the teaching. Ladies and gentlemen, there is an urgency in the message that must not be ignored.

For hundreds of years of history, God used his prophets to proclaim the coming Messiah. Now that he has come, his message must be heard and taken seriously.

Oh, excuse me, a catch? Taken seriously. You can laugh, it's okay. Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

[5 : 53] It's prudent to hear the words of Jesus, but not just to listen. They hear my voice and they follow me. Matthew 7.24, which I can read for us earlier, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

It's not simply hearing the word of God. It's not simply hearing God's revelation that is sufficient, but it is doing.

It is acting on what we are being told to do. We must be listening and actively following our Savior. He's the good shepherd. We're the sheep.

He's the good shepherd. We're to follow him and not let the words of life pass us by. And it's not only detrimental to us, but also to those whom the Lord puts in our path.

In Romans 10.14, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

[6 : 58] And how are they to hear without someone preaching? The reality in the New Testament, and I could take you to verse after verse after verse, but it's not the point of this message, is that we are the light of the world.

We are reflecting Jesus. We are light in the world. We are to be showing the love of Christ through our actions and our activities. I mean, that was what James was about, right?

I mean, it was about faith and action. It was about showing forth the faith that you have through what you do in the community you live in, with the people you engage in with day in and day out.

Matthew 28, 19, and 20, the Great Commission. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

How can we possibly be prepared to teach anybody anything if we are not paying close attention to the things that we have heard?

[8 : 11] The author of Hebrews, he'll address later in the letter the importance of believers to be teachers of the Word. But for now, we cannot ignore the importance of those who possess the knowledge of the message from the Son.

They are the ones who must pass it on. It's a very important aspect. Yes, it can be verbally sharing the Word of God.

It can be verbally sharing the Gospel message. It could also just be a presence, living it, showing the love of Jesus with no strings attached.

So we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, because Jesus is the superior revelation of God.

Verse 2, The author here continues his plea to the Jewish people that he's writing to, who may be intellectually convinced of the Gospel, but have not received it themselves.

[9 : 27] They know the Old Testament Scripture better than anyone. They know that every transgression and disobedience has been and will be punished by God.

They know the prophecies point to Jesus as the deliverer from that punishment, yet they resist the need to repent of their sins and call on Him for salvation.

The warnings are there in their own law of what will happen if they are not obedient. I've been going through this intense Bible listening plan to start out the year, doing pretty good, almost through day 6, so today's 16th would be day 16 today, and it's about an hour of listening each day, so I'm basically up to Joshua now.

But I was just listening through Deuteronomy, and oh my word, God is, He makes no bones about it. He doesn't hide His displeasure with disobedience. He makes it very clear.

If you want to see it for yourself, you read from Deuteronomy 28 and following, where God says, what will happen to those people who disobey and do not keep the law of the covenant?

[10 : 52] And I'll tell you this, it's not good. He promises retribution. He promises action. And that's going to be the case for everybody.

Perhaps you've come here today in the same boat as these, those who intellectually assent to the superiority of Jesus, but don't want to call on Him for salvation. Maybe that's you today.

Or it's someone you know. You agree that Jesus is the Christ, He's the Savior of the world, He's one who's paid our sin debt on the cross and raised again after being in the grave for three days.

And while you've made sense of this in your mind, you have not made the commitment with your life. Like a man who believes a boat will hold him, but who will not get into it when he needs to.

I question whether a boat will hold me or not, but it's probably because I don't like water. It could be also because I'm a fairly rotund individual.

[11 : 58] Maybe both. But the reality is, I know that a boat will hold me. And if I need to get into it, I need to jump into it. If you know who Jesus is, God in the flesh, you know why He took on flesh to live among us, to be sacrificed on the cross for our sins, it's not enough to just know.

Yes, this makes sense. Yes, I understand this. But no, I don't want to do anything about it. John MacArthur tells of an experience that he had.

I found it quite, I don't know, sad? I'll share it with you. It's a little long, so please bear with me. He says, I will never forget the lady who came into my office one day, informed me she was a prostitute, and said, I need help.

I'm desperate. After presenting the claims of Christ to her, I said, would you like to confess Jesus Christ as your Lord? Yes, she replied.

I've had it. She was at the bottom and knew it. So she prayed a prayer and seemingly invited Christ into her life. I said, now I want you to do something.

[13 : 17] Do you have your little book with you that has the names of all your contacts? When she replied that she did, I suggested, let's take a match and burn it right now. Looking surprised, she responded, what do you mean?

Just what I said, I explained. If you really met Jesus Christ as your Lord, if you really accepted his forgiveness and are going to live for him, let's burn that book and celebrate your new birth right now and just praise the Lord.

But it's worth a lot of money, a lot of money, she objected. I said, I'm sure it is. Putting the book back in her purse and looking at me in the eye, she said, I don't want to burn my book.

I guess I really don't want Jesus, do I? And she laughed. There are many people who know the truth and stand on the edge of the right decision but never make it.

Because they realize when you make a decision to commit your life to Jesus, you call on him for salvation and you seek to live and follow him to live after the ways that he did and the ways he commands and teaches us to do so, we realize real quickly that there is a tremendous sacrifice that we have to make.

[14 : 46] It is not the same for everybody as to what needs to be sacrificed. It's not the same to everybody as to how that sacrifice looks or how living out Christ-likeness looks in your life and how easy or hard one thing or another might be.

But the reality is when we come to him realizing we are sinners, we have been, we offend a holy God and we are in need to be saved from the penalty of our sin which is death and separation forever.

we come realizing that we can't, if the way we're living before Christ is offensive to him, we can't expect to live the same way after coming to know him.

He has expectations. He has commands. He has expectations for his people. And a lot of the times those expectations aren't what naturally come to us.

things like consider others as more important than yourselves. Humility of mind. Sacrificing your wants and desires for the sake of other people.

[16 : 04] I'd like you to turn to Romans chapter 10 if you will. We're going to be in Romans for a couple passages. Romans 10 verses 11 through 13.

We'll start in verse 8. Excuse me. But what does it say? The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith that we proclaim.

Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

For the scripture says everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Folks, the day is coming when we'll have to stand before God.

[17 : 23] And the Bible tells us if our name is not written in the book of life we will receive the due punishment for our sins. Which if you want to know what that is God doesn't hide that either.

You can go back to the book of Revelation and read in chapter 20 what takes place at the great white throne. That anybody whose name was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire forever.

Which by the way was not prepared for mankind. It was prepared for Satan and his angels his demons who followed after him. But we receive the same punishment when we reject Jesus.

We reject God and walk in our own way. So when we stand before him we're not written in the book of life that is what we will receive. It's the due punishment for our sin.

Yet Paul tells us here in Romans that we will not be put to shame when we call on Jesus for salvation. This was such an important truth to Paul and it was the deepest desire of his heart.

[18 : 34] Turn back to Romans 9 real quick. Romans 9 verse 1 through 3 So the first eight chapters of Romans Paul has done an exquisite job doing a deep theological dive into the gospel and what it is and what it means and I mean it's really it's an intense book.

But verses 1 through 3 of chapter 9 reveals the heart of the messenger. He says I am speaking the truth in Christ.

I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul knows the gospel very clearly. He understands what happens when somebody dies without Christ and what their eternity looks like.

and his heart's desire is for his countrymen to come to know Jesus. He said I wish I could go to the lake of fire so that my countrymen could be saved.

[20 : 19] That's deep. That's a deep consideration for someone else. Where are you at?

I mean what is your concern for your neighbor for your family members for your coworkers for your classmates whoever who day in and day out you engage with and interact with and you know when they walk out the door or you walk away from them might not ever see them again.

If they died their eternity is separated from God. Does your heart break the way the Apostle Paul's did?

And by the way the Apostle Paul tells us in Corinthians be imitators of me as I am of Christ and you can go in the Gospels and you can see Jesus' broken heart for his people who were rejecting him.

So as you're listening to this sermon my plea to you is not to walk away without making a decision about what you will do with the claims about this man called Jesus.

[21 : 47] God in the flesh who died for the sins of the world. John 3.16-18 says for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

Hebrews 2.3-4 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.

The truth of Jesus who he is and what he accomplished is laid out for us in the four gospels. The eyewitnesses of those events spread the message which is recorded for us in the book of Acts.

The questions being asked today are do you believe Jesus is the son of God who took the penalty for your sin on the cross and are you ready to commit to him as Lord and Savior?

[23 : 23] That's a question those are two questions everybody must answer for themselves. let's pray. Father God I thank you for your word.

I thank you for Jesus Christ. I thank you for his life compassion and love and concern. I thank you for his sacrifice on the cross.

Lord I thank you for this today in the book of Hebrews the clear desire of the author to see the Jewish people he was writing to come to Jesus and commit to him not to ignore this revelation but to realize the old covenant the old law is done away and Jesus is the mediator he's the initiator of a new greater covenant initiated and made possible by the shedding of his blood and I pray Lord for anybody here today or at home who's listening in Lord I pray that they would seriously consider and make a decision about these questions do they really believe Jesus is God in the flesh who paid the penalty for their sins and if so Lord are they ready to commit to you Lord I pray that each and every one of us here would meditate and think on these questions answer them for ourselves

Lord and consider what it means when we do indeed commit our lives to Jesus as Lord I pray in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ Amen