

How shall we escape?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 December 2014

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Let's 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, and so on. The heading in the ESV, in this chapter, is Warning Against Neglecting Salvation.

Now, we know that in life we're always facing warnings. Just recently, with regard to this weather bomb that came, was supposed to have hit us last week, there were all kinds of warnings, and throughout the country people were putting up flood defences and such like, because people were listening to, heeding the warning, and taking action about it.

Sometimes you'll be in a place, and you're going walking, and there are beautiful sands, but sometimes you see there a notice which warns that there are quicksands, or that there's not to go any further, that these sands are dangerous.

You begin to sink in them. And there are loads of circumstances in life where we're always getting warnings. Now, I don't know whether it is the natural rebel that's within us, but very often there's a reaction against a warning.

[1 : 3 8] Sometimes we heed a warning, sometimes we don't. See, we've always got a choice. Whenever you come across a warning, or whenever a warning is given to you, you have two options.

Either listen to it, take heed, do what you're told to do, or else ignore it, and kind of say, well, I hope it will help.

It won't be as bad as they say. It might not work like that. And so there's often people take the chance and say, ah, it doesn't matter. I'm not going to pay any attention.

Well, here we're very clearly told we have warnings set out before us. And we've got to listen to what is being said.

That's what we're told here. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest, here's the warning, lest we drift away from it.

[2 : 3 4] And I think this is very important for us to lay hold upon. Because when we come to the Word of God, whether it is privately or publicly, as we do tonight, it is vital that we listen to what is being said.

In fact, this listening is an act of will. It is something that we actually have to do. See, it's very easy to come to church and just to sit and allow the words just to drift by.

Well, that's not what we're told to do here. This is an act of will. This is where we have to, with deliberate attention and focus, heed what is being said in the Word.

So that is why it is very, very important that we listen to what is being said. Therefore, we must pay closer attention, close attention to what we have heard.

And I think we all know that when we come to God's house, that it's very easy for us to let God's Word drift away from us.

- [3 : 46] Sometimes we come, I know that there are times, sometimes we can have a very, very busy week, and you come to church, and maybe it's the gathering of a lot of people, but it's very easy to become drowsy, or it's very easy to daydream.
- I think church must be one of the easiest places in the world to daydream, to begin to think about this and that. And daydreaming isn't just the activity of the young.
- I'm sure the oldest person in here that you daydream as well. Because sometimes we think daydreaming belongs to youth, and you're thinking about things you're going to do and plans and futures and all that.
- We all still daydream. And it's amazing how often when we come to church that we begin to listen, and within a very short time, that's as we're gone.
- And we're away with this or away with that. Sometimes we begin to worry about something. Sometimes we plan. Maybe there's already some of you planning what you're going to do this week or later on.
- [4 : 51] That's the way it operates. And we've always got to remember that there's somebody present who does not want you to listen, and that's Satan. We must never, ever dismiss his wiles and his influence and his power.
- Because Satan knows what God's Word says, and God's Word says this, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.
- So it's part of Satan's strategy to stop you listening to God's Word. Because he knows that this is where faith comes. And that's the last thing he wants to happen in your life.
- He does not want you to come to faith in Jesus Christ. So that is why it talks about attention. It talks about earnest heed.
- It talks about, that's why I said, it's an act of the will. So that when we come to church, we mustn't come with just sort of plonk ourselves down, sort of saying, well, that's me going to, yeah, if it's really interesting, I'll focus in.
- [5 : 55] Otherwise, unless the minister really grabs my attention, that's me out of it. I'll just, I might take something. No, we're told here, this has got to be deliberate, deliberate, focus. This is an act of will.
- This is where we have to engage. Because it's a living, and through God, that's speaking to us. And so that's what we're being told here.
- And we're told, therefore, we must pay closer attention to what we have heard. And of course, this is where all the problems begin.
- If you're a Christian, the problems of backsliding begin by not paying attention, by not taking heed, by not listening, by not doing.
- Because listening and doing go together. And I'm sure any person who has struggled along in life, any person who has hit a dip in their Christian faith, that one of the things that they will always say is that my own private devotion sort of got pushed aside.
- [7 : 03] You know this, it's actually quite hard to really backslide if every day you read God's word and meditate a little on it and seek the Lord in prayer.
- I tell you, it's actually quite hard to really backslide. Yes, we're all capable of backsliding at various degrees, but to go into a real bad condition of backsliding, it's actually really difficult to do that.
- If every single day we take a wee bit of time to read a little of God's word, to study God's word, to meditate upon what it is saying, and to really engage with the Lord in prayer.
- But if we neglect these things, if day after day after day, if not at the end of one day, but at the end of several days or at the end of a few weeks you find yourself saying, I don't know when I last opened the Bible.

I don't know when I last really spoke to the Lord. That's not, we're not talking about there might be a quick Lord help me here or there, but actually taking time to be with the Lord.

[8 : 15] And that is so often where the problems begin. And that's what we're being told here. We've got to pay attention to the word lest we drift from it.

And when we begin to drift from the word, we will begin to drift. The two things go hand in hand, side by side, together. The more we drift from the word, the more we will begin to drift.

And when we begin to drift, we begin to backslide. And so it goes. And if we begin to backslide, there is no easy fix.

It doesn't just happen. I know that the Lord can. He can just do something, just instantly bring us back. But very often, if you're here, you might be here tonight, and you might be saying to yourself, you know, I am actually quite far away.

And part of the problem is, you know, that it's going to require a fair bit of effort to get back. You know where you should be, you know where you are, you know where you should be, and you know that it's going to be quite difficult.

[9 : 27] Because you're going to have to claw your way back. It's just, it's not, there is no easy fix. But you've just got to begin again with the Lord, with His Word, seeking His face, working your way back.

But it's worth it. It's worth it all. But again, let me say, if you are here and you do not know the Lord Jesus, do not let this word slip.

The one thing I'll say is, is God is speaking to us all. God speaks to us in various ways. Primarily, this is where God speaks in His Word. But He also speaks to us in His providence.

And when God speaks in His providence, that's in the events and the circumstances that have occurred within our lives. God is speaking because it is His providence.

And God deals with us in these things. And one or other, in all the events and circumstances that happen in life, one of two things is happening.

[10 : 34] We're either softening or hardening. Tonight, you're either softening or hardening under God's Word. When you look back over your life over all the years, however long these years may be, there have been many things that have happened in your life and in your family's life and in your friend, amongst your friends and contemporaries and all these things where things have happened that have shaken you.

And God speaks to us in and through these things along with the Word. And we've always got to ask ourselves, what am I doing with these things?

Am I harder tonight than I was some years back? or am I softer? Am I closer to the Lord or am I further away?

Was there a day when I sat under the Word and my heart melted and Jesus seemed so close and I wanted to be a Christian? But now, my heart is like Flint.

Still coming to church, that's good. Still coming to church, but, ah, it's all so far away. It doesn't really touch me. It passes me by. These are solemn, searching things.

[11 : 54] Well, that's what the Word is saying here. Do not let, lest do, pay attention to these things, lest we drift from it. That's what, what is being said.

Maybe tonight, might be some who are genuinely interested in salvation. But right now, there's an awful lot of things happening in your life. You're looking out ahead and there are certain things that you need to see to and see to, and you're saying to yourself, you know, once I get this over, see if I make it till next summer, I'll begin to sort things out.

There's too much going on at the moment. Well, what you've got to remember is this, that the world will promise you everything. but you know, the world doesn't have one solidly thing for your soul.

And your soul is more precious than anything you possess, anything you could hope to achieve, anything that the world has. It's of more value than the whole world put together.

Jesus said that. So, remember, the world has nothing for your soul. And when you come to die, remember that, that the world has nothing for your soul.

[13 : 21] Only the Lord Jesus has. And that's why we're told, don't let this drift, don't let these things escape your attention. And then, we see about this message that was declared by angels.

A lot of people find difficulty and problems with that, and of course, to a certain extent there is. Because you say to yourself, well, surely the message, the word, was delivered first and foremost.

Was it not the word? This is, of course, dealing with the old, with the Jewish Christians and going right back into the time of the law of Moses and such like, and contrasting the superiority of Christ to the angels, to Moses, all these things.

Well, yes, God was the one, the Lord was the one who gave the law. But when you go to Deuteronomy, you read that the Lord was, that accompanying the Lord, there were, there were so many angels.

You read about it in Deuteronomy. Again, Stephen talking about it in Acts chapter 7. So there seems to be this accompaniment of angels that are present as well. But the thing is this, that at the end of the day, the great message that has been given is the message of Jesus Christ.

[14 : 35] And then comes this question, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? And of course, this is a great salvation, first and foremost, because we have a great Savior.

That's what we were remembering today was the death of our Savior. Our Savior is the greatest person that ever, ever, ever came into this, walked this world.

There's nobody ever, ever like him. And yet the amazing thing as we heard this morning, that when the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, it was almost as if he slipped in unnoticed, apart from some wise men who were able to study things and also the message that was given to the shepherds.

It's as if he slipped in, but his glory, the glory, his own essential glory was veiled so that the world couldn't see, the world didn't notice. This was, this is the Son of God.

And when Jesus grew up, he just grew up like any other boy. In Nazareth, he was obviously, tells us, that he grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man, which really says that he was, which we would expect, he was really an exemplary young boy growing up so that he found favor, yes, obviously with God, but also with people.

[16 : 02] People as they met with Jesus and as he grew up and as he learned and as he worked and he worked his way up from childhood into adulthood, people were saying at that time, lovely young man, this Jesus.

And so he should be, but nobody knew at that point that he, here is, the Messiah. There was this ordinariness about Jesus. So different to what we look on today.

You know, we're so used, we don't so much see it here, but we see it on our television screens whenever there's any sort of inauguration or say a presidency or for the queen, the royalty, there's always this sense of grandeur.

Film stars, red carpet treatment, you see the star to the Olympic Games, World Cup, there's all this razzmatazz and everything's so spectacular. And we're used to seeing that sort of thing.

But here's Jesus, he just, it's like he slips in, born in an outhouse. And so it's very easy for people to lose sight and not grasp the greatness of the Savior.

[17 : 12] But you know, if we go to Revelation, it gives us a few little glimpses of who this Jesus is. And it tells us in Revelation that this description that John was given of Jesus, that he had eyes as a flame of fire.

That's an amazing thought. Eyes that were penetrating in everywhere. nothing in this universe hidden from the glare, the searching power of his eye.

There's nothing hidden in the whole universe. Tells us that he has feet like brass that burned in a furnace. Again, we have this idea there of very often people see in this picture of fire and the brass representing judgment.

And you think back to the temple, the tabernacle and the altar there, the altar of brass. First thing you would see as you come into the temple was there. This was a place where sacrifice was made for sin.

The sacrifice was consumed on the altar. And of course, Jesus became, that's what we're remembering today, Jesus became that sacrifice. The fire consumed Jesus.

[18 : 29] But you know the amazing thing is this? Jesus also consumed the fire. Works both ways. The fire consumed Jesus on the cross while he consumed the fire of God's wrath for us.

He extinguished God's wrath for us so that God's wrath will never burn against us. That's one of the things Jesus has done.

He has turned the wrath away. That is what is involved in the whole propitiation is that particular aspect of his work turning God's wrath away from us.

Then again in that picture that we have in Revelation it tells us here that voice his voice sounded like many waters. That's like a huge waterfall cascading.

If you've ever stood beside a massive waterfall and tried to speak to somebody it's impossible. You can shout and shout and the other person can't hear you.

[19 : 37] The noise of the water is so extraordinary. Maybe some of you have been to Niagara Falls it's one of the places I would love to go to see just this massive volume of what I could imagine the noise must be quite extraordinary.

Well this is a description that is given of the voice of Jesus. And you know people think very little of the Lord Jesus because they look at the babe of Bethlehem it tells us that there's going to come a day when he is going to give a shout to when he returns isn't it an amazing thing?

I would love to know what the voice was like at the very beginning when God said let there be was it a whisper was it audible was it a voice like the voice of many waters when at the creation let there be light let there let there one after another here was this voice coming and his face shone with the brilliance of the sun you and I can't look directly into the sun midday but your eye try and focus on it blinding that's who Jesus is Saul of Tarshish got a glimpse of the risen Jesus and he fell down blind couldn't look at the glaring brilliance of him John who was given this vision he fell down at the feet of Jesus as one dead Jesus put his hand on him and said fear not that's the glory of the Jesus who is the saviour no wonder it's a great salvation because this is the great saviour who came into this world but it's a great salvation because of the incredible cost that was paid tonight this salvation costs nothing for you and for me supposing tonight we were told right in order to be saved you have to pay the church one hundred thousand pounds

I reckon people would be saving up they would be they would be have opened as whenever they could a direct debit or whatever trying to pay up that money as fast as they could if you were told tonight you know you've got to walk right around the world if you walk right around the world you will gain eternal life I reckon this world would be full of people walking all the way around but we don't have to do anything because all the doing has been done and the great invitation is there is to come you see salvation is a gift you and I do not have what could pay for that we don't have the ability we don't have the resources we are we're bankrupt our pockets are empty when it comes to what God demands God demands the perfection of the law we cannot do it we can't fulfill we have to say the Lord sorry I'm bankrupt can't do the Lord says it's all right

I've sent my son he's come to do what you can't do and all he wants of you is to receive I have a gift for you God the Father is saying to you tonight I have a gift for you and that gift is eternal life and that gift is in and through my son Jesus Christ all you have to do is receive that gift that's what you do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved so what are you saying do you say to yourself no don't want that or are you saying yeshah I'll think I'll think about that later on not too sure about that well this is what this is what our word says how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation here is this great salvation that we were remembering today this great salvation from by this great savior remember we saw for just highlighted for a few moments something given to us in revelation about who this

[24 : 03] Jesus is he left the glory that was his coming down into this world every step he took was downward into Bethlehem down into the temptation into a world where he was maliciously accused all the time I see that Jesus just a glutton see that Jesus he's always he's always at the wine see that Jesus see the miracles he performs it's by the power of the devil that's what they were saying everywhere he went the tongues were wagging misrepresented falsely accused people attacked him wherever he went down down down down all the way to Gethsemane all the way to the trial all the way to the cross all the way to the grave down down down down down for you and for me and I can't think of anything worse than to say to the God the Father who has sent his son Jesus

Christ into this world no thanks because if you reject that's what you're doing you're saying no thanks but the word here is how shall we escape if we neglect in other words how how shall we escape God's judgment if we ignore or forget about or just neglect this salvation and you notice there's no answer because there's none to give if we neglect this salvation there is nothing else that's solemn there is no plan B God doesn't anywhere from Genesis to Revelation say well I have sent my son into this world and whosoever believes in him will have eternal life but there's also another way no there isn't there is no other way there is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved that's what the Bible says so you see it's the most solemn thing in the whole wide world to neglect this salvation

I believe if hell could be listened to tonight there would be many a soul in hell and they would be saying like the rich man hey don't neglect your salvation I did I always intended to do something about it but I neglected it then one day I had no more opportunity today today if you hear his voice don't harden your heart and I want us to lay hold upon this because we're dealing here with life and death it is it is there is nothing more important in the whole wide world and I believe so many people who have sat under the gospel always intended to do something about it I don't think there's one person in here tonight who's saying to themselves you know I have no intention ever ever ever in my life of ever wanting to get right with God in

Jesus Christ if any person in here tonight thought like that I would be really shocked because I don't think you'd be here I don't think for one moment you'd be here if you never ever intended ever to get right I think everybody intends to get right with God one day but that's a problem the one day if you're putting this to this one day you're actually neglecting because it's now now is the appointed time now is the day of salvation please don't go out of here tonight neglecting this great salvation let us pray Lord our God we pray that the seriousness and the solemnity of this gospel may indeed be brought into our own heart may we deal quietly in our own heart with you and may we come to discover that salvation is a gift and that you are the giver give us oh

Lord the prayer where we will go to you and say Lord please open my heart open my heart that I might receive Jesus as saviour we pray that we might come by the way of faith seeking you with all our heart we pray to bless us and guide us keep each one of us on the right way and have mercy upon us cleansing us from our every sin in Jesus name amen our concluding psalm is psalm 37 psalm 37 and we'll sing from verse 35 to the end psalm 37 from verse 35 to the end psalm 37 psalm 37 verse 35 I saw the wicked great in power spread like a green bay tree he passed yea was not him I sought but found he could not be mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness cause had surely of this man the latter end is peace but those men that transgressors are shall be destroyed together the latter end of wicked men shall be cut off forever but the salvation of the just is from the Lord above he in the time of their distress their stay and strength doth prove always remember that the salvation is from the Lord above it's not something we can find in ourselves it is something we find in him and from him psalm 37 verses 35 to the end on the tuner's sheffield i saw the wicked great in power i saw the wicked great in fire spread like a green pit tree he passed he found

[30 : 47] What if I saw, but found he could not meet? Mark that the perfect and me, O the man of uprightness, Because the assuring of this man, the latter end is peace.

But those men that transgressors are, shall we destroy together?

The latter end of wicked men shall be cut off for ever.

But the salvation of the just is from the Lord above.

He in the time of their distress, their stay abstracted through.

[32 : 16] The Lord shall help and heal, he shall then free and save.

From wicked men, because in him their confidence they have.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.