



D-Group Material for January 24, 2024

Hebrews 2:1-18

As a reminder, take some time to read and reread the passage. Make note of any questions you have and watch out for major themes and ideas as well as anything that stands out to you as useful.

So far in Hebrews, we have seen that Jesus is the better message **and** the better messenger. The dominant idea from chapter one is that *Jesus is God's superior self-revelation*. He is greater than the prophets. He is greater than the angels. Therefore, He is big enough for us to place our trust in Him. **As you read chapter two, look back at chapter 1 and see how the two chapters present a contrasting and complementary picture of Jesus.**

Chapter one is unimaginably *big*. It begins with Jesus on the throne, and it unpacks the identity of Jesus as the exact imprint of God, radiating His glory. Chapter two, on the other hand, is more personal. It's about the *intimacy* of the incarnation as it explains why this God took on flesh. But before the writer portrays Jesus as man, we are first given a warning: a warning to listen very carefully, lest we **drift away** from the truth. The term used for *drift away* is a nautical term used to describe a ship that had become loose from its moorings and is floating out to sea. To *drift away* is to be lost in the current and to lose sight of where you are and where you're going. This isn't a picture of fighting against the current, but instead, just aimlessly floating along. In the ocean, drifting happens without doing anything at all. I remember playing at the beach with my boys and looking up to see that we, unintentionally, were so far away from where we had entered the water. We were just playing while the current pushed us away. You just look up to find that you're somewhere different. It's the same in life. Drifting happens very easily and imperceptibly, not necessarily as a conscience choice. C.S. Lewis said in the *Screwtape Letters* that "the safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." Many things can lead us to get distracted and drift. **What are some examples that you have seen?**

So how do we avoid the danger of spiritual drift? We *pay attention* "all the more to what we have heard." Another translation says that we *must pay most careful attention*. While drifting may be passive, *these* words stand in contrast to that. *Paying attention* is active and urgent. It's a reminder to hear and to do. (see James 1:22-25). The importance of *hearing and doing God's Word* pervades Scripture. Look at Romans 10:17 as an example. Hearing will be an important theme over the next few chapters of Hebrews as well (3:15-16). **What is the truth that we have heard? What is the message and what are some practical ways that we can pay careful attention to it?**

This warning against drifting away is a warning to stay vigilant; to develop perseverance and to stand firm by dropping the anchor of our souls into the deep waters of the Word of God. **What role does doctrine or right belief have in helping us fight spiritual drift? What about our actions? How could spiritual disciplines (prayer, bible reading, memorization, fasting, journaling, etc.) help?**

How does being involved in the local church help us avoid spiritual drift, and how can you help others?

How do you see culture tempting the church to make concessions and to drift spiritually?

In Verse 5 and onward, the writer of Hebrews begins to tell us more about this message to which we are to pay attention by explaining how God became a man to save human beings; how Jesus, while fully God (as seen in chapter 1), is also the ultimate and perfect *man*, able therefore to represent us before God. To do this, the author first takes a moment to shift the focus to us: who we are and what we were made to be and do. ***What do verses 6-8 tell us about humanity?***

The phrase “you have crowned him” calls to mind Gen 1:26 where we are told that we are made in God’s image. Humanity was made for a purpose: to bear God’s image and to reflect His glory. We were also given authority and dominion over creation (v8). God made humans to be the guardians, protectors, and rulers of His world. Humans are special among the creation. Each person is made for the purpose of reflecting God’s glory and ruling His world.

How does this quick reminder of the value of human beings help us as we interact with the world? How might this reshape our goals and pursuits in life? How we treat people?

There is some debate as to how the author of Hebrews is using the Psalm that is quoted in this passage. The NIV and NLT interpret it as speaking about humanity in general. Others think the Psalm is telling us something about Jesus *specifically*. I agree with Chad Ragsdale when he says, “I believe that Hebrews wants us to recognize in the psalm both the human condition ***and*** how Jesus enters it.” After this picture of what humanity is made to be, we’re reminded that what we see doesn’t match the expectation. We could spend plenty of time exploring how humanity does not live up to its purpose. We’re fallen. Broken. But into this problem, Jesus has come. Jesus, as a man, is the perfect fulfillment of humanity’s purpose. We see Jesus take *our* position: a position for a time, lower than the angels but now crowned with glory. Even though our hope may be challenged by the things we see in the world around us, our faith tells us to fix our eyes on the victory of Jesus. He is our hero bringing us to glory. He is our liberator freeing us from the bondage of fear of death. He is our high priest making atonement for our sins. ***Take a moment and reflect on verses 10-18. What does this section tell us about the nature of our relationship with Jesus? List everything we learn about Jesus in these verses. Then list everything we learn about ourselves.***

Consider taking a few moments to put verse 10 to memory. It’s such a beautiful and powerful summarization of the work of Jesus.

Here are some questions to think on and possibly discuss with your group:

How does this chapter help us to persevere in our faith and avoid spiritual drift?

Can you think of other verses or phrases in Scripture that capture a summary of the work and ministry of Jesus as beautifully as verse 10 does?

Verse 14 speaks of the power of the devil. How does this verse aid in your understanding of who he is? How does Christ’s victory over the devil affect your view of the enemy?

Verse 15 speaks of the fear of dying. Do you fear death? How does this passage prepare us to handle the inevitability of death? How can Christ’s accomplishments over death calm fears about death?

How does the fact that Jesus had to be like his brothers and sisters comfort you? What are some of the ways that the temptations and sufferings of Jesus could help you in the sufferings and temptations that you face?