

## The Danger of Drifting

### Hebrews 2:1-4

#### I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. The main purpose of Hebrews...is to show how wonderful Jesus is.
- b. The secondary purpose of this book... is to urge believers to advance toward spiritual maturity.
- c. Within the book of Hebrews... there are what are called five warning passages... these passages sound a warning about some kind of spiritual danger.
- d. The warning passages of Hebrews are not directed toward unbelievers... they are directed toward those who believe in Jesus.
- e. The first of these warning passages... is found in these verses.
- f. Notice the terminology used in these four verses... *Hebrews 2:1 (NKJV) "Therefore WE must give the more earnest heed to the things WE have heard, lest WE drift away."* ... *Hebrews 2:3 (NKJV) "How shall WE escape if WE neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to US by those who heard Him."*
- g. The WE and the US in these verses refer to those who believe in Christ ... not to unbelievers.
- h. The phrase... "*How shall WE escape if WE neglect so great a salvation*"... is not directed toward unbelievers... it is directed toward those who believe in Christ.
- i. You cannot neglect something you do not have... lost people cannot neglect salvation... because they don't have salvation.
- j. Lost people can REJECT salvation... but they cannot NEGLECT salvation... because they don't have salvation.

- k. But believers can NEGLECT salvation... believers can neglect the responsibilities of salvation... they can neglect the responsibilities of the Christian life... they can fail to advance in the Christian life... they can fail to invest the time, talents and treasures God gives them into the work of God's Kingdom.
- l. The greatest tragedy in the world...is for a person to reject the good news of Jesus Christ... and the salvation that He freely offers.
- m. The second greatest tragedy in the world ... is for a saved person to neglect the great salvation that he or she has in Christ... to neglect the Christian life...to drift away from God ... to become a careless... negligent ... worldly... uncommitted Christian.
- n. Every Christian needs to heed this warning... because if we are not careful... every Christian is liable to drift away from God.
- o. And, Christians who have drifted need to repent and come back to God...to return to their first love and first devotion for Christ.
- p. I am afraid this is true for so many Christians today... at one time they were close to the Lord... they had joy and peace... they were praying... growing... serving ... and worshipping ... they were active and involved in church life.
- q. But they took their eyes off of Jesus... they began to neglect their Christian life and their Christian responsibilities...they began to get caught up and involved in the world... and in the life that God saved them from ... they have drifted away from the God who has saved them.
- r. If that is true of you... I pray that you will wake up today and ask yourself ... "How did I get here?" ... "What happened to my commitment for Christ?"... and I pray that you will come back to your first love for the Lord Jesus.

- s. Today I want us to see... the cause of drifting... the consequence of drifting... the comeback from drifting.

## **II. THE CAUSE OF DRIFTING-**

- a. Drifting from the Lord happens... when believers forget the greatness of the salvation they have in Christ.
- b. Suppose a car you were riding in plunged off an icy road into a lake ... as you struggle to free yourself... you discover that the seatbelt you are wearing is jammed and won't unlatch... and the car door next to you will not open.
- c. As you frantically try to free yourself... and as the car begins to sink and fill up with water... you realize that you are trapped... you are in a desperate situation... and unless something happens... or someone helps you... you are about to die.
- d. Imagine that just before you are about to go under the water... suddenly a figure appears swimming outside the car door... and that person smashes the car window... reaches in and frees you from the seatbelt.
- e. Then he grabs you by the collar... pulls you free from the car... and swims you to the surface of the water... and to then to the shore saving your life.
- f. Do you think you would ever forget that person... and what they did to save your life?
- g. No, you would never forget that person... you would always remember them ... you would always honor them... you would name one of your children after them... you would tell their story to everyone who would listen... you would be willing to do anything for them.
- h. As Christians before we were saved we were in a far more desperate situation ... than a sinking car.

- i. Before we were saved...we were chained and locked in the cold dark dungeon of our sin against God...a dungeon of our own making.
- j. Though we were physically alive... we were spiritually dead.
- k. We were one heartbeat... one breath... one second away from forever plunging into a lost eternity in hell... forever separated from God.
- l. There was no appeal from our situation ... it was just... we had willingly... many times over... committed sinful rebellion against a Holy God.
- m. We could not free ourselves... and there was no human force... and no spiritual power that could set us free... we were dead and doomed ... in our trespasses and sins.
- n. But then one day... a bright light pierced the darkness of our spiritual dungeon ... one day a figure came to us ... and it was the Lord Jesus Christ.
- o. And the Lord Jesus said to us... take my hand and follow Me... I have paid the debt of your sin and of your trespasses with my own blood.
- p. If you will follow Me... if you will trust in Me... I will set you free from this dungeon ... I will set you free from the just sentence and penalty of your sin... I will save you... I will rescue you.
- q. I will give you eternal life... you will be my child... I will give you a good, clean life in this world... and a home in Heaven.
- r. Do you remember when you gave your life to Christ? ... Do you remember when you trusted in Him? ... Do you remember when He saved you?
- s. Do you remember when you loved Jesus with all of your heart?... Do you remember when there was nothing that you would not do for Jesus?

- t. Do you remember when your love for Christ... burned with a bright passion?
- u. Do you still love Jesus like that? ... Has your love for the One who has saved you grown cold?... Have you left your first love for Jesus? ... Have you drifted away from the Lord?... Have you become cold and indifferent to Him?
- v. The cause of drifting away from the Lord is to lose our first love for Jesus... it is forgetting the greatness of the salvation we have in Christ.
- w. The salvation we have in Christ is great in its preciousness... *1 Peter 1:18-19 (NLT2) "For we know that God paid a ransom to save us... And the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God."*
- x. The salvation we have in Christ is great in its power... when Jesus saved us He changed our life... we were lost and now we are found... we were blind but now we can see... we were dead but now we are alive...and He changed our eternity.
- y. The salvation we have in Christ is great in its permanence... the salvation we have in Christ is a salvation that we will never lose.

The Cause of Drifting

### III. THE CONSEQUENCE OF DRIFTING-

- a. The greatest sin a Christian can commit... is the sin of drifting away from Christ... the sin of becoming cold and indifferent to the One who saved us... and the sin of neglecting and taking for granted the great salvation that we have received.
- b. Sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of a non-Christian... it is worse.
- c. Unbelievers really do not understand the full effect, wickedness and danger of sin... but Christians do.

- d. Christians know that when they sin... they are sinning against the Father... the Son... and the Holy Spirit... and the great salvation which God has given to us by His mercy and grace.
- e. Christians do not lose their salvation when they sin ... but they do lose their joy... they lose the peace they should have... they lose assurance ... they lose power... they lose the sense of God's presence in their life... they lose the close fellowship they should have with God and other believers.
- f. The writer of Hebrews warns that Christians who drift from God ... Christians who wander from God... who neglect the salvation they have received and treat it with indifference... will not escape the chastisement of God.
- g. If you take your salvation for granted... if you fail to love God and live for Him as you should... if you neglect your Christian life and your responsibilities as a believer in Christ... if you just give Jesus lip-service...and live a go through the motions Christian life...you will pay a price.
- h. You will pay a price in this world... and you will give an account to God at the judgment seat of Christ... when the lives of all Christians will be judged for how we lived for the Lord after we were saved.
- i. If you live the neglectful Christian life... you will lose blessings in this world... and you will lose rewards in Heaven.
- j. We must never forget what it took to save us from the penalty of our sin...we must never forget what it took to make our salvation possible.
- k. It took the death of Jesus Christ on the cross to make our salvation possible ... and do you think in response to that... that God is satisfied with us living an uncommitted, worldly and neglectful Christian life... living half the time as if we have never been born again?

- l. *1 Corinthians 6:20* “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”
- m. God loves you... but He will not be satisfied with you living a lazy and neglectful Christian life.
- n. God did not save you... to put you on the His mantle in Heaven... like you are some kind of trophy.
- o. Don't think for one moment that God is just a passive observer of our lives as Christians... that He is like a parent in the stands watching and cheering their child on as they play in a game.
- p. God saved you to make you more like Jesus... He saved you to be a productive and fruitful believer... and from the moment you were saved until you go to Heaven... God will be all involved in your life working to achieve that purpose.
- q. To achieve His purpose in your life God will bless you... encourage you... guide and lead you... and when it is necessary He will chastise you.
- r. *Philippians 1:6* “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished...”

The Cause of Drifting... The Consequence of Drifting

#### **IV. THE COMEBACK FROM DRIFTING-**

- a. How can those who have drifted from Christ into an apathetic, indifferent and uncommitted Christian life come back to Him? ... by repenting of their sin and coming back to Christ.
- b. “Oh Lord... I am sorry that I don't love You like I use to... I am sorry that I don't love you like I should ... I am sorry that I have allowed the world and the things of the world draw me from You... please forgive me... I want to come back to You... I want to give you my first love.”

c. British Baptist Pastor Robert Robinson was saved under the preaching of George Whitefield in the mid-1700's...at the age of 26 he became the pastor of the Stone Yard Baptist Chapel in Cambridge, England... Robert was a powerful preacher who soon saw many people come to Christ... but Robert had a crisis of faith... and he soon drifted from the Lord... he eventually left the ministry ... he stopped reading his Bible... he stopped praying... and going to church ... by his own account... Robert said that after he left the Lord... he became a joyless, miserable man running from God... one day Robert was traveling in a stagecoach from Cambridge to London ... and a young lady was reading a book of hymns... she turned to Robinson and said... "Sir, this is such a wonderful hymn, do you know it?"...and she sang the words to the hymn "Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing"... *"Come, Thou Fount of every blessing...Tune my heart to sing Thy grace... Streams of mercy, never ceasing...Call for songs of loudest praise...Teach me some melodious sonnet... Sung by flaming tongues above ... Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it... Mount of Thy redeeming love... O to grace how great a debtor... Daily I'm constrained to be!.. Let Thy goodness, like a fetter ... Bind my wandering heart to Thee... Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it ... Prone to leave the God I love... Here's my heart, O take and seal it... Seal it for Thy courts above."*... Robinson did indeed recognize those words... because he was the one who had written that song when he was just 22 years of age... when Robinson heard the words he had written... *"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it... Prone to leave the God I love..."* he broke down and confessed to the young woman that he was the one who had written the words of that hymn as a young man ... and he had indeed wandered far from God... the young woman listened as Robinson poured his heart out... and then she said...But, Mr. Robinson, in your song did you not also write that *"God's streams of mercy are never ceasing."*... through the encouragement of this young lady... Robert confessed his sin... he was restored to the Lord... he rediscovered the joy of his salvation... he started preaching again and he faithfully served the Lord as a pastor until he

died at age 55 ... you can drift away from God... but you can also return to the Lord!

## V. CONCLUSION-

- a. Don't drift... stay close to the Lord... keep Him first in your life.
- b. If you have drifted... come home... come back to Him.
- c. Let me change the question asked in Hebrews 2:3 and ask it this way ... *Hebrews 2:3 (NKJV) "How shall you escape if you reject so great a salvation?"*
- d. The Son of God died on the cross for you... He is the only way to salvation... how shall you escape if you say "no" to Him?
- e. *John 3:18 (NKJV) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*