
The Eternal Danger of Spiritual Drift

Hebrews 2:1-4

Introduction I am sure that all of you have said to someone else, “Please pay attention.” It is even more likely that you have heard these words with varying emphasis and strength from parents or teachers or coaches or bosses. We know how important it is to pay attention.

- Not paying attention to instructions can ruin meals, destroy equipment or give us green hair.
- Not paying attention can cause car accidents and life wrecks. It can bring wrong answers on quizzes and failure in life’s tests.
- Not paying attention can flaw the multi-million dollar Hubble telescope mirror and can sink the Titanic.

Now all of these things strike us as being terribly important in their context. But, this passage tells us that if chapter one is true (and it is), then there is an immense danger that is constantly threatening men and women, teens and children.

The Description of Our Danger (v.1-3a)

Our responsibility to the Word we hear.

If Jesus is all that chapter one says He is, if Jesus is greater than the prophets and greater than the angels in His deity, if Jesus is the final and decisive Word of God in His revelation, redemption and rule, if angels worship and serve Him, if all that God has, is and will reveal has been spoken in Christ, then *we had better pay attention*.

As a Duty (v.1)

The first duty in the book of Hebrews is to *listen*...an unbeliever.

It is a sad fact that the words here clearly identify Christians today, yes even many of you.

Where We are Inattentive

You are not giving serious attention Jesus and to the Word.

WE ARE INATTENTIVE IN OUR READING OF THE WORD...

WE ARE INATTENTIVE IN OUR HEARING OF THE WORD...

WE ARE INATTENTIVE IN OUR USE OF THE WORD...

So what does this bring about? What is the consequence of not paying attention to the Word, to Christ?

Where We are Drifting

This is terrifying is it not? Not paying attention to the greatness of the revelation, redemption and rule of Jesus produces drift. And this is an amazing and terrible danger.

Hebrews says that if we do not vigilantly pay closer attention to the Word of God, we will float by—we will drift away from God and His Word...

And in your drift you are nearing the rapids...

Here is God's solemn invitation to be satisfied in Jesus so that we do not drift downstream into deceitful desires. Here is God's serious command to listen, to pay attention, to firmly anchor yourself on Christ in heaven so that *you do not drift*.

As a Warning

(v.2-3a)

We are alerted to our danger, not only by being told what our duty is, but also by a stern warning.

In its Content

(v.2-3a)

If the revelation of the Old Covenant, if that Word spoken by God through angels exacted that kind of judgment, then what do you think will be the judgment as a result of the greater, final and decisive revelation in Christ and His Word?

In its Consequence

What is our second danger here in this paragraph? Neglecting our salvation.

We neglect its glorious greatness...

We neglect its Christ-centered importance...

We neglect its present relevance...

We neglect its transforming power...

Therefore:

We live as though our lives are defined by the here and now...

We live as though our lives are primarily about us...

We live as though our redemptive is about our past, not about our present and future...

We live as though we will be changed some other way...

Is your life covered with the dust of neglecting your salvation?

So here are the great and terrible dangers.

- Not paying attention to the Word with the consequence of drift.
- Neglecting our salvation with the consequence of judgment.

But what is it that makes our response to the Word of Jesus and His salvation so important?

The Reason We Are In Danger

(v.3b-4)

The reliability of the Word we have.

Now let me ask you. Did you feel a strong command to give attention to every word, every sentence, every pronouncement that our political leaders say and sense a grave danger if you neglect the hopes and salvation offered? Absolutely not. Why is that so? Because we know their promises and pronouncements were unreliable. Today's truth is tomorrow's lie.

But when we come to the Word, we come very differently. We come to what we are absolutely sure is reliable and authoritative and sufficient. The author here is answering a very important question. In fact, this very same question is being asked today, not only by unbelievers, but by professing people within the church.

How do I know that the Scriptures are the revelation of Christ?

Spoken by Christ

(v.3b)

The New Covenant revelation we have begins with the life and ministry and teaching of Jesus Christ...

Confirmed by the Apostles

(v.3b)

What Jesus taught was confirmed to the author and others who did not walk and talk with Christ on a daily basis, by those who did...

Attested by God

(v.4)

God authenticated their exposition and explanation of the words and works of Christ by signs and wonders and various miracles and by distributions of the Spirit...

So we had better pay attention to this Book and to the greatness of the salvation and the Savior it speaks of because we can trust its accuracy and authority.

Now, I said that some are still asking this same question today. There are many ways of making the Word secondary, insignificant and insufficient. But one of the most appalling ways is to add to its truth and to claim that you have the same authenticating signs as the apostles and prophets *when all the verbs of this text are in the past tense*. Signs and miracles and wonders and distributions of the Spirit were given to those who were writing the Scriptures. Their authenticity and authority was therefore attested to. But not so today. This Book is finished. What God has spoken and what He yet speaks, He does so *in this Book*.

- One of the signs that you may not be born again is that you hear what I am saying and see no danger in drifting nor feel a desire to guard against drifting and are not really gripped by how great your salvation really is. May God's Word cut like a scalpel deep into your hard heart and open it up so that you will feel with amazing pain how awful your sin really is. Then may you turn to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. May you trust Him.
- One of the symptoms of drift this evening is some of you hear this sermon and dismiss as not being for you or about you. Yes, drifting away from the Word and from Christ and His people is a serious danger... for others. Or, you really think that where you are in spite of the obvious symptoms drift are actually right on course. My friend, you need to reverse course, to being to row hard lest one day you wake up in deep trouble with the roar of rapids hurtling you towards the falls of destruction.
- And one of the signs of hope this evening is that many of you may be startled up to realize the danger you are in. You have suddenly come to realize that you are drifting. You have a rising desire to set your eyes on Jesus, to give attention to His Word and to stop neglecting the greatness of the salvation with which you were redeemed.

Conclusion

Pay attention to the Word so that you do not drift. Do not neglect your salvation so that you are not judged. And do so because Jesus is infinitely superior over prophets and angels and is the full and final revelation. The danger is great. And, O, the delight is even greater.