

Hebrews 6.4-6

Refusing the Power

- The greater the revelation of God, the more accountable we become.
- The greater mercy of God bestowed, the more responsible we are to honor and obey
- The greater grace displayed, the more terrible the judgment when we ignore and profane it.
- The more committed we become to our own ways and our own ideas and our own things, the harder it becomes to walk in grace and truth.

Hebrews 2:1–4 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ 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*, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

So, here is the fact of the matter - we have seen a progression of enlightenment, of revelation, of grace and mercy... and we have seen that there are those who, although exposed to every measure of this wondrous display of mercy, will turn aside unto fables, heaping up to themselves false teachers who will tickle their itching ears (1Timothy 4.1-4)... they are adding the fullest possible measure of condemnation unto themselves.

These are NOT the children of God, but the children of Satan. Having been so since their birth, they will remain so for all of eternity. Despite any wriggings under the preaching of the Word, or the outworking of the Spirit... But it is this very fact which makes it so necessary that we keep earnest watch over our souls and over the souls of those who God places under our care. For it can be difficult to discern the difference between a wriggle and the presence of life.

I. REJECTING THE POWER OF THE WORLD TO COME.

a. This is a reference to the presence of the kingdom of God. Consider the words of Jesus

Matthew 12.22-32

. They had the very person of the Incarnate God among them and were so committed to the things they already believed that they were willing to accuse Him of being in league with the devil.

a. They had the testimony of the apostles accompanied by their works of wonders, the outpouring of the spirit of God and evidence of His truth

i. Review Acts 3.1-21 - lame man healed

ii. **Acts 3.12-21** - the gospel is preached

1. Notice the mercy extended to all,

a. Full account of evil done in ignorance, for the gospel never pulls its punches

b. God's will accomplished,

c. mercy offered - now repent.

iii. Review Acts 4.1-12 - arrested and still preaching the gospel

Acts 4.13-22

a. Notice the refusal of these outside of Christ to repent.

b. Worried about how they will look to outsiders

c. Mostly concerned to keep the status quo

d. Attempt to bully those of God into silence, threats and warnings...

e. Those inside of Christ will not relent. We must speak the things we have seen and heard.

iv. Acts 5.26-33

1. Notice that they are still committed to having their own way despite the things that are being done in the Kingdom.

a. Furious that they were disobeyed

b. Denied that they are guilty of the blood of Jesus

2. Consider a few things...

a. Mark 15:11–13 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. Pilate answered and said to them again, “What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?” So they cried out again, “Crucify Him!

b. “Matthew 27:24–25 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

3. By their own words they asked that the blood of Christ be upon them, but now are so angry about being reminded of their guilt that they deny ever having done or said anything of the kind AND are willing (and already plotting) to have an encore performance with the disciples.
- v. This is always the sticking point. Unbelievers who are struggling under the working of the spirit rebel at the inference of their guilt. They will not deal with the sin in their hearts, instead being sure of their own righteousness.
 - b. We will see squirming, wriggling, bargaining, demanding and asserting all to avoid simply repenting. This reaction tends to intensify when the power of God is manifested more powerfully.
 - c. The more powerful the display, the more dramatic the reaction.

- d. The more we are convinced of our own innocence the more we are going to respond in hatred when we are forced to acknowledge that it is false.
- e. This is always the reaction of the natural man, but there are some who hide it, pretending to believe, perhaps believing in the more gentle aspects of the gospel, but really just going along to get along until they are forced to admit that they are also guilty...

II. WARNINGS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE GOSPEL

- a. Remember Hebrews 2.4 - how shall we escape if we neglect...?
- b. Jesus used warning to teach and cement truth

Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But

rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

- i. **Matthew 25.41-44**
 - ii. **Mark 16:16** He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
 - iii. **John 3:36** He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
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- i. The apostles knew that they WERE the warning! That the working of God in them would condemn the world unless the world repents.
 - ii. **2 Corinthians 2:15–16** For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life

leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

- iii. The reality of future judgment based on the truth of Christ was always present

2Thessalonians 1.3-12

2 Corinthians 5.9-11

III. WARNINGS HELP BELIEVERS TO GROW AND PERSEVERE

- a. Keep our hearts in constant reverence of the God who is and the Christ who bought us with His own blood.
- b. Blesses and strengthens our hearts under trials and persecutions when we consider that God will take vengeance on all of His adversaries. Jesus is no less faithful in His warnings that in His blessings.

- c. Stirs up praise and thankfulness when we see that wrath from which we have been delivered.
- d. Keeps the taste of fear fresh to help us fight against stubborn temptations of the flesh
- e. Gives us courage to stand in the day of fierce tribulation and persecution:

For man threatens us if we will not forsake the gospel; but God threatens us if we do! Who should we rather fear? What did Jesus say? "Don't fear those who can only kill the body, but fear the one who after he has slain the body has the power to cast you into hell."

IV. HIDDEN PROMISE

- a. Remember that throughout this entire passage there is a double message.
 - i. No one who draws this close and turns away can ever come back... it is a dire warning and a

sure promise that should cause us to examine ourselves.

- ii. Those who are in Christ, need never fear for we cannot fall this far if Christ has made us new. We are held surely and securely in the hand of the Sovereign God who Himself ordained and accomplished our entire salvation.
- iii. If you are in Christ, you are ETERNALLY safe in the arms of the beloved, no matter what may come in this life!