



The Danger of Drifting: Hebrews 2:- 1-4, 10, 14-18

There is a new series starting in the fall called PAN AM. How many of you remember airline? I do for an unusual reason. I did an art project of a PAN AM airline, not because I liked the plane; but because I wanted to change the last letter. So I made this poster with the decal reading PANAS. Yeah, PANAS airlines, my own aircraft! The show will revolve around the flight attendants when the airlines first started. I guess the airlines treated their flight attendants like queens, allowing to go anywhere they wanted to go when they were off, which meant going to the hotspots, meeting dignitaries, and I am sure romances. Well I am glad PAN AM treated them well; because I don't.

I have a confession to make! I don't listen to the flight attendants when they give their safety talk. You know, they grab their manual; they point their arms like this, so you know where the exit doors are; and they tell you about that bag you can use if you have to barf; or that floatation device under your seat. I admit it; I tune them out. They are not doing anything wrong, they are just telling me, "Hey if this plane goes down, if there is an emergency and you don't know what to do, if the plane falls from the sky because the pilot just died; you need to do this!" Meanwhile I am either reading a book, listening to my i-pod, or sleeping with my mouth open like this. So how is a flight attendant and a pastor similar? We are both trying to save your life. But sometimes you just tune us out.

So here is what I want you to do. The next time you go on a plane tell the flight attendant that you will listen to their opening spiel because you realize they are trying to save your life. Then as you leave the plane, tell them you would like them to do a favor for you. Tell them the next time they go to church to make sure they listen to the pastor. He is also just trying to save lives!

Anyway, if you have sinned like me; this first line is for you. Consider the author of Hebrews a preacher.

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it.

What is he talking about here? He is talking about what he said in chapter one. It was all about Jesus! God has spoken to us through him in the last days

- Jesus is the radiance of God's glory
- Jesus is the exact imprint of God.
- He laid the foundations of creation.
- He made purification for the sins of the world
- He now sits at the right hand of the Father because of his life

Lest we drift away.

Drifting away has to do with Christians. The idea here is that one is growing numb to the salvation offered by Christ and begins the process of losing their “awe” for Jesus. It happens for several reasons, one of them has to do with our hearts.

Those are many incredible descriptions when it comes to Jesus, yet people still tune out sometimes when we study a book like Hebrews. I actually heard a fill in preacher, whose assignment was to teach on Hebrews 2, who confessed to the congregation that his mind drifted away as he studied the chapter because he confessed he had a hard time paying attention because he was bored. Therefore, this preacher says he does not have anything for them about Hebrews 2. Instead, he confessed that his heart was not right. As he wrestled with this lack of desire to study, God impressed on his heart that the reason he had trouble paying attention to the chapter was because it was not about him.

I just wanted to let you know that you are selfish. Yeah, that’s right, you’re are selfish. But not just you, I am as well. I see this reality when I look at pictures of me with friends and family. I have another confession to make. Here it goes, round two. Every time I looked at a picture with me and others, the first person I look for is me. Before anything, I want to see what I look like. Am I too heavy? Do I look silly? How is my hair? How is my posture? It does not matter if everyone in the picture looks perfect, if I do not like the way I look, it is a bad picture. Toss it. Delete it. We drift away often because we are selfish. In church we won’t worship Jesus if the message is not about me, or if the music doesn’t fit my style, and if the message seems dry. Many times we blame it on the preacher. He sucks! I am not being fed.

How do you know if you are in danger of drifting away? There are two-tell signs.

1. You don’t seek opportunities to grow in your faith
2. You don’t have a heart to reach lost people.

Drifting away is a slow process. No one purposely seeks to drift. But one moment they are on the beach, they next time they find themselves not being able to see the shore. People who have no desire to grow or reach others for Christ, have really drifted out to sea. The very two areas Jesus covered in the great commission was to make discipleship and reaching lost people. You must be honest with yourself here. Ask yourself how far you have drifted since you first had that “awe factor” for Christ.

The Christians that were being addressed here were in danger of drifting away. There is nothing so sad when the Christian message becomes something you do not pay attention to and over time you just drift away. This leads to verse two.

2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable

Okay, if you remember last week, the author of Hebrews mentioned that Jesus was superior to the angels in every way. Remember he said things like...to which of the angels did he address as his son, or bestow the privilege of sitting at his right hand. The answer of course, was none. He was saying Jesus was superior to angels! So, why did these folks revere angels so much?

Well, the reason was because the angels had the privilege of delivering the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The law was revered, and angels were worshipped because they brought it to Moses. Other passages that mention this are Acts 7:38, 53 & Galatians 3:19.

The Scriptures mentions other features about angels

- They were around before the creation of the world.
- From Genesis to Revelation, they are present
- From what we know, they do not die
- They were deliverers of God's revelation
- They manifested themselves as humans
- They had wings, and flew
- They lived in heaven

Based on these biblical realities, you can see why many Jews considered angels to be superior over Jesus, which is why the author emphasizes his superiority over the angels. He was not just an observer in creation, he laid the foundation. He didn't just live with God; he was His son. He was not just supernatural; he was the exact imprint of God. He did not just emanate a heavenly glow, he was the radiance of God's glory. He did not just minister to those who inherited salvation; he purified us by dying for our sins. It was important to convey that while the angels deserved reverence, Christ superiority meant that he deserved allegiance and worship.

2 For since the message declared by angels **proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution**

Okay, the angels were revered because they brought the Law to Moses. The law was God's gift to the Israelites because it taught them how to govern themselves. The religious leaders loved the law.

I don't know about you, but I would have a hard time revering the angels if they were responsible for giving me a bunch of rules and regulations. I remember being handed chores as a middle schooler. I only had a few, but I did not like them. I did not like alternating with my brother do dishes until I left the house. I did not like waking at 8:30 in the summer times to take the dogs from the garage to the backyard. Why the insisted in 8:30 is beyond me to this day. I think it was cruel to dice up my sleep when I am tenting it in the backyard with my buddy. Oh yeah, that list of rules also mentioned that every other week I had to clean out the garage because my dogs had to use that facility or their bathroom there all week. I did not feel like revering my parents because they gave me the rules list. But at least I could DO them!

Think about this from the perspective of the 10 commandments. The angels deliver you the commandments about man that you cannot keep. 1. Do not lie. Can't keep that one. If you said you have, that would be at the very least your second lie. 2. Do not steal. Well, I helped my buddy steal his parents car when I was a teenager. Cannot keep that one. 3. Honor your mother and father: I don't even want to go there. Remember the chores list! 4. Do not murder. Finally, one I could keep. Oh yeah: Jesus said, that includes not hating anyone. Okay, so I was a little bitter when that dude took my spot on the basketball team. I should have remained the starter. Oops! 5. Do not commit adultery. Oh yeah, Jesus equated that with lusting after someone in your heart. I don't want to talk about that one. 6. Don't covet your neighbor's wife, or anything else. But I had to have the iPad, I won't mention the female part. So here's the point. Angels delivered the law that was impossible to keep, yet they still get angel love.

2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received **a just retribution**, 3 **how shall we escape** if we **neglect** such a great salvation?

So the Law of Moses was valid, but in this verse lies the point as to why we need Jesus. Every transgression must receive a just retribution. In other words, we must be accountable for our sins. Each of them. I do not know about you, but with me there are a lot. More than I can count. I am in trouble. You are in trouble. We all are in trouble.

Unlike drifting, neglecting salvation often has to do with non-Christians, but not always. Ultimately, that is why the author says if we neglect the salvation offered by Jesus, how shall we escape? We cannot escape. And here is the reality, there are many people who spend their life neglecting the salvation offered by Jesus. They have convinced themselves that God will save them if they are a good person. That God will spare them based on their heart. Yet it is not about how many good things you do in life. You are judged based on the bad things. If you rely on your own life, then you have to live a perfect life. This is what is communicated by Paul in Galatians.

Galatians 3:10

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

There are many people who are striving for heaven and they will never make it if they are relying on themselves. We are told in this passage that every transgression must receive a just retribution. This hurts deeply because I know a lot of people who have heard about Jesus, some I have told, but they have neglected to act on it. They put it off because it does not seem pressing. Northside, this should grieve you. If you are not grieved, then you need to get a heart transplant.

We must take chances. Last week I received an email that a lady in his church lead someone to Christ. It started with encouragement from a community group, and from a desire to eat a blueberry scone at Starbucks. She desired that scone so much that when the first coffee shop did not have one, she went to a second Starbucks. She thought she was going there for a scone; God had her there for a better reason. She met a woman standing in line, which culminated an hour later when she lead her to Jesus. I want us to be burdened. If you are not, you need to confess, repent, and pray to God to change your heart. There are folks out there that are in big trouble because they have neglected Jesus.

Neglect is such an ugly reality. In relationships often neglect is worse than physical and emotional abuse. There are many people today who were neglected by their parents and still are affected today because they cannot connect with people. There are a lot of people running around with low self esteems because they were neglected. There are a lot of people who do not know who they are because of neglect. .

It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The author concludes this section by saying the salvation offered by Jesus has been revealed in three ways.

1. It was declared by the Lord himself
2. It was attested to by others who heard the message
3. God bore witness by the miracles.

On the last point, though there are miracles throughout the Bible. Though miracles I believe still exist today, there were special times where miracles appeared in clusters and were intensified. One of these occasions occurred during the ministry of Jesus. You will have people tell you that miracles should happen at the same frequency as it did during the days of Jesus; but in reality that is just not true. God used intensified periods of the miraculous to validate the ministry of His son. If we are honest we know this from our reading of Scripture; and from our own personal experience. When Jesus returns, there will be another cluster of intensified miracles.

The rest of the chapter focuses on the perceived belief that the angels were superior to Jesus. One of their main arguments was that Jesus was a mere human who experienced death. Let us examine how the author carefully addresses this issue apologetically.

10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.² That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,¹² saying,

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

The point here is that Jesus was made lower than the angels, initially, because he had to become our high priest. One of the qualifications for this position was being human. The high priest of course made sacrifices for the people. Jesus makes the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life to God as a propitiation.

Another thrust through this chapter is that Jesus being human; also experienced the highs and lows in life that we experience. He has joy; but he also has suffering. Aren't you thankful we have a God that cares enough about us that he was willing to become a human on our behalf. He is not this deity that is removed from His creation; but rather one who is deeply involved, deeply missional in nature. Moreover, the pain that you experience; he also has experienced in his life. He lost loved ones like John the Baptist tragically, he experienced physical pain that is hard to imagine. He was unjustly persecuted, accused, beaten, and even killed on your behalf.

However, though our pains, his pains, were real and deep. We are told in this chapter that everything has been subjected to Jesus, even death itself. So the encouragement is to keep holding on, one day there will be no more emotional or physical pain, no more tears, only an eternity of joy with Jesus. Until then, we hold tightly to his promise of salvation. Make sure you don't drift away from the awe and heart of Jesus. Make sure you do not neglect the salvation offered by Christ because of pride. Jesus did everything he did so you could be a part of his kingdom.