

Listen up  
Hebrews 2:1-4

**Intro:** Highway travelers dislike the sudden appearance of warning signs, but travel could be dangerous without the warnings. The author of Hebrews presents a series of warning signs throughout the book. They aren't flashing lights, but they shout "danger!" If we do not heed the warning, we will not escape.

In fact there are five warning signs found Hebrews: There is the warning against ***Doubting the Word*** in 3:7-4:13; then we are warned against ***Dullness toward the Word*** in 5:11-6:20; later we find the warning of ***Despising the Word*** in 10:26-39; and finally we are warned about ***Defying the Word*** in 12:14-29. Today we look at the first of these five warning signs, the warning us against ***Drifting from the Word***.

In today's text Paul encourages all readers, Christian and non-Christian alike, to pay attention to God's Word and obey it. Just like those warning signs that sometimes slow us down as we travel, so should warning signs found in Scripture slow us down so we won't fall into danger.

**[Read Heb 2:1-4/pray/release Jr. Church]**

We have all heard the quote "history repeats itself." About that quote someone else is quoted as saying, ***"History repeats itself, which is good because most people don't pay attention the first time anyway."*** How true it is. In our modern world of instant on TV, Food, and information via the computer it is hard for us to pay attention to anything these days.

I remember our first computer, a Commodore 64. It didn't do much unless you could type a program it to it. So one Saturday right after I bought the thing I set back in my bed room typing this program that, when you ran it, was supposed to draw and redraw this pattern on the screen until you stopped it. Well after 2 or 3 hours of typing, running and it not working and retyping I got mad. About that time I walked Chrissie our oldest daughter who said to me "Dad let me try, I am used to paying attention to directions." Well she set down and in about 15 or 20 min she had the thing doing just what it was supposed to be doing.

It wasn't much different when I was in school. I can remember when that every time I turned around one of my teachers would say "Denny, turn around and pay attention." My experience with the computer shows that the "pay attention" lesson is one that I didn't learn the well.

In our religiously pluralistic society, people have many opinions about how to get to God. "Let every person worship his own god," someone will say. "Sincerity is all that matters," someone else advises. "Keep the Ten Commandments," a hard-working traditionalist might say. "God is inside you," we might hear from an advocate of personal potential.

Hebrews 2:1-4 gives us instructions which we must hear. These are directions from the Creator and Savior of the world. Reduced to a sentence, it says, ***"...give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard..."*** or ***"Listen to Jesus."***

The writer of Hebrews is telling us ***we must listen to Jesus because ignoring him leads to sever penalties*** so we to listen up and pay attention to what he is about to tell us. When I was in Advanced Individual training in the Army I took a two week special training course as a Sapper – learning how to blow things up and place land mines. I remember the very first day of class when the Drill Sergeant said, "Now listen up! For the next two weeks we are going to be working with live explosives." He then said, "If fail to pay attention to me and my instructors during this class you will not just fail out you might blow out. So pay attention so you won't blow yourself and your instructor back to Chicago." Needless to say I made a point of 'paying attention.' And that is what the writer is saying to us. When he begins Chapter 2 with the words "Therefore" he is saying; "Because of what I have just told you we better pay close attention (give the more earnest heed to...).

If you are facing a difficult time in your life today then this message is for you; you could be experiencing God's chastening for not paying attention to His word. ***What are we to pay close attention to and why?***

- 1) **Pay more careful attention to our faith** V. 1
  - A **Paying Attention requires work**
    - i) Don't have a casual attitude toward Biblical truth
    - ii) Pay as close attention to Biblical truth as we do to stocks, sports scores, statistics or TV shows
  - B **Drifting is always easier than paying more careful attention**
    - i) It is easier to drift than it is to maintain the same position.
  - C **What does it take to pay careful attention to our faith?**
    - i) Be prepared against Temptations
    - ii) Drifting happens gradually and usually undetected
    - iii) Pay Attention
  - D **How do we drift away?**
    - i) We become careless or complacent in our devotion to Christ
    - ii) We backslide into sin we formerly had repented of
    - iii) We compromise our morals and disobey Christ's teaching
    - iv) We neglect Christian service and become inactive Christians
    - v) The currents of temptation pull strongly on all Christians
  - E **In order to resist, we must pay careful attention to Christ**
- 1) **Why we should pay careful attention to our faith** V. 2-4
  - A. **Because The Character of Christ demands it** – Chapter 1
    - 1) The first reason we should pay careful attention to our faith is given in chapter 1, it is Jesus Christ, and we looked at that last week.
      - (a) He is called the Son and Heir of all things and the Creator of the world (1:2).
      - (b) He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact representation of the divine nature, the sustainer of the universe, the purifier from sin, and the One who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high (v. 3).
      - (c) He is worshiped and served by angels (vv. 4-7).
      - (d) He is anointed above all others, the Lord of creation, the unchangeable, everlasting God (vv. 8-12).
    - 2) This is who Christ is.
      - (a) Who could possibly reject Him?
      - (b) What kind of person could reject that kind of Christ—the Christ who came into the world as God incarnate, died on a cross to forgive our sins, paid our penalty, showed us divine love, and offers to introduce us to God and give us blessing and joy beyond imagination?
    - 3) Jesus was God's voice.
      - (a) Jesus was God in the world, and to reject Him is to reject God.
      - (b) To reject God is to reject the reason for our existence.
      - (c) Because of the magnificence of the Person of Christ, a man is a fool to reject the salvation He offers.
      - (d) I do not understand how a person can know who Christ is, admit that the gospel is true, and still not commit his life to Him.
      - (e) What an incomprehensible mystery—and tragedy!
    - 4) To understand this we have to understand a couple of things there in verse one
      - (a) First there is the phrase “...**give the more earnest heed...**” means **‘pay much closer attention to’** and is emphatic.
        - (1) In other words, on the basis of who Christ is, we must give careful attention to what we have heard about Him.
        - (2) We cannot hear these things and let them just slide through our minds.
      - (b) The word ‘**slip**’ actually means to **‘float passively past, a picture of laziness and criminal neglect.’** Neglect of the gospel message will cause us to drift away unknowingly
      - (c) Both of these words/phrases also have nautical connotations:
        - (1) “...**give the more earnest heed...**” means to moor a ship, to tie it up.
        - (2) ‘**slip**’ can be used of a ship that has been allowed to drift past the harbor because a sailor forgot to attend to the steerage or to properly chart the wind, tides, and current.

- 5) With these meanings in mind, the verse could be translated, **“Therefore, we must the more eagerly secure our lives to the things which we have been taught, lest the ship of life drift past the harbor of salvation and be lost forever.”**
    - (a) The illustration is both graphic and appropriate.
    - (b) Most people do not go headlong and intentionally into hell.
    - (c) They drift into it.
    - (d) Most people do not deliberately, in a moment, turn their backs on God or curse Him.
    - (e) Most people just slowly, almost imperceptibly slip past the harbor of salvation out to eternal destruction.
  - 6) We must be sure to understand that it is not the gospel that slips.
    - (a) That is not the meaning at all.
    - (b) The Word will never drift from us.
    - (c) The danger is our drifting from it.
    - (d) The harbor of salvation is absolutely secure.
    - (e) It is Jesus Christ, who never moves, never changes, and is always available to anyone who wants the protection and security of His righteousness.
  - 7) Also, just as a person who has heard the call of salvation can drift pass the harbor of salvation so to can the Christian drift out on the see of life.
    - (a) We can just as easily drift from the things we know are sure and get caught up in the current of selfishness, disobedience and neglect
    - (b) We are then little different from the one who has rejected God's great salvation – the only difference being that our ultimate destination isn't hell but our reward will be affected.
- B. **Because The Certainty of Judgment demands it V. 3a**
- 1) Two types of sins referred to in Verse 2:
    - (a) Transgression – these are sins of commission
    - (b) Disobedience – these are sins of omission
  - 2) Two types of judgment
    - (a) Judgment of the lost but the writer is addressing Christians in our text because he includes himself when he says **“Therefore we...”**
    - (b) Judgment of the saved
      - ◆ If those who neglected the law of Moses which was delivered by angels received punishment how much greater will the punishment be for those who receive a greater message.
      - ◆ Our message of Salvation is so much greater than the messaged delivered by the prophets, patriarchs and angels because our messenger was so much greater then they were
    - (c) **ILL:** A pastor just finished preaching a series of sermons on “the sins of the saints.” As he came off the platform one of members of his deacon board came to him and the pastor could tell that he must have said something that the deacon was upset about. The deacon got right in front of the preacher severely reprimanded him for the implications regarding sins in the life of the Christian. As he finished his reprimand he said **“Besides, Sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of the lost.”**

To which the Pastor was heard to reply, **“Yes, your right, it is worse.”**
    - (d) We have the idea that believers today “under grace” can escape the chastening hand of God that was so evident “under the law.”
      - (1) But To whom much is give; much is required **“...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...”** (Luke 12:48)
      - (2) The more you know the greater the expectation to be living a more Godly life.
    - (e) One of things that many more “mature” Christians do is they begin to take their salvation for granted and the believe they can skip their quiet time or miss reading their Bibles
      - (1) Worse yet they believe that because they can go here and do this because they would never fall this or that temptation they don't have to be as concerned how they live.
      - (2) The problem is that the lost world is watching our every move.

- (f) Let me illustrate it this way. **Now don't misunderstand what I am about to say; I am not talking legalism here.** For me, I have chosen not to go to movies. Not just 'R' rated movies but all movies at theaters. I know I can go, and I know that it is very unlikely that by me going to a movie I will somehow backslide or fall into some kind of evil temptation or sin. I have chosen this because I believe that, as a Christian, that my life must be different from non-Christians. Going to movies is one of the ways my life is different. Does that make me more holy? NO! Does it make me a more mature Christian? NO! Does it mean that all Christians shouldn't go to theaters? NO! What it does mean is that since I know others who are lost know me and will see my life and say if he can do it so can I. When I stand before the Judgment seat of Christ He will then hold me accountable for all who might have been drawn to the cross had they been able to see a difference in my life than everyone else.

C. **Because The Confirmation of Three witness demands it** V3b-4

- (a) The gospel was first given by Christ
- (1) When Jesus preached the gospel, He also did some things that made it even more believable.
  - (2) He said, **"though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him"** (John 10:38).
  - (3) When He claimed to be God and then did things that only God could do, He confirmed His divinity and, consequently, the truth of His message.
  - (4) On the Day of Pentecost Peter reminded his hearers that **"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know"** (Acts 2:22).
- (b) Was confirmed by the apostles who had heard Him in person
- (1) God gave similar confirming signs through the apostles, the first preachers of the gospel after Christ Himself.
  - (2) Many of their listeners no doubt said, **"Why should we believe them? What proof do we have that their message is from God? There have always been a lot of false teachers around. How can we know that these are true?"**
  - (3) So God bore His apostles witness by giving them the ability to do the same things that Jesus had done—signs, wonders, and miracles.
  - (4) And they did indeed perform astounding miracles.
  - (5) They raised the dead and healed many diseases and afflictions, and through these wonderful works God confirmed their ministry.
  - (6) To argue with an apostle about the gospel, therefore, was to argue with God.
  - (7) Their preaching and teaching was divine truth, substantiated by miraculous works
  - (8) As if this confirmation were not enough, God also gave the apostles special gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.
- (c) Even more importantly, however, it was confirmed by God Himself bearing witness.

**Conclusion:** Are you facing some difficult situation in your life? If so is it because at some point in your life, some part of your life that isn't in tune with God's Word? Have you been doing life your way and not paying heed to the things which you have heard?