

Sunday, August 21, 2022 pm

## HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE? Hebrews 2:1-4

Neglect is a subject we need to think about. I can become a serious matter if we are not careful. If we neglect our health, it will lead to serious problems. If we neglect our homes or things, they will begin to fall apart. If we neglect our responsibilities, typically things begin to pile up to the point that we become overwhelmed. Or worse, irreparable damage is done in the areas we neglected. What all these examples have in common is that problems are created because we neglect to do what we ought to do. This is a truth in virtually every area of society. But these are matters of material concern. Even more serious is the neglect of spiritual matters. Tonight, I want to remind us of a verse that we come across from time to time. Hebrews 2:1-4 finds the writer warning His audience to not let down their guard of faith. It is a lesson we need to consider from time to time.

### I. The results of neglect

- a. *The building decays* – Ecclesiastes 10:18. As noted in the introduction. When we are neglectful of material possessions, they begin to fall apart. This is true spiritually as well. Our bodies are described as the temple of the Spirit of God who dwells in us – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. We do not want to neglect our spiritual bodies.
- b. *We may let down our guard* – Satan is waiting for us to let up so he can devour us (1 Peter 5:8). That is why continually, we are called upon to be on the alert – “Be sober”. Mark 14:38, Jesus warned His disciples to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. “*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” We addressed this this morning.
- c. *We may begin to drift* – Hebrews 2:1, the very thing our text warns us about. Just remember that drifting is usually a gradual thing. And the result is we are further away from God instead of closer (the opposite of our theme for 2022).
- d. *We will not be growing as we ought to* – 2 Peter 3:18 concluded with that. Also consider Hebrews 5:12ff – they had not grown as they ought to and were rebuked.
- e. *All of these things can lead to spiritual weakness and failure.* We may get caught up in sins (2 Peter 3:17), taken advantage of (2 Timothy 3:6), or find ourselves without adequate defense (1 Peter 3:15).
- f. *Ultimately, we may lose our salvation.* That is the warning of our text – How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Understand clearly, we CAN forfeit our salvation. 1 Corinthians 10:12, 9:27, Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 10:26-31, 2 Peter 2:20-22, etc.

### II. What makes our salvation so great?

- a. *The great love of God* – John 3:16 -17 – God sent His Son so that the world through Him might be saved
- b. *The great price that was paid* - Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 2:24 – He bore our sins in His own body.
- c. *It is available to all* – Mark 16:15 – the great commission; 1 Timothy 2:3-4 – God desires all men everywhere to be saved; Titus 2:11 – His grace has appeared to all men...
- d. *It is age lasting* – Matthew 28:20. The ways and plans of man come and go. History records the rise and fall of empires. More recent history records the rise and fall of great business, some of which we thought would never fail. But such is the way of the world. Matthew 24:35, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.* 1 Peter 1:23-24 reminds us we are born of incorruptible seed. While heaven and earth pass away, His word endures. So does His salvation.
- e. *It cannot be taken from us by this world* - John 10:28 – a life that none can snatch away.
- f. *It is eternal* - It is described as “everlasting life” (Matthew 25:46, Romans 2:7, 6:23, 1 John 2:25, etc. – an expression found 32 times in the NT).
  - i. 1 Peter 1:4 speaks of our inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that is reserved in heaven for us.

- ii. From time to time, it does us good to think about our reward in heaven and what it is going to be like. That is the anchor of our hope (cf. Hebrews 6:17-20). We often sing songs about heaven and our hope. We need to do this to appreciate just how great our salvation is AND to keep us from neglecting that salvation.

### III. How can we neglect our salvation?

#### a. *By failing to study and pray regularly –*

- i. We know as Christians we need a regular diet of personal interaction with God. Bible study is how God communicates with us and prayer is how we communicate with Him. Both are INDESPENSIBLE in the life of a Christian.
- ii. 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 2:2, 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, Ephesians 6:18 – prayer is that final piece of “armor” we wear in our spiritual battle (note: vs. 17 speaks of our “weapon” – the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God).
- iii. If we neglect Bible study and prayer – we leave ourselves vulnerable to ignorance, false doctrines, and being exploited, etc. – Ephesians 4:14, 1 Corinthians 14:20 – do not be children in understanding.
- iv. 1 Peter 3:15 calls for us to give a defense for our hope. How can we do that if we do not spend time in His word.
- v. Recall Hebrews 5:14, we are to have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The Greek word in that text is the word from which our English, “gymnasium” comes from. We “exercise” ourselves with God’s word.

#### b. *By failing to meet with the saints –*

- i. Hebrews 10:24-25 warns us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. The Hebrew writer who warned about drifting gives this as part of the solution in the same letter. While not the intent of this lesson, I am fully convinced that God EXPECTS us to be part of His church in our community.
- ii. The church is the body of Christ – Ephesians 1:22-23. Ephesians 3:10-11 tells us it was part of His eternal plan and His “manifold (multi-faceted – CSB) wisdom”.
- iii. We are to come together to worship Him (assembling is inherent in the word “church”). Colossians 3:16 tells us we are to teach and admonish one another in songs; 1 Corinthians 11 addresses coming together to take the Lord’s Supper, etc.
- iv. Be reminded of the damage this pandemic has done for many in this area. Far too many have reasoned that they simply “stay home and watch church online”. That is NOT what God intended.
- v. If I do not see assembling with the saints as important: 1) I am neglecting my salvation; 2) I am NOT receiving the spiritual nourishment God intended for me to receive. There is much more to Hebrews 10:24-25 than simply being present – considering one another, exhorting one another, stirring up love and good works, etc.

#### c. *By failing to live with conviction –*

- i. Do I genuinely believe what I profess? Am I here because I believe this is God’s church (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1) and that we are doing what He wants? Or is it for some other material reason? To appease family, tradition (If it was good enough for dad and mom...), “This church lets me live how I want”, etc. If such are my reasons, I likely have little or no conviction. And if I am not convicted, I will not take salvation seriously. Consider 2 Timothy 4:2-4, especially the attitude of those who will not endure sound doctrine.
- ii. Will I share it with others? 1 Peter 3:15 again – we are called upon to give a defense for the hope that is in us. Matthew 28:19. Are we really concerned about the lost – 2 Corinthians 5:10-11?
- iii. Will I fight for the purity of the church? (Ephesians 5:26-27)
- iv. How much will I be willing to sacrifice for the Lord and His people? Cf. Matthew 6:33.

- d. *By failing to live lives of purity and holiness.* We have been addressing this on Sunday mornings so no need to reemphasize it here, other than to remind us that it is a way we can neglect our salvation. 1 Peter 1:15-16, Hebrews 12:14, etc.
- e. *Through apathy and indifference* –
  - i. Do we take our salvation for granted? That is one of the quickest ways to neglect our salvation.
  - ii. Matthew 13:15 Jesus spoke of hearts that had grown dull and ears hard of hearing.
  - iii. Revelation 3:15-16 – the church at Laodicea condemned for being lukewarm.
  - iv. Which better describes your faith? Excited or apathetic? What about your attitudes? The way you worship God? Etc.
  - v. Titus 2:14 – we know God wants us to be a people zealous for good works. That is just one of multitudes of passages challenging us to a life of fervor for His cause.

**IV. How can we prevent the neglect of our salvation?**

- a. *Take heed!* We have to beware of the possibility!
  - i. 1 Corinthians 10:12, take heed lest he fall
  - ii. 1 Timothy 4:16 – to young Timothy, Paul told him to take heed so that he could save himself and those who heard him;
  - iii. Hebrews 3:12, 2 John 8, “Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.”
- b. *I need to frequently examine myself and where I am* – 2 Corinthians 13:5
- c. *I need to renew my mind* – Ephesians 4:23, Romans 12:2. NOTE: This too is an ongoing process – something we continually work at. (Both texts are present tense actions).
- d. *I need to overcome apathy and indifference* – by resolving that God IS going to be my priority.
- e. *Do the things I am supposed to be doing as a Christian* – I do not just talk the talk, I walk the walk – Ephesians 4:1 speaks of walking worthy of the calling with which you were called; James 1:22-24 calls for us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.
- f. *GROW* – you have to be growing. 2 Peter 1:5-11 is just one of the many passages challenging us to grow.

Our title for this lesson, and the warning of the text began with a question: How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Understand that the “question” was actually rhetorical, meaning there is only ONE answer. If you neglect you salvation you will NOT escape! Instead, you will face the wrath of God (again Hebrews 10:26-31). Know that how we manage our spiritual affairs on this earth will have eternal consequences. As our text noted, and we have discussed, this involves our salvation. That is why we cannot afford to neglect them. What about you? How are you managing your salvation? Think about it!