

Anchored in the Word

Int.

1. Aim: To show how we must be anchored in the word so we will not drift.
2. Heb. 2:1-4
3. The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who lived in a difficult time in the first century.
 - a. Nero, the Emperor of Rome, at the time this letter was written, had developed a grave dislike for followers of Jesus; thus, he made life extremely difficult for them.
 - b. He felt his mission in life was to relentlessly persecute them.
 - c. This persistent persecution of Christians had a big impact on them.
 - d. There was the temptation for some of them to turn back to Judaism - Heb. 10:25
 - e. One purpose of this letter was to encourage the first-century Christians to resist the pressures they were experiencing and remain faithful to the gospel.
4. In chapter one, the writer makes two facts clear:
 - a. First, God speaks to people only through his Son - Heb. 1:1-3
 - b. And the writer points out Christ's superiority compared to angels. He compares the Son with angels due to the fact that the Jews understood that angels stood next to God in greatness and power. The writer provides ample evidence of Christ's superior state to the angels.
5. In this lesson , let us examine several important thoughts related to the text.
 - i. First Why the warning was given;
 - ii. Second why Christians may drift; and
 - iii. Third - a sure way to prevent spiritual drifting.

Discussion

I. WHY THE WARNING?

- A. Warning signs are a part of everyday life.
1. People place warning signs in their yard to caution others of a possible attack from a dog or some other danger.
 2. As you travel, you might see signs indicating construction / rock slides
 3. These warnings are there to encourage us to be cautious, to avoid harming ourselves.
- B. In the text, the writer gives us a warning of a very real danger.
1. The warning of the text is for Christians to be extremely careful.
 2. There is the danger of slipping or drifting away from the truth, or the church.
 3. The writer with the use of the word, "slip" (KJV) or "drift (ASV), provides an analogy of a boat drifting away from shore or drifting because it has not been correctly anchored.
 4. To illustrate the point of the text, picture in your mind a man fishing from a boat in a river. The river, in certain spots, may drop as much as 15 to 20 feet. The person in the boat fishing is unaware of the drop because he has fallen asleep. While he is asleep the currents of the river slowly draws the boat miles away toward the drop. The man eventually wakes up; he sees the danger and realizes what he had forgotten to do - to cast his anchor. He fights frantically the currents of the river, but it's too late.

5. Just as a boat when it's not properly anchored will drift; a Christian not spiritually anchored will "slip" or "drift." It's possible to drift!
 6. In the text, the writer refutes the false doctrine which states that a person is "once saved always saved." If one does not continue to pay attention to what he has heard, then the person can go so far as to fall (Heb. 2:1; 3:12-14; Jas. 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:20- 22).
- C. Furthermore, it is possible for a person to so fall that it is impossible to restore him (Heb. 6:4-6).
1. The danger of drifting or falling away is very real.
 2. It is clear that a Christian can "fall from grace" (Gal. 5:4).
 3. If this was not the case, then why would the Holy Spirit guide the writer to give this warning?
 - a. Why give the warning if it is not possible for a Christian to fall ?
 - b. There is no sense in telling people to be careful or cautious of something that there is no possibility of it happening.
 - c. The warning is given because of the real possibility of drifting from the truth or falling from God's approval -1 Cor. 10:12

II. REASONS FOR DRIFTING

- A. There are many reasons that a person might drift spiritually. It can occur intentionally or from simply a lack of awareness.
1. Thus, the writer interrupts or deviates from his "train of thought" concerning Jesus's superiority over angels to interject the above warning.
 2. Let us now explore suggested reasons or causes for Christians' drifting away.

B. (1) **Failure to Keep the Passion Alive**

1. The loss of passion or a desire to please God is one reason why some are drifting from the church. Passion means a strong feeling or emotion.
2. John, in the book of Revelation, provides two situations of what can happen to Christians who cease to keep their light shining for the Lord.
 - a. John tells us about saints in the city of Ephesus who had "left their first love" (Rev. 2:4).
 - (1) There was a time when these saints were excited and filled with a strong desire to serve the Lord, but something happened to cause them to drift away from the Lord.
 - (2) John writes to these saints to encourage them to strive to recapture their flame for the Lord.
 - b. In chapter 3, he describes many of the saints of the church at Sardis.
 - (1) These members had not only permitted their light to burn low, but to go out (Rev. 3:1). "Hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
 - (2) The saints of Ephesus and Sardis drifted from their "call to faithfulness."
 - (3) One can correctly deduce from these two situations that people with a "lost passion" will slowly drift away from the church.
3. Paul, writes of the consequence of lost passion. Hymenaeus and Alexander's faith had been overthrown - 1 Tim.1:19-20
 - a. Why? Could it be that their faith was shipwrecked because their passion to "walk with the Lord" died?
 - b. Could what happened to these two men also happen to us?
4. Also, the realization of passion dying is seen in the life of Demas.

- a. He was present with Paul and Luke at the time of the writing of the book of Colossians, around AD 60.
 - b. But, several years later, during Paul's second imprisonment, he writes ". . . Demas has forsaken me," (2 Tim. 4:10). Demas lost his passion, and drifted away.
5. If we do not keep a strong feeling of emotion for the Lord then we will drift

C. (2) **Failure to Protect the Heart**

1. A second reason that some are drifting from the church is because of a failure to protect the heart.
2. The wise man Solomon wrote of the need to protect the heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life" Prov. 4:23
3. The condition of the heart is an excellent predictor of present and future thoughts and behaviors - Prov.23:7
4. The importance of protecting the heart is also seen in Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" - Matt. 5:8
 - b. Those who cease to strive to keep the heart pure might possibly drift from the truth and therefore not please God.
5. Illustration of Daniel - Long ago, there lived a captive boy in the city of Babylon.
 - a. It was not long after the Israelites were carried away into captivity that this boy, Daniel was faced with a life challenging situation (Dan. 1:3-7).
 - b. Why didn't he drift away from his desire to serve Jehovah?

- c. In verse 8, Daniel tells us he “. . . **purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself . . .**”
 - d. Those who have devised a strategy to keep the heart pure are more prone to answer the “call to faithfulness.”
6. So, some are drifting from the church because they have not protected their heart's from the temptations of this world.

D. (3) **Failure to Abide in the Doctrine of Christ**

- 1. A final reason that some are drifting from the church is seen in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul, in the letter, refutes the false doctrine advocating salvation by “the work of the law” i.e., by keeping the Ten Commandments.
- 2. Those who were members of the churches in Galatia had “**tasted God's goodness and mercy,**” and Paul was shocked that some had defected or drifted from the gospel of Christ - Gal. 1:6-8
- 3. Paul says, if “an angel from heaven” or any man comes declaring a doctrine different from what you have received, denounce it Gal. 1:7-11
 - a. It is nothing more than an attempt to draw Christians away or cause them to drift from the truth.
 - b. John writes in 2 John 9, “to the elect lady and her children” of the possibility of drifting or wandering away from the doctrine of Christ.
 - c. He writes of the chance that some might go too far. Clearly, there are those, even some among us, who have gone too far. Thus, he writes “**Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . .**”
 - They have drifted!

4. Peter writes of the time when men of various centuries would drift away or depart from the doctrine of Christ - 2 Pet. 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."
5. To please God requires us to remain anchored or grounded in "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23),
6. But some have drifted as a result of human philosophies (Col. 2:8). How sad!

III. Preventing Drifting

- A. We must all agree that the warning of the text is somewhat frightening!
 1. It demonstrates to us the seriousness of the gospel while at the same time warning us of a dangerous possibility.
 2. Let's return to the earlier image of a man fishing in a boat slowly drifting down a river. The person in the boat is asleep and thus is unaware of the danger ahead. Eventually, the person sees the danger and attempts to make adjustments, but it's too late!
 3. It is possible for Christians to drift because they don't keep their passion alive or refuse to protect the heart, or deviate from the doctrine of Christ.
 4. So, the million-dollar question: how can we avoid getting ourselves into a spiritual situation like this?
 - a. Because of the danger of spiritually drifting, it's essential that we as Christians do something to avoid it and "escape" its consequence.

- b. The writer explains in chapter 1 that Christ is greater than the angels, and then he starts chapter 2 with the word "therefore."
 - c. Therefore is a common connective that links what the author is about to say with what has just been said.
 - d. Also, when you see the word "therefore," it's always good to speculate what it is there for!
 - e. With the word "therefore," the writer tells us to recall what he has just told us in the previous chapter.
 - f. Since Christ is so much better than and superior to the angels, there is something we need to do.
5. We need to pay close attention to what he has to say.
- a. The writer says, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (Heb. 2:1a).
 - b. The writer does not just say "give heed," but "give earnest heed."
 - c. And it is not just "give earnest heed;" he encourages us "to give the more earnest heed."
 - d. By putting these words together, the writer is emphasizing just how important it is for each one to personally apply the things which we have heard.
- B. With this exhortation, the writer clearly gives us the only sure answer to avoiding drifting, and that is to cast an anchor.
- 1. An anchor is a heavy object on a ship cast overboard to hold the ship in a particular place - Mark 6:53; Acts 27:29-30
 - 2. The only anchor that has the ability and power to keep us secure spiritually is the word.

3. This is seen in the words of the Hebrews writer when he challenges us “. . .to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard” because they can serve as an anchor to keep us from drifting or falling from the truth. More specially, what does it mean to be anchored in the word?

IV. THREE THINGS TO PREVENT DRIFTING

A. Know the Word

1. Sermons and Bible classes must be filled with quotations from the Bible or numerous citations of “book, chapter, and verse.”
2. What was so sadly stated about God’s people in Judges 2:10, “. . .there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel,” can be truthfully said about today’s generation.
3. This occurred because the people ceased to remain knowledgeable of God. Hosea says that the failure of his people to remain informed of God led to their drifting away (Hos. 4:6).
4. To be anchored in the word means to know the word. To teach people what they need to know and to lead people to Heaven requires us to be anchored in the word.
5. An excellent example of Christians being anchored in the word is seen in Acts 17:11. Luke, the writer, tells us of a body of believers who daily read and meditated on the scriptures.
6. For people who know God’s word, is the probability low or high that they will eventually drift from God?
 - a. The probability is most likely low.

b. The Hebrews writer tells us why we need to know the word: "Let us labour there to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

- Heb. 4:11-12

7. The writer stresses two points.

- a. First, there is a need for Christians to be diligent because of the danger of drifting like the Israelites.
- b. Secondly, to decrease the possibility of drifting demands that Christians know God's word. Strive to know the word because it is living and powerful in assisting us to be able to answer the "call to faithfulness." Are you anchored in the word?

B. Possess an Unshakable Faith

1. The Jewish Christians to whom this letter is addressed were greatly discouraged.

Many of these new believers were ready to turn back.

- a. So, the writer exhorts them to pay extremely close attention to the word Heb. 2:1
- b. This means not only knowing the word, but also possessing a faith that is unshakable.
- c. This unshakable faith does not permit you to see the outcome or what lies ahead, but "we know" like Daniel "our God" is able (Dan. 3:17).

2. In the midst of life's storms, trials, and disappointments, it's comforting to know who God is, and that he ". . . is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think . . ." (Eph. 3:20).
 - a. This unshakable faith is seen in the centurion of Matthew 8:8 and the woman with the issue of blood of Matthew 9:20-22.
 - b. There is absolutely no limit to what God can do.
 - c. Therefore, I will anchor my trust in him.
 - d. Solomon exhorts us to: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. 3:5-6

3. To trust God completely is to be anchored in the word.
 - a. The importance of this fact is seen in numerous examples in the Bible.
 - b. One which stands out is found in 2 Chronicles 20. Because King Jehoshaphat had acquired the knowledge of who God is, he was able to develop an unshakable faith in God.
 - c. Thus, when he was confronted with foreign invasion, he didn't drift or fall.
 - d. Verse 12 conveys his unshakable faith in God to deliver God's people: "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no power against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

4. What faith! Faith is so essential to remaining faithful to God.
 - a. The Hebrews writer puts it this way, "But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is. . ." (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Do you have an unshakable faith?

C. Remember the Certainty of Judgment

1. Finally, to be anchored in the word, is to remain aware of the fact that those who neglect the word or make light of it will be unable to escape the coming judgment of God.
 - a. As stated earlier, the writer, in the previous chapter, states clearly that Jesus is better than angels.
 - b. In Hebrews 2:2, he writes the “word spoken by angels” referring to the Law of Moses. Moses was the mediator between God and the children of Israel, but angels were used in giving the law to him on Sinai - Ps. 68:17
 - c. If the law which was given by angels proved to be steadfast in every respect, what can we expect from a superior law given to us by the Son of God?
2. Those who transgress, go beyond what is written, or do what is forbidden and disobey and those who refuse to hear or to obey the gospel shall not escape the judgment of God.
 - a. Those who disobeyed the law given by angels, either by sins of commission or sins of omission, were properly addressed.
 - b. The Bible gives us several examples of those who experienced the consequence of violating the “word spoken by angels”:
 - (1) First, remember what happened to the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath—he was stoned to death (Num.15:32-36);
 - (2) Second, remember what happened to Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, who offered to God something not authorized— they were destroyed (Lev. 10:1-2);

(3) And thirdly, remember what happened to Achan and his family because he transgressed and took some of the accursed things—they were destroyed (Josh. 7:11-25).

3. If these and many others received severe punishment for violating the word spoken by angels, then certainly, we shall not escape if we do not remain anchored in the word given by the Son of God.
4. Those who hear and obey the gospel of Christ, but allow it to slip or drift from them will suffer a greater punishment. The consequence is eternal destruction.

CONCLUSION

1. So, stay anchored in the word!
2. To do so requires each of us to put forth the effort to do at least three things:
 - a. To know the word
 - b. To possess an unshakable faith, and
 - c. To remember the certainty of judgment.

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