

PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION



LEST WE DRIFT



I. For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.

- (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) **For this reason we must pay much closer attention** to what we have heard, **lest we drift away**.

A. God has now spoken to us through his Son.

- (Hebrews 1:2a LSB) In these last days spoke to us in His Son.

B. We need to hear what he has to say.

i. That Jesus his Son is superior to the angels.

- (Hebrews 2:1a AMP) For this reason [that is, **because of** God's final revelation in His Son Jesus and **because of** Jesus' superiority to the angels].

ii. That Jesus brings cleansing for sins.

- (Hebrews 1:3 LSB) [*Jesus the Son of God*] who is **the radiance of His glory** and **the exact representation of His nature**, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**; who, **having accomplished cleansing for sins**, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

II. We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard or we will drift away.

A. "What they had heard" was in reference to the gospel they had heard from Paul and the apostles.

- (Acts 20:24 LSB) But I do not make my life of any account nor dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and **the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God**.
- (1 John 1:1–2a LSB) What was from the beginning, **what we have heard**, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and touched with our hands, **concerning the Word of Life**— 2 and the life was manifested, **and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life** ...

B. They must never let up but in fact must pay much closer attention to the gospel they had heard.

Much closer ... περισσοτέρως (perissoterōs) ... (even) more, especially; abounds all the more; all the more; even much more; far more; much closer.

Attention ... προσέχω (prosechō) ... to hold to, pay attention to, attend to; give attention.

- (Galatians 2:5 LSB) **But we did not yield in subjection to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you**.

C. Not paying much closer attention to the gospel brings about an inevitable (and usually imperceptible) moving away from the hope of the gospel.

- (Colossians 1:21–23 LSB) And although **you were** formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds, 22 **but now** He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach**— 23 **if indeed you continue in the faith firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard**, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

1:23 ... **moved away ...** μετακινέω (metakineō) ... to shift; to move from one setting or context to another.

What this means is that the context of the person's daily life has shifted and is no longer anchored in the strong promises of God, but some form of false hope has undermined her hope in the salvation promises of God.

D. Paul speaks with this same urgency to the elders of the church in Ephesus (see Acts 20:17).

- (Acts 20:28 ESV) **Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock**, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood**.

E. Although using a different word Paul speaks with the same intent and urgency to Timothy.

- (1 Timothy 4:16 LSB) **Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things**, for as you do this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

III. The person who does not pay much closer attention to the gospel will drift away from the truth of the gospel.

A. The imminent danger here is not a sharp turning away but a slipping away.

Drift away ... παραρρέω (pararreō); to flow by; to flow past; to slip away.

B. Any slippage in our careful attention as to who Jesus Christ is and what he has done will lead to a drifting away from the truth (and the hope) of the gospel.

EXCURSUS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DRIFT AWAY?

1. We need to first consider to whom the letter to the Hebrews is written.
 - A. Hebrews is written to predominantly Jewish Christians—people who are saved.
 - i. These people have believed unto salvation.
 - B. Hebrews is written to predominantly Jewish people who profess to be saved but are not.
 - i. These people believe some of what God says in the Bible.
2. Drifting away ***does not mean*** that a truly saved person can slip away and lose his salvation.



For a person to lose his salvation would mean ...

A. That Christ “lost you” so did not do the Father’s will.

- (John 6:38–40 LSB) For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 **Now this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day. 40 **For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life**, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

B. That God failed in his plan to choose us, bless us and to present us holy and blameless before himself.

- (Ephesians 1:3–4 LSB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **just as He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love**.

C. That God failed in his foreknowledge, in the sanctifying work of the Spirit, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in protecting us.

- (1 Peter 1:1–4 LSB) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood**: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. 3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, 4 to obtain an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you, **who are protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

3. Drifting away *does mean*** that a person who truly believes can become useless and unfruitful in her knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- (2 Peter 1:8–10 LSB) For if these things are yours and are increasing, **they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 9 For in whom these things are not present, that one is **blind, being nearsighted**, having **forgotten the purification from his former sins**. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and choosing sure; for in doing these things, you will never stumble.

A. Because she has not diligently exercised her spiritual eyes she has become nearsighted to the extent that she is in effect spiritually blind.

B. She has forgotten the purifying, cleansing of her sins.

C. She has lost the assurance of her calling.

D. She will compromise Scripture and tolerate false gospels based on superficial agreement.

E. She will very possibly spread a false gospel.

4. Drifting away *does mean*** that the person who does not pay much closer attention to what God says may have even the superficial knowledge of the truth which he possesses taken from him.**

- (Mark 4:24–25 LSB) And He was saying to them, **“Beware what you listen to**. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you, and more will be given to you. 25 For whoever has, to him more shall be given; **and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him**.”

- (Luke 8:18 LSB) So **beware how you listen**, for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, **even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him**.

END EXCURSUS

IV. Paying much closer attention we will know that every sin will receive a just penalty.

- (Hebrews 2:2–4 LSB) For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, **and every trespass and disobedience received a just penalty**, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? **That salvation, first spoken by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard**, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

A. The words of the Old Covenant are binding.

- (Hebrews 10:28–29 LSB) **Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy by the mouth of two or three witnesses.** 29 How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as defiled the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
- (Deuteronomy 17:12–13 LSB) **And the man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to minister to Yahweh your God, or to the judge, that man shall die;** thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. 13 “Then all the people will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again.

B. How much greater will be the judgment for rejecting that salvation first spoken by the Lord himself.

- (Mark 1:14–15 LSB) Now after John had been delivered up into custody, **Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God**, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**”
- (Galatians 1:11–12 LSB) For I make known to you, brothers, **that the gospel which I am proclaiming as good news is not according to man.** 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, **but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

- (Hebrews 12:25 LSB) See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. **For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.**

C. That salvation is the gospel as spoken by the Lord and confirmed by the apostles and others who heard firsthand.

- (1 John 1:1 ESV) That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.**
- (Galatians 1:15–16 LSB) But when God, who had set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 **to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him as good news among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

D. God also testified to the authenticity of the gospel with signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Spirit.
