

Slipping Away *Heb 2:1*

Heb 2:1

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. KJV

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For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. NAS

Introduction:

The word “therefore” is a linking word, usually associated with a conclusion or a verdict, bringing something that has been said before to our attention as a point of references for what is about to be said. So, what has been said before? If you are familiar with what is contained in ch.1, you know that it is this:

- God, the One Who spoke previously (in the OT) through the prophets at different times and in various ways, has now spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ, Who has purged our sins, finished the Work, and sat down as King and Ruler on His throne in heaven at the Right Hand of the Father.
- He is the Radiance of the Glory of God and far superior to all created beings, even the angels.
- In fact, He is designated as and called ‘God’ by God the Father.

THEREFORE, we should pay particular attention and take diligent care that we not slip away from the things that we have heard through the *means* of God speaking to us through Him.

The presumption of the writer is that:

- (1) We have accurately and fully heard the Voice of God and His teachings through Jesus Christ, and,
- (2) We have believed, laid hold of, tied ourselves to those teaching, believing them from the heart and obeying what we have heard and believed.

The concern is that those who have heard and believed will “slip away” from their commitment to Christ and become seduced by a religion or a belief system that cannot save and will ultimately destroy them.

The imagery contained in the word translated ‘let slip,’ or ‘slip away,’ is that of a boat that has been tied to a dock. If you have ever tied a boat off you know that the action of the water, over time, gradually loosens the knot with which you tied it. Diligence and ongoing attention are needed: (1) to make sure that the knot is good in the first place, and (2) to revisit it regularly to make sure that it remains secure.

There is a reality of life that was being observed by our writer in the lives of people that he knew and for whom he was concerned. The book of Hebrews was written primarily to Jewish people who had professed faith in Jesus Christ. They were in a sort of a ‘double bind’ when it came to

their faith. On the one hand there was their culture, their people, which exerted a continual pull to come back to orthodox Judaism and away from this new upstart religion called Christianity. On the other there was the pull of the world system to persuade them to become like the rest of human society. But the greatest pull was the one closest to them, their families, friends, homeland and upbringing. The thrust of the book of Hebrews is the demonstration of the superiority of the Work of Christ and faith in Him to all that they had learned and been taught as Jews, the entire Mosaic system.

But the subject matter becomes larger than merely the danger of a believing Jew giving up on Christ and going back to Judaism. There is a universal truth in what the writer sees that every believer, no matter what culture he comes from, must face and deal with not once, but every day his whole life. There is an ebb and flow of life circumstances, storms as well as gentle but persistent currents of pressure, that will cause spiritual drift in any life if diligent, persistent, and earnest effort is not given to keep the life securely anchored in Jesus Christ and the revelation concerning Him in the Word of God. Only this 'earnest heed' that the writer mentions will guard the heart and mind from this drift, keeping all of the 'knots' as well as the 'rope' in good condition.

The truth is that drift is inevitable. It is constant. This is Reality and it does not change. One cannot keep from being affected by the pressures of life. He can only war against them and keep re-tying the knots that bind him to his faith and to Christ. And, he can only do that as enabled by the Spirit of God.

You know as well as I do that the currents of the world around you push on you constantly because the values of the world are not the same as the values of a true Christian. Every Christian commitment that you seriously undertake to keep will only increase the pressure of the current against you. You know that a very slender boat, like a kayak or canoe, offers very little resistance to the current in a stream, but the larger the boat and the wider the hull, the more resistance is offered. One only needs to go down to the Mississippi river and watch those tugs trying to push barges upstream to realize how much pressure the current exerts on a wide craft. Christian commitments, disciplines, convictions, and beliefs offer resistance to the current of opinions in the world and the more diligent and serious we are about those things, the 'wider' our boat becomes as it undertakes to travel upstream against that current. Every new spiritual commitment and conviction increases the pressure against us.

Let us consider for a few minutes some of the things that the world is trying to persuade you to believe. This is by no means a complete list but I think it catches many of the main issues.

1. **It is all right to be immoral so long as you are a nice person.** The world around us is filled with immorality of every kind and description. It is all contrary to the Revealed Will of God but our world is convinced that it is OK and there is a great pressure to sweep everyone up in the notion.

But, think with me for a moment, if a person is practicing immorality, he/she is not doing it alone. Someone else is involved and that immorality that is being practiced is hurting both parties, placing them both at odds with God and subject to His wrath and judgment.

Still with me? Then think about this, nice people do not hurt others. The immoral person is hurting both himself and his/her partner in crime. So, in a very real sense, the immoral one is not a 'nice person,' but is sacrificing the spiritual welfare of another for his/her own pleasure.

But, our world is convinced that this conclusion is wrong and that Christians are crazy for believing that immorality is a horrible thing. The pressure is constant and it is increasing. It comes at us from every direction. Only diligent attention to hold on to what we have seen and heard from the Word of God can keep us anchored.

2. **It is all right to have an abortion because the baby is a part of the mother's body and she has the right to make that decision.**

Reality: once conception occurs that which is conceived is a person, fashioned by the hand of God with his own identity, his own DNA and his own rights.

Second reality: every one in his environment will give an account to God for how they treat this little person.

Now, again, there is tremendous pressure in our culture to surrender to the popular notions. How many of our representatives, senators and even presidential candidates have expressed convictions on this subject but then refused to take a stand when it really counted? There is pressure and it is intense. We must be diligent.

3. **You really do not need to be serious about religion, all nice people go to heaven.**

Look again at our text.

Heb 2:1-4

- 1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.
- 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and **every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;**
- 3 **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;** which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;
- 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? KJV

See also:

Matt 7:21-23

- 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
- 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, **have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?**
- 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work

iniquity.

Apparently, there will be many ‘nice people’ who do not make it, yet the current of social opinion around us presses us continually to back away from biblical teaching that only the repentant, only the truly righteous, will be saved.

1 John 2:29

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 John 3:7

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

We know that no one is saved by good works but we also know that no one is saved apart from them, “faith without works is dead,” says James.

4. All religions lead to God. Stop being so dogmatic about yours.

John 8:22-24

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

These people were religious. They believed in God. They even said that they believed the scriptures. But their religion led them away from God and not to him and they were destined to die in their sins unless they repented of them.

You and I must make a decision and be diligent about it. Do we believe Jesus Christ or do we bend to the forces and the current around us. Will we ‘give earnest heed’ or will be ‘let slip’ and ‘drift away’ from the Word of God and from Jesus’ Own words?

5. Whatever the majority believes must be right.

This is the reason that polls are so popular in our day. If you do not agree with the majority then there must be something wrong with you. Every time I hear that I think of the lemmings who follow the crowd to their death by the thousands.

How many times has the majority been wrong? They were wrong when Moses was on the Mount receiving the Law, wrong when Ahab and Jezebel led Israel to worship idols, wrong when Jesus was crucified, and a thousand times since.

Peer pressure is strong and very difficult at times to resist but we are sternly warned against being molded by the opinions that surround us.

Rom 12:1-2

- 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
- 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The pressure is constant and intense. The decision must be made every day and sometimes many times during the day that we will not be pressured into conforming to the world around us. Our intensity must be greater than the intensity of the pressure.

6. One can vicariously participate in immorality without being affected.

Have you seen a movie or watched TV lately?

Pornography is one of the great sins of our day and it has become mainstream so that much of it is not even recognized as being so. Millions are addicted and any child with a computer can see things that our grandparents could not have even found to see if they wanted.

Prov 23:6-7

- 6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:
- 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

What we think about defines who we are and the culture around us continually suggests that we think on things that are condemned by the Savior Whom we claim as ours. There is a good reason why the apostle gives us the following instructions.

Phil 4:6-9

- 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, **whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**
- 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

If we are what we think about and if what we see affects how we think, then we do well to guard our eyes and our minds, resist the pressures of the culture and diligently follow

what we are taught in God's Word. But, our writer knew that it would not be easy.

Heb 2:1

1 Therefore **we ought to give the more earnest heed** to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

7. If we could just get a Conservative President and Congress, all would be well.

The pressure is to put all of your time and effort into straightening out the political system.

Reality: America is not right with God and conservative political leaders cannot fix that. Only the people of God, by giving earnest heed to the things they have heard from Christ can have any hope of seeing change and that only by earnest and diligent prayer as well as true and complete repentance of their own sins.

2 Chron 7:14

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

That being said, there are some things which will surely guarantee that you 'slip away.'

Failing to keep Jesus Christ pre-eminent in your life.

Inordinate love of money (idolatry)

Failing to diligently discriminate between holy and profane things.

Selfishness

Laziness, lack of diligence, general apathy, lack of understanding of the spiritual dangers around us.

And, there are some things which will tend to keep your heart secured to Christ.

A faithful prayer life.

Diligence concerning scripture.

Regular communion with the people of God.

A firm understanding of just what it is that you have 'heard.'

What is your theology?

How is a person saved?

What is faith?

What is Repentance?

Now, one might say, “I do not do these things and I am not slipping away.” I would challenge your thinking here. It may be that the slipping has already taken place and that your lack of perception is simply a symptom of how far you have gone.