

BRETHREN, ARE WE DRIFTING?

Heb.2:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

Heb.2:1-3a- *“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”*

- A. Drifting can be very dangerous because it can come upon you and proceed to dangerous proportions completely unnoticed! It usually does not attract attention to itself until it is well out of hand!
1. Billy Norris, a preacher, gives an illustration of this in an article he wrote in Gospel Guide: “Two young men were fishing above a low dam on a river near their hometown. As they were concentrating on catching fish, they were unaware that they had drifted until they were not far from the water flowing over the dam. When they finally realized their situation the current near the dam had become too powerful for them to keep their boat from going over. Below the dam the water was dashing with strong force over great boulders and through crevices in the rocks. Caught by the swirling waters under the rocks, they never came to the surface.
 2. “After days of relentless searching, the divers finally found one of the bodies, and then the other one two or three days later. It was such a sad occasion when these two young men lost their lives in the bloom of youth. It was also a sad occasion – one tempered with hope and thanksgiving – when I preached the funeral of one of them, a young convert I’d baptized only a week before!”
- B. Many people have launched their spiritual lives in the lake of life by taking some positive Biblical steps that have put them close to the Lord!
1. It’s really great to be in the right place at the right time, isn’t it?
 2. SADLY, after taking pains to access the right location, many lose their allegiance and commitment and consistency toward the anchors that will **MAINTAIN THEIR STATUS**, and start *DRIFTING TOWARD DESTRUCTION!*
- C. Several years ago Yater Tant wrote a book called ***J.D. Tant, Gospel Preacher***. It was about his daddy, a sacrificing, hard-working, faithful, itinerant gospel preacher who was always warning people about the dangers of yielding to the apostacies that were confronting the church in his day. And the words of warning he most often used were: **“Brethren, we are DRIFTING!”**

I. SOME IMPORTANT WARNINGS ABOUT DRIFTING WE SHOULD KNOW:

- A. It requires **NO EFFORT** on our part! That’s why they call it **D-R-I-F-T-I-N-G!**
1. Just stop rowing, or tacking against the wind, or cut off the motor, or lift up the anchor, **AND YOU’R FREE TO DRIFT!**
 2. This is why the Hebrew writer said, *“We must give the more earnest heed!”*
- B. It is an unconscience process. That is, ***it requires no conscious effort!***
1. It is possible to be drifting and not be **AWARE** of it! A boat on the surface doesn’t always reflect the actions of rip-tides or undercurrents that are deep below!
 2. After the excitement of the new relationship in Christ has worn off and the reality of life’s responsibilities have settled back in, many new converts have slowly started their spiritual drifting from their promised allegiance!
 3. Sadly, many congregations have been caught up in the **SPIRITUAL ATROPHY** that is instigated by many leaderships, and ***gradually drift away from the purity of the gospel*** that’s to be preached and lived by all the members!
- C. **DRIFTING IS NEVER TO A HIGHER LEVEL**, physically or spiritually! We never **DRIFT** upstream, or against the tide, or to a closer relationship with the Lord!
1. Our efforts in Christianity are like trying to row the boat upstream!

2. When we don't properly address our tasks we first will stand still momentarily, then we start a "reversing of our progress," or **RETROGRESSION!**
 3. So is it really any surprise that the Lord wants us to CONTINUE TO GROW? **2 Pet.3:18; 2:2; Matt.5:6.**
- D. Your speed increases when you start drifting downstream, until such time that it becomes much more difficult to impede your progress!
1. The dangers increase with the speed of the drift! By the time you hear the noise of the waterfall it's usually too late to do anything about it!
 2. The farther from the safety of shore we are the less perception we have that we're drifting! We need to maintain a "point of reference" to be most acutely aware of our circumstances!
 3. This is especially true spiritually! As we move farther from the Lord we lose valuable spiritual perspectives and **our DESIRES TO HALT our wayward progress** DECREASES and we VACILLATE in our corrections!
- E. DRIFTING IS DANGEROUS TO OTHERS, as well as to SELF!
1. A ship, just drifting, is a hazard to all other vessels on the water! Cf. def. of "derelict:"
 - a) "Something voluntarily abandoned; specifically, a ship abandoned on the high seas"
 - b) "A person in abandonment; viz, losing sense of duty, being negligent." --Webster.
 2. Parents who are just drifting will soon find the opportunities to train their children are past! **Prov.22:6; Eph.6:4.**
 3. When those who HAVE BEEN spiritually stable start tossing to and fro with every wind of doctrine, they are leading and encouraging others also into spiritual adversity! **Eph.4:14-15-** *"as a result we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, 15] but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ!"*
 4. UNLESS IT IS IMPEDED, **DRIFTING ENDS IN SHIPWRECK!** **Text.**

II. CONSIDER SOME OF THE COMMON SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL DRIFTING:

- A. A lessening of the desires to study and meditate on the Word of God is a definite sign of waning spirituality!
1. Without God's revelation we cannot truly know our origin, purpose or our destiny. This alone should stimulate an aggressive interest in the Divine Disclosures!
 2. The Bible tells us what the terrible consequences of sin are, how we can escape those guilt consequences, and how we can live the most joyful and useful lives! **Jno.8:32.**
 3. It would be MOST UNFORTUNATE if we, who once gladly took time to glean God's directions from His holy pages, should no longer have such interest in it! **Psa.119:105** [*..lamp to feet, light to path..*]; **1 Tim.4:16-** *"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."*
- B. Diminishing desires to attend services of praise to God with His other people is another common sign of reduced focus on, and drifting from, our goal of heaven!
1. We should have the attitude of the psalmist and anxiously anticipate our gatherings with the saints! **Psa.122:1.**
 2. Since we're to "keep tabs" on ourselves, the very fact that the gladness, and the desires to attend are no longer there **should be a strong warning TO OURSELVES** that we are drifting!
- C. Reduced interests and actions in taking the gospel to others **nails us** as spiritual DRIFTERS!
1. One of the most aggressively evangelistic times in our lives is just after we've obeyed the gospel, when it's still fresh on our minds that we're new creatures in Christ because our sins have been blotted out! **Acts 8:4; 1 Thes.1:8-** *"For the word of the Lord has sounded forth*

from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place you faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.”

2. A DESIRE doesn't remain a DESIRE very long if it isn't acted on! We're hard pressed to convince others we have a DESIRE to spread the gospel if we're not doing it! **Jas.4:17-** *“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin!”*
- D. DRIFTING spiritually is the reason if we start feeling less NEED FOR and giving less TIME TO prayer in our lives! ***We need to talk with God regularly and often!***
1. Jesus prayed often Himself, and also taught His disciples to pray! **Mk.1:35-** *“And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.”* **Mk.6:46-** *“And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray.”* **Matt.6:9-13-** *“Pray then in this way...”*
 2. When the Christian prays less and less, he is drifting more and more. **1 Thes.5:17; Lk.21:36-** *“But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* **Jas.5:16-** *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much!”*
- E. Increased thrills in worldly pleasures and greater attachments to worldly honors are common signs of spiritual decline!
1. When some physical recreational activity excites our soul more than our relationship with God does, we have already begun to drift! **2 Tim.3:4-5-** *[For men will be] “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have DENIED ITS POWER” [THEY HAVE DRIFTED!!]*
 2. A young man received honors attached to his academic and athletic abilities that brought about a demonstration by his parents that was never attached to any spiritual accomplishments. With such a focus, the passing of time saw the entire family ***drift away*** from their allegiance to God!
 3. Although the accolades and pleasures of the world are only temporary, they are a most effective tool of Satan's to minimize the effectiveness of the people of God! **1 Jno.2:15-17.**
- F. A choice for constant or in-depth relationships with those OTHER THAN the people of God is signature action that broadcasts spiritual degeneration!
1. Ungodly associates will not only suffocate our religious activities, **which will speed up our drifting**, but also they'll be the UNDERTOW that keeps us from ever regaining control of our spirituality!
 2. Christians need to spend much time together so they can give and receive encouragement, and will have the strength to withstand the EVIL ONE! **1 Jno.5:19-** *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one!”* **1 Jno.2:14-** *“I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one!”* **Rom.14:19-** *“So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”* **Heb.3:13-** *“But encourage one another as long as it is still called Today, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*
 3. Such DRIFTING with ungodly associates is in direct contradiction of the HS's warning through Paul: **1 Cor.15:33-** *“Do not be deceived: ***Bad company corrupts good morals!***”*

III. THE LORD ALSO OFFERS US REMEDIES AGAINST DRIFTING.

- A. Continue your steady activity of rowing; or, keep patiently RUNNING! **Heb.12:1-** *“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*
1. Even with such counsel as this many still want a life of spiritual ease and the course of least resistance. **Amos 6:1; Rev.3:15-18.**

2. It requires diligent effort to live a life of service to the Lord; we cannot lay our oars aside! **1 Cor.15:58.**
- B. We must guard against the rip-tides and undercurrents which would deter us from our faithfulness to the cause of Jesus Christ!
1. Temptations are on every hand to pluck us from our steadfast adherence to righteousness.
 2. We also have a carnal nature to reckon with. **1 Pet.2:11-** *“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”*
 3. We are often our own greatest enemy, aren't we? **Jas.1:14-15-** *“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”*
- C. We must learn to STAY WITH the word of God, even when it means going against the **tide of influence of trusted associates!**
1. There are many tides that will sweep us away: popularity & praise of men, skepticism & humanism, denominationalism's varied false doctrines, and the NEGLECT and apathy of those we may have deemed as “faithful!”
 2. When we “drift along” with the majority we'll certainly be lost! **Matt.7:13-14.**
- D. We must maintain a strong anchorage in the storms of life, in order not to DRIFT off our course toward our eternity with God!!
1. Our minds must be anchored to the truth. **Eph.4:14-15-** *“We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, **but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.**”*
 2. We must maintain a Hope that is unshakable! **Heb.6:18-19-** *“..we have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us, This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil.”*
 3. And we have to be rooted and grounded in love! **Eph.3:17-19-** *“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you ... may be able to comprehend ... and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge..”*

CONCLUSION:

- A. It's **SELF EXAM TIME!** Am I DRIFTING? Am I just floating aimlessly downstream? Have I forgotten the waterfall [**judgment**] ahead? Am I acting obliviously to the dangers along the way?
- B. AM I, and are WE, allowing the congregation to just DRIFT? Have we been affected by the tides of indifference and neglect? Have we lessened our hold on the TRUTH OF GOD so that we're nigh to be vomited out of the Savior's mount because of lukewarmness?
- C. If ANY CHANGES are needed, NOW IS THE TIME to set right our allegiance and dedication and commitment to the Lord! We need to give A MOST EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS SPOKEN IN THE BIBLE! **Heb.2:1-3a-** *“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”*