

## Hebrews 2: 1-4

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Date: 21 March 2021

[ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to ask if you would join with me this morning as we stand together and we read Hebrews chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, and then we will pray. The Word of God says, For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard. 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.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we are so thankful for the opportunity we have of gathering together. Lord, we thank you for your Word, and Lord, we pray as we have read your Word, Lord, that you would speak clearly to our hearts.

Lord, you would open up our minds to see your Word and its truth. But Lord, that we would take that Word which we hear from you and we would apply it in our daily lives for your glory and your honor, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

[ 1 : 13 ] Amen. You may be seated. Amen. We are opening up kind of a pause in Hebrews 2, verses 1 through 4, because the author of Hebrews has closed the first chapter.

Now, we understand this, okay? When the letter was written, when the book of Hebrews was written, it wasn't written with chapter breaks, right? It was written as one long letter, and they would have read it in its entirety at one sitting, and they would have read it as a letter, so to say, not broken up into chapters and verses and things of that nature.

But there is this parenthetical break between the end of what we have as chapter 1 and then chapter 2, verse 5 and following. That is, his reference to Jesus being greater than the angels, because he's going to pick that theme up later.

He's going to pick it up in chapter 2, verse 5, and continue it through the rest of that chapter. But he has this parenthetical pause, which, again, is another theme we find in Scripture, where the author, being moved by the Spirit of the Lord, stops for a moment and then gives this kind of aside, which has an application of a truth, which he has just said.

In Hebrews, there are five of these parenthetical pauses. These are five admonitions or five corrective actions which we must take. That if what was just said was true, then there must be this response to that truth, because a truth without a response is just useless information.

[ 2 : 38 ] If we know the truth, but we don't do anything based upon that truth which we know, then that truth has not benefited us at all. And what we find is each one of these pauses or each one of these admonitions are applications of the truth which we have just read.

These are some of the most difficult passages that we find in the book of Hebrews. If you know anything at all about the book, you'll know probably with some excitement looking forward to Hebrews chapter 6, where there's this admonition about our salvation, and it seems to imply that one could lose their salvation there in Hebrews chapter 6.

By the way, I do not think that it teaches that at all, but we're not going to get into that yet because we're not there, right? And then you get into Hebrews chapter 10, which is where Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon, Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God, based upon Hebrews chapter 10, where it says, It is a fearful and awful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. Such a sermon was preached by Jonathan Edwards that people were grabbing the back of their pews because they felt like hell was opening up below them and they would all fall into it. And it was an admonition of doing something in response to a truth which they had just heard.

We have Hebrews chapter 11, the heroes of the faith, but then it is followed by an admonition in Hebrews chapter 12, if we are surrounded by so great a God of witnesses, if this is true, then let us

live this way.

[ 4 : 02 ] And we have this here in these four verses of the first chapter, in chapter 2, in response to the truth we have just heard. If Jesus is a better Savior, and he is, by the way, we'll go ahead and answer that.

He's better than any Savior anyone else has ever trusted in or will trust in, right? He is a much better Savior. If Jesus is better than the angels, and he is, then we will do this.

And this hope resting on better things will lead us, if you need the theme for this morning, to a greater devotion. To a greater devotion. Because of who it is we are trusting in, it leads us to a greater devotion.

And we see this in Hebrews 2, verses 1 through 4. First, we see the danger of a neglected word. The danger of a neglected word.

Look at what the word of God says. For this reason, for this reason, because of who Jesus is. Friend, listen, if you don't hear anything else, because of who Jesus is, we must do what the scripture calls us to do.

[ 5 : 17 ] Not because of who I am. Not because of who anyone else is. Not because of anyone that has ever, whoever your spiritual father and mother in the faith are. Not because of them.

Not because of who you learned your faith from. Not because of the church you grew up in. Not because of your grandparents' faith, or your parents' faith. But because who Jesus is.

For this reason, because of Jesus, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard. Because of who Jesus is.

The danger of a neglected word. Why do you need to be in the word of God? Because of who Jesus is. Jesus Christ is found from Genesis to Revelation.

He's all throughout it. He's throughout God's history of interaction with mankind. He is the word of God, and he was the word made flesh. But because of who he is, presently and eternally, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.

[ 6 : 23 ] You know, the greatest encouragement that I could ever give you to be in the word of God is because of who Jesus Christ is. Jesus himself said, it is not I who judges you, but it is the very word of God which will judge you.

You know, God is so fair. As a kid, were you ever in trouble and you ever asked the question, why? Like, why am I getting in trouble? Or why is this happening? And my parents gave that classic answer that I give a lot of times, because.

Right? And that's good. It's because. It's enough. But we want to know why. And when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, God is so good, and he is so righteous, and he is so fair, he has already told us the standard of his judgment upon us.

And because of that, Jesus is only going to ask you one thing. What does your life look like in comparison to the word of God?

Not in comparison to anybody else. Not in contrast to the people around you. But how does your life measure according to the word? He says, because of this, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

[ 7 : 34 ] There is a great danger here. Now, it is my estimation. It is my understanding here, and we need to clarify this, because some biblical scholars will tell you that the author of Hebrews in this portion is writing to non-believers encouraging them to be believers.

I go the other side, and I believe that the author of Hebrews is writing to believers and encouraging them to be greater believers. And the reason I think that is because he has this word, we, all throughout it.

He unites himself with that, right? He unites himself along beside of that. He says, we must pay much closer attention so that we do not drift away from the faith or from it.

There is a great danger, and we are seeing it played out. There is a greater sense of biblical illiteracy in our world today than there has ever been. We have more people packed into churches who know less Bible than they ever have.

And that's a reality. There is a danger of drifting away from the word. And their faith may be based upon a sensation that is it felt good and they had goosebumps. Now, I hope that I never have the power to give you goosebumps unless it's the word of God that is causing them upon you.

[ 8 : 45 ] It has been a great show. It has been a great performance. And there has been this great eloquent speaker who can wax philosophical with his words and he seems to be so poetic and he

seems to be so smooth and he convinces you of something and the goosebumps follow up on you, but you do not know what the word of God says about it.

And that is something that is running rampant throughout our testimony. Unfortunately, many of the most often quoted Bible phrases in our society today are not Bible phrases at all.

They are man's interpretation of what they think the Bible should say. See, there is a great danger of drifting from it. We need to give ourselves to the word because of who Christ is.

And we say, well, you know, I used to think that, well, if I've accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, that's enough, right? Well, no, because there's a lot more in there that he wants for me other than just my salvation.

Now, I'm not talking about losing your salvation. I'm talking about drifting away from it in the midst of your salvation. The greatest illustration I can give to this and it probably doesn't even do it justice.

[10:01] I remember just this past summer that carrying the kids and I and even my in-laws went down to Dolphin Island, Alabama. And many of you know Dolphin Island. It's this great place, but Dolphin Island is this real little sliver of island and we were all on one side.

Well, on one side of the island, the waves and the wind was really just blistering you. So we decided we were going to just walk across the little island and go to the other side and carrying the kids and I walked over there and as soon as we got over there, it was kind of mayhem going on on the beach and it was just kind of insane.

There was really nothing, you know, nothing didn't look out of the ordinary, but we saw this lady running back and forth and something really tragic had happened because what had happened there were two teenage boys on kayaks and one of them came back.

And the lady we saw was the mother and they couldn't find her son. I think he was somewhere in the age of 13 or 14. They couldn't find him and it was somewhere out there.

It took the police forever to get there and a boat, a fishing boat came up that had been from that area and the fishing boat came up and they had his kayak. This kayak was empty and then they went back and they were looking and by the way, I'll go ahead and say this.

[11:12] The name of the boat was Lucky Guess and I don't believe in anything such as luck so I'm just not going to attribute it to that. The two went back out there and everything was kind of going crazy. The mother was losing it and before you know it, after probably about 30, 45 minutes, the boat came back and had the boy with him and he had floated way out into the currents.

You know what had happened? As this boy was out there in the midst of that ocean on the kayak and having a good time, he decided he wanted to go for a swim and since he wanted to go for a swim, he took his life jacket off and he dove off his kayak.

You know that ocean's got a current in it when you get so far out and it took him further away than he could have ever imagined when he went underwater. See, he neglected the very thing that would have kept him close.

He just happened to pop up and his kayak paddle was close to him so he had been floating for about an hour holding on to his kayak paddle gradually being carried away out into the Gulf of Mexico.

You know what happens to a lot of people? They come to faith in Christ and they're enjoying it. They want to have a little bit of fun so they decide to neglect the very thing that keeps you on course and they dive right in and they drift away.

[12:24] They're carried away from where they should be because they forget the pull of the current of the world. Friend, listen to me. We must pay much closer attention to the word of God because there is a danger of drifting away.

This world has a current that does not carry you towards God. The current of this world will carry you from God and unless you stay in the word you will fall farther away than you could ever imagine.

And why do you need to do that? Look at what it says. For if the word spoken through angels that's the law by the way because all throughout scripture we have the giving of the decalogue, the ten great sayings, the ten commandments or the law, the angels are attributed as being there with God giving of the law.

We see Paul writing of that also in the book of Galatians and we see it being testified throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament and says, if the word spoken through angels and Jesus is better than the angels, right?

Yes, he is. If the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, that is you could not change it, and if every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

[13:31] I want to tell you something. Your salvation is great. I mean, it is amazing. And if we neglect the greatness of it, we will be held accountable for it someday.

Just having the truth but not getting into the truth and applying the truth is a dangerous thing because we will be held accountable.

Maybe we forget that believers also stand before a judgment seat. And it is the judgment seat of Christ. It is the Bema seat for the unbelievers.

But the believers will stand before the Savior who died for them. The Savior whose blood redeemed them and purchased them and called them to such a great salvation.

And we will stand personally before Him and He will look upon us. And as Paul says, we will enter eternity, some of us, suffering loss.

[14:36] Suffering loss. Because the wood, hay, straw, and stubble will be consumed as if by fire and only that which will remain is the precious stones. There is the danger of neglecting the Word.

Number two, there is the delivery that supports the Word. How can you trust it and why should you trust it? Look at what the Word of God says. It says, after it was at first, or the wording there, the literal wording is, which at its first speaking, after it was at first spoken through the Lord.

After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard it. Here is the delivery of the Word. You know how we have this?

Because Jesus said it. Men were moved of God to write the Word of God by the Spirit of God, but the Word of God is, and we see it in John chapter 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, or the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we refer to Him as what? Emmanuel, who is Jesus Christ, which means, in my simple Billy Joe Calvert interpretation, anything God has ever said to us has come to us through the Word, who is Jesus.

[15:56] So when the Spirit of God moved men of God to pen the Word of God, they were writing about Jesus, which was at the first spoken to us through the Lord.

In the beginning, God said, Now, can you say anything without words? Don't tell me, well, I have expressions on my face, and you can talk. You cannot say a thing without words, right?

You can display something, you can show something, but you can't say something without words. If I told you I was going to get up here and preach without words, then you would look at me awkwardly and probably leave very quickly, and that would be okay, but it says, if you say something, in the beginning God said, let there be light.

Now, He said it with the Word, and then we also find out in the New Testament that God created everything through Jesus, and Jesus is the creator and the sustainer of everything. Why? Because He is the Word who created it.

So why do we pay attention to it? Because of its delivery. It is from Jesus Himself, who is a better Savior, who is better than the angels, but not only that, because it says He was also confirmed to us by those who heard.

[17:12] We have a multitude of first-hand eyewitnesses who confirm for us. You know there is nothing in history that has been authenticated more and confirmed more than Scripture.

Nothing. There is no other historical document that has more confirmation behind it than the Bible. Nothing. Historically, archaeologically, eyewitnesses, you have, let's just take Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four Gospels, right?

Something that bothers some individuals, and we'll kind of allude to this a little bit, James Warner Wallace, by the way, who was a homicide detective for a number of years, this is a great study on apologetics, and he takes a great highlight into this if you ever want to look up some of his stuff and read it.

But anyway, if we take Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four witnesses, the four Gospels, right? Some people kind of get bent out of shape because they seem to have differences in them.

Let's just take the demoniac in the tomb. When you read one Gospel, you get there and there's one demoniac. When you read the other Gospel, there's two demoniacs. And some people say, see, the Bible contradicts itself. It's not saying the same thing.

[ 18 : 20 ] And I agree with Mr. Wallace there, the others, that it is the differences in the testimony that add authenticity to the reality. Because, okay, I had an incident on my bus that happened Friday.

It involves three people. It involves three elementary school students. I asked all three of them what happened. It was pretty easy to find out it was an incident.

It was a young boy standing in front of me and he had white stuff all over his face. White stuff all over his face. And he was just sitting there with this shot look on his face and he was just kind of staring at me, kind of blanking. I don't know what happened.

I said, what happened to you? He told me. I turned him around and asked the rest of the bus. Somebody said, it looks like shaving cream. I said, it ain't shaving cream. Nobody on here is shaving. What is it? Well, I found out who the other two were. I talked to three kids about the incident.

You know how many stories I heard? About six. But three, no. Three different stories. But the reality that it happened is authenticated by the fact that everybody was talking about it.

[ 19 : 24 ] If you have a group of eyewitnesses and all of them tell you the same story, that means they have met before and collaborated that story. I mean, come on, how many of us have multiple kids?

If your kids come into the room and they tell you the same story, they talked about it before they came into the room. They got their story right. I did that. Right? Me and Wynne did that. We're going to have to answer to Mom and Paul when we get there.

Let's be sure we got the same story. All that does is tell you we were making something up. We collaborated our story. The truth was kind of left out because we didn't want the reality of what happened highlighted.

We would rather tell you what we want you to hear what happened. Right? The fact that we have differences in the four gospels testifies to us that these are actual events.

If four of us witness the same event, all four of us are going to tell different details about that event because all four of us see them from different life perspectives. One of us is going to be caught up in the main character.

[ 20 : 24 ] Somebody else goes, oh, but there was another guy there too. We need that because it authenticates for us. Listen, when you open up the scripture and you read the Bible, the fact that God used so many people to testify to what he was saying is a very authenticating fact that shows us it must be paid attention to because by the way, the Bible only says one thing.

It's not a whole bunch of stories. It is one story from beginning to end told by a multitude of people in different genres throughout different ages and it's very cohesive and never argues against itself. That's why I say the best commentary on scripture is scripture because we don't need man's interjection to help us once we understand God's perspective.

We have this delivery. God didn't give us one man hiding in a cave. Okay? He didn't give us one man digging in the ground in New York.

God said, I'll show you how I can speak. I'm going to speak through all these different men and not every one of them were probably or none of them really, let's just be honest, none of them should be put on a pedestal other than the fact God used them.

[ 21 : 51 ] And the testimony that God gives us shows us we must pay attention. Third and finally, let's get to this. We need to understand not only is there the danger of neglecting the word, there is a delivery that supports the word, there is the demonstration that confirms the word.

Is this thing so? And it says in verse 4, God demonstrates for us because not only did Jesus say at first it was spoken through the Lord, it was also confirmed to us by those who heard it and then we have in verse 4, God also testifying with him.

I love it when God adds a testimony to what we say. Right? I love that. You know how that happens as a pastor when you're preaching the word and you start feeling this churning in your stomach and you start feeling this conviction and this uncomfortableness?

God is adding a testimony to what is being said because I can't create any unnecessary conviction or anything like that. It is only the spirit who does that. God also testifying with him both by signs and wonders and by various miracles.

Now where do we see that being played out? We see it being played out a lot in the Old Testament because every time a prophet would come and forth tell something that God said God would testify

to that, right? We see it being played out in Moses and Aaron throughout the Egyptians.

[ 22 : 59 ] He really testified to the reality of what they were saying. We see it being played out in the New Testament in the book of Acts. Every time the word of God went to a new region there was this great display of miracles and signs and miraculous events.

You remember that? Every time in the book of Acts when the word of God goes to another group people are filled with the spirit and they begin to speak in tongues and they begin to speak a known language that was unknown to them.

I believe the interpretation is there and they were really being moved of the spirit because God was offering his testimony along with what his people were proclaiming. There was all these miraculous signs all these testimonies God is confirming what is said.

Now when we get to the end of the book of Acts and we get to the spread of the gospel to the known world and it begins to move along by the way by the time we get to the end of the book of Acts and we close out the rest of the New Testament by the time we get to the book of Revelation the gospels really just went into the uttermost parts of the world.

I don't believe we have those testifying testimonial signs as much. You know we don't want to get into it because here's the great testimony we have is this last one and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.

[ 24 : 09 ] You know how God demonstrates today that the word is true by the gifts he gives every believer.

It is a spiritual gift. You know how I know the word is true personally? I know this comes as a shock to any that really don't really really know me I mean know me other than that knew me before I was 20.

So they have to know me pre you know like pre 20 years. I hated public speaking. To this day I don't like public speaking. I don't like getting up in front of people.

I don't like standing up and you know I don't mind walking into a crowded room I'll talk to everybody one on one but when everybody's quiet and I have to stand up I don't like it. Other people think well he's a pastor he'd be a great person to lead this.

If it's not preaching I don't like it. I'm not good at it. I stumble over my words. My brother used to make fun of me because I walked into Burger King one time I was 16 years old and I hated public speaking so much that I walked up to the counter and I wouldn't even make eye contact with the person behind the restaurant and I said I want a chicken burger.

[ 25 : 20 ] I was trying to say I wanted a chicken sandwich. You know what happened a few years ago? They introduced the chicken burger. I called him back and said I have been at that a long time ago. That was me. Right?

Now the world is just not catching up with it. But I didn't like it. I still to this day don't like drive throughs. Not only because they always think I'm a girl and they call me ma'am. So I always try to get this real deep voice like this.

But I just don't like it. I don't like those things. So for God to call me to preach was really beyond me.

Now I'm an extrovert. I like being around people. You know what you find with most pastors?

They're introverts by nature. Most pastors are introverted by nature.

Now God can use every one of us. You know also I found with most pastors? Pastors deal with a greater depression than just about anybody else I know.

[ 26 : 20 ] You know why? Because that which they do is a testimony to the gift God has given them and it's his work alone. And it confirms to them that the word of God is true.

The one place that I can be bold, unequivocal and not have any shadow of doubt is when I stand behind the pulpit and I open up the word of God because I'm not standing on Billy Hill.

And the spiritual gift God is giving you, you come to faith in Christ all of a sudden you can love like you used to never love. For the fruit of the spirit is what? Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, kindness and self-control.

All of a sudden you got a self-control you used to never have. You know what God is doing? He is demonstrating to you that the word is true. You begin to be concerned about the church and pray like you've never prayed before.

You begin to have a peace that passes all understanding. All of a sudden these gifts become a reality in your life and you tried your whole life to make them happen but they wouldn't happen. And the moment you gave your life to faith in Jesus Christ, God confirmed it.

