

### **3 Ways We Can Neglect our Salvation Pleasant Plains 4-8-2018PM NICK ANGEL**

- **\*READ Hebrews 2:1-4\*** There is much about the Hebrew letter that we simply do not know for certain. Everyone's favorite trick question in Bible Trivia (right behind, "How many of each animal did Abraham put on the ark?") is, "who wrote the letter to the Hebrews?" Of course, the answer is that we don't know for certain. Some say Paul, others say Barnabas, some Timothy, and still others have different ideas of their own. We simply don't know. We also don't know who exactly these Hebrews were. Other letters make the recipients a bit more easy to identify since they are named based upon where the people were located, but Hebrews is simply to the Hebrews.
  - Nonetheless, while we might have questions about the authorship and recipients, there isn't much question as to what was on the author's mind as he pinned this New Testament letter. Quickly out of the gate, we see the writer zeroing in on the readers need to make sure that they are giving great attention to what it was that they had heard regarding their faith. (**Hebrews 2:1**) It becomes quickly apparent that the author believes there is a need for the recipients to be reminded about their need to stay alert regarding their faiths. If other people were punished for their sins (**Hebrews 2:2**) then how could they but incur the same punishment if they neglected the great salvation that they had obtained through faith in Jesus? (**Hebrews 2:3**) Even though these individuals had seen the great signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, it was still necessary that they pay attention and not neglect their salvation. If this was a need warning for them, then it is certainly a worthy warning for us to heed.
  - As disciples in the 21st century, we, too, must be just as careful to make sure that we do not neglect our great salvation, but how can this happen? How is it that we can neglect our salvation? To neglect simply means to "fail to care for properly," so how can we fail to care for our salvation? Thankfully, the Hebrew writer goes on to give at least three different ways that we might neglect our salvation, and we are going to consider those three ways of neglect for the next few minutes of our study.
- I. We fail to seek the strength Jesus desires to provide. (Hebrews 4:14-16)**
- A. Unbelief and disobedience can and will hinder us from obtaining the reward of our salvation.**
1. Prior to these verses, we see the Hebrew writer bringing the readers minds back to the Israelites and their failures to enter the promised land. (**Hebrews 3:12-19**) Their unbelieving hearts led them to being disobedient to God, and for that God did not allow them to enter into His rest. (**vv.18,19**)
  2. In **Hebrews 4:1,2**, the Hebrews writer draws the application to the reader for them to make sure they were paying close attention to their faiths so that they would not come short of entering into God's eternal rest.
  3. For some people, the thought of being fully devoted to God in belief and obedience seems almost an unachievable task! Instead of giving Satan respect, we cower to Him and think that we cannot overcome the temptations that he puts in our way. The Hebrew writer tries to put those types of thoughts out of our minds by offering up the example of Jesus's life on earth.
- B. Part of Jesus's work on earth was to show us that obedience to God can be done.**
1. Part of the strength Jesus provides us is His example of obedience to the Father. We do have a great high priest who has past through the heavens and back to God, and because of Him we can hold fast our confession. We can hold on strongly to our salvation and not neglect it. How is this the case, though?
  2. This is the case because He showed us the ability to overcome Satan and His temptations. He not only overcame Satan head to head (**Matthew 4:1-11**), but He also overcame the daily struggles of life to please God and serve as our example. Now, some will argue that of course Jesus did what He did because He was God, but we cannot forget that Jesus was certainly God but He was also man. (**I John 4:2**) He could truly sympathize and even empathize with us in our struggles.

3. So what does that mean in regards to our nurturing and caring for our faiths? It means that we can and must look to the example of Jesus who was *"tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."* We can look to His ways of overcoming and use those same ways of escape. We know the ways of escape are present (**I Corinthians 10:13**), but we must still make the choice as Jesus did to use them to overcome Satan's temptations. That strength He offers must be taken advantage of or we will be found guilty of neglecting our great salvation.

## II. We fail to grow and mature. (Hebrews 5:11-14)

### A. Failure to grow and mature leaves us without the ability to change from the sin we were engaged in before coming to faith in Christ.

1. As the Hebrew writer is making his way through this writing, he speaks about his desire to write to the recipients about the order of Melchizedek and how Jesus fits into his priesthood. Yet, he is hindered from doing so based upon their dull hearing which has resulted in their lack of success in growth. They should've been teachers by this time, but they instead still needed someone to teach them the basic principles of the faith.
2. This led the Hebrew writer to warn them that those who fail to mature are not able to train their senses to know what is good and what is evil. I don't know about you, but that almost seems to be a stretch to connect these two things. It seems a stretch to say that failure to know and grow in knowledge will leave us in a place where we might sin more, but it is very much the truth. We must recognize that we are able to grow and change based upon our greater knowledge of God's will for us through knowing the Bible better. (**II Timothy 2:15**)
3. If we are not putting in the effort to learn God's word better, then not only will we not come to know the *"elementary principles,"* but we also won't be able to know what God wills for us to do and to avoid. We will be ignorant of His desires for us, and in doing so we will be neglecting the great salvation that has been extended to us.

### B. If we want to nurture our faiths then we must take full advantage of our second chance at life.

1. Our life in Jesus is truly a second chance at life, and with this being the case it should make sense to us that we are taking full advantage of the opportunities to grow and mature in our new found faiths. *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; before, new things have come."* (**II Corinthians 5:17**) We have the opportunity to rebuild ourselves into exactly what God would have us to be because of the salvation He has given us in Christ.
2. Just as babies are nurtured and fed so that they might grow up strong and healthy, so too we must be sure that we are being nurtured and fed with God's Word so that we can grow into someone who no longer needs milk but is in need of the meat of God's Word. Giving effort in this way will help us to be sure that we are not neglecting our salvation or our second chance, but that we are taking full advantage and bringing our faith along as it ought to be.

## III. We fail to remain in the faith. (Hebrews 6:4-8)

### A. Our salvation does not give us free license to go and do as we wish.

1. This was the question that Paul seems to be cutting off in **Romans 6:1**, *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?"* His answer of course is, *"May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"* Paul's words in **Romans 6:1,2** fit in nicely with our verses in **Hebrews 6** because they both speak to the necessity of being committed to our new faiths and the lives that come along with that.
2. Those who make the commitment to Jesus and then fall away from their faiths often do so because they have failed to nurture their faiths. They have neglected the great gift of salvation, they have neglected their second chance at life, and in doing so they have shamed Jesus and the sacrifice that He made on their behalf. Let this not be said of us!

**B. We must never forget the unsurpassable blessings that come from being a child of God.**

1. Notice what all has to be ignored by saints who neglect their salvation by falling away from their faiths. They have become enlightened. They have tasted the heavenly gift. They have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit. They have tasted the good word of God and have experienced the powers of the age to come. And yet they still fall away! That doesn't happen by accident, but it happens through a saint forgetting just how great it is to be a part of the body of Christ. It happens when they neglect to remember the goodness of God. **(Hebrews 6:4,5)**
2. Not only that but they have neglected to remember just how much Jesus had to do in order to make salvation through belief in His name possible. He had to take on flesh, suffer through temptation, and be murdered just so men might have the chance for salvation. How could we ever neglect our faith and our salvation when Jesus cared for us so much? Surely knowing what we have experienced and knowing what had to be done for us to experience it will be enough motivation to push us to always care and nurture our faith and our salvation that is based upon it. We have received such a blessing in our salvation, and we must be sure to only do that which is good with it. What a shame to waste such a blessing. **(Hebrews 6:7,8)**

The Hebrew writer opens his letter by reminding the recipients of the great need for them to be sure that their salvation wasn't be neglected. He gives them a few things to keep in mind, but then right before a transition he takes a moment to reassure them of his confidence in them. In **Hebrews 6:9-12**, we see the Hebrew writer state that he was convinced they would be just fine even though he had been speaking strongly to them, and I have faith that each of us are more than capable through the power of God to not neglect our salvation. As we move forward, may we always keep our eyes focused on Him and make sure that our faiths and salvation are being cared and nurtured to the fullest degree.

**\*PRAYER\*** *Our loving Father in heaven...we are so very grateful for the salvation that is possible through Your eternal plan and the willing sacrifice of Your Son Jesus. As we have considered this evening, we pray that You would ever help us to not neglect the great salvation that we have obtained. Help us to look to the example of Your Son for strength. Help us to give great effort to grow and mature. Help our faiths to always be strong and thriving, so that we might never put Your Son to shame. Bless us as we go throughout this week. Help us in our struggles against the evil one. These things we ask in the name of Your Son...amen.*