

## 4. Guilty of negligence

January 4, 2015

The most famous diamond in the world, the Hope Diamond, 45.52-carat, described as the most perfect blue diamond in the world, is one of the most highly prized gems on the planet, with an estimated value of \$250 million dollars.

The diamond is notorious for supposedly being cursed. It has a long recorded history, with few gaps, in which it changed hands numerous times on its way from India to France, having been originally in the possession of King Louis XIV, passed to Catherine the Great of Russia, then to King George IV of Britain, and eventually to the United States.

Despite the diamond's enormous value, one of its more eccentric owners often strapped it to her dog's collar. Eventually the jewel came into the possession of diamond merchant Harry Winston, who donated it to the Smithsonian Institution. Amazingly, Winston sent the diamond to the Smithsonian through the regular U.S. mail, wrapped in a brown paper bag as you can see on the screen. Can you imagine being the person who opened the package that day? Today the Hope Diamond sits on display behind bullet-proof glass at the National Museum of Natural History.

There are two things that are far more valuable than the Hope Diamond going unappreciated often. I am speaking of our personal salvation, the incredible gift that God gives to every person who puts his or her faith in Jesus Christ as well as the commands of God through the Bible. They are the greatest things God has given to each of us, yet we often take them for granted.

In this morning, I believe that our Lord is going to spend some time with us to explain how not to take His gift, salvation in Jesus Christ and His commands lightly, rather we should take them seriously.

### A. NEGLECT, YOU WILL DRIFT

*Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

The late Dr. J. Vernon McGee used to say this with his Southern drawl, "Whenever you see the word 'therefore' in the Bible, you need to find out what it is there for." In our previous Sundays, we've learned that Jesus is far superior over all the prophets and even angels. So, the author of this Book is connecting what we've learned so far with what he is about to teach.

We need to pay attention to what v1 says here. It tells us that if we don't take earnest heed to the things we have heard and learned from the Bible, we WILL drift away from the Lord.

Please remember that this Book of Hebrews was originally written for those first century Jewish Christians. But I believe that this applies to us very much as well. He is speaking about the danger here that of neglecting our salvation. Please note that he is not talking about "rejecting" but "neglecting." The author is not telling unbelievers to become Christians; rather, he is encouraging Christian believers to pay attention to their great salvation and the commands they have received from the Lord.

Listen, more spiritual problems are caused by neglect than blatant disobedience. Let me explain. The original Greek word of 'drift away' is "pararreō". It is the idea of

“to slip” and it often was used for an arrow slipping from its quiver, or food slipping down the windpipe to cause choking. It happens easily without our knowledge.

On one summer day, long, long ago while I was a college kid, I was in a small one man rubber boat at Korean sea. I paddled out about 30 yards from shore. I was kicking back, put the paddles in the boat and was enjoying the sun and dozed off. When I woke up, I realized that I was drifting far away from the shore. Did you notice two things that I didn't do? First, I did not have an anchor of the boat; second, I did not paddle.

No born-again Christian wakes up in the morning and says to oneself, “I am going to be a backslider starting today.” It starts with not doing that we are supposed to do. Our backsliding always comes from slow drifting by not praying to the Lord daily, not reading the Bible daily, not fellowshiping with God's people regularly. It does not happen suddenly. As the followers of Jesus Christ, we must anchor our faith in the Savior and Lord Jesus and constantly do the things that are required to walk closely with the Lord.

## **B. TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE**

*Hebrews 2:2-4 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

“The word spoken through angels” meant to be the OT Law. We have to wonder how the angels were involved with the OT Law. We find a verse from the cross-reference in the Book of Acts. Right before he was stoned to death, Stephen, who was full of the Holy Spirit said this:

*Acts 7:53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.*

I do not know how the angels were involved in the OT Law, but the Bible says that they were. That's good enough for me.

The main point of this portion of the Scripture is not arguing about the involvement of the angels in the OT Law, rather it is about the importance of the salvation message that was given by the Son of God Jesus who is much more important than the angels.

I want all of you to pay attention to two words in v2: ‘*transgression*’ and ‘*disobedience*.’ We've heard these two words so many times in sermons, they go in one ear and out the other. Let's look at those two words closely that cover all of our sins.

Transgression refers to “sin of commission” which means a willful violation of God's law. But disobedience refers to “sin of omission” which means a willful refusal to comply with God's commands.

Since we are living under grace of God, some believers think that even if they sin against the Lord, they can escape the chastening hand of God that were evident under the OT Law. No prophet or angel died for our salvation, but the Son of God did. If we willfully continue in our sins, it is like daring and challenging and neglecting the great gift of God, salvation and His commands. Our sins are much worse than the unbelievers' sins, because we should know better.

*Luke 12:48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

Ladies and gentlemen, listen to me and listen to me well, please. We are living in the age the culture of death, from abortion, to euthanasia, to racial confrontation that includes killing police officers. A so-called reverend Al Sharpton who has repeatedly made the police look like the enemy, and even led protests where cops were shouted down, insulted, and threatened with murder.

If that is not bad enough, the historic Washington National Cathedral – a privately owned and operated Episcopal church – allowed its first-ever Muslim prayer service on November 14th, 2014. Its “Very Reverend” Gary Hall said, “the sound of the midday Muslim prayers were “a beautiful sacred language in a beautiful sacred space.” Shame on him and shame on that church. It is exactly the same thing as some of the ancient Israel kings who brought the foreign idols into the holy temple and made sacrifices to them.

This is not going to get any better in the year 2015, but only will become worse. If you do nothing in your walk with Christ, you, too, will drift away from the Lord. You have to have a strong determination to stay closely with the Lord, not from the distance as Peter did before he denied the Lord three times. Pray to the Lord daily, read the Bible daily, and have fellowship with God’s people regularly. Remember, being an undercover Christian means that you don’t want to be acknowledged with Christ.

*Matthew 10:32-33 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

In v4, we find another very important truth. According to Mark chapter 16, Jesus said:

*Mark 16:17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues*

Please note that miracles, signs, and wonders that God brings forth is to confirm for those who believe according to His will, not to the demands of humans. Much damage is done by those who think that they can just demand to the Lord and He is obligated to do as He was told. At the same time, there are many Christian protestant denominations that flat out ignore signs, wonders, and gifts of the Holy Spirit because their denomination rules and regulations don’t acknowledge them.

I don’t know which one is worse – the denial of miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the fleshly counterfeit of them. Either of them is dangerous.

### **C. THE GLORIOUS HUMANITY OF CHRIST**

*Hebrews 2:5-9 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little*

*lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

In chapter 1, the author of the Book of Hebrew brilliantly explained to us about the deity and superiority of Jesus over the prophets and angels. But in this chapter 2, he explains the humanity of Jesus through the sacrifices He made for us.

We must understand and acknowledge that the fact of Jesus – fully God and fully man. He was not a half God and a half man. Don't think that He was a man on the outside, but God on the inside. He added a human nature to His divine nature. Unbelievers would say, "That's impossible." I say, "Absolutely. That's why Jesus is God."

Many people who do not know anything about all the religions around the world in depth insist that all religions lead to the same God. They just assume it. That's the reason they have a bumper sticker "coexist." All of the religions of the world do not teach the same thing, nor do they want to coexist with other religions because they denounce the others.

If anyone thinks that God of Christianity should have a broader mind to accommodate other religions, that person is insulting the Lord. In fact, if there is any other way, do you think that God the Father would have allowed His Son to go through something as horrific as the crucifixion?

There was no other way to clear the sin that mankind committed other than a sacrifice. But it had to be done by a sacrifice of a man, not just any man, but a man without sin. Angels could not do it because they did not have physical bodies. No man or woman could do it because all of us are sinners by nature and by choice.

*Matthew 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

What is "this cup"? I believe it was the cup of the wrath of God. Isaiah called it the cup of His fury.

*Isaiah 51:22 Thus says your Lord, The Lord and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people: "See, I have taken out of your hand The cup of trembling, The dregs of the cup of My fury; You shall no longer drink it."*

Jesus tasted death for everyone. Jesus had to be the recipient of the wrath of God in our place so that we could be forgiven of our sin. There was no other way. Now do you see how valuable and important the gift of salvation is that we have in Christ? Don't take it lightly, because Jesus paid for it with His life.

#### **D. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) We cannot and will not obey the Lord and His commands as long as we think of our salvation lightly.
- 2) God's commands remain as commands to us, not suggestions, even if we don't like them.
- 3) Pray to the Lord daily, read the Bible daily, and have fellowship with God's people regularly.