

## Hebrews 2

Good morning and thank you for joining us! We're continuing our vbv study through the book of Hebrews, so would you please turn in your Bibles to Hebrews 2?

Last week we saw how the writer of Hebrews showed 7 OT scriptures that proved Jesus is greater than any angel, because Jesus Himself is God. And the week prior to that we observed 7 reasons why Jesus is greater than the OC.

This morning we move from lofty theology to direct applicability to our lives.

On July 9, 1960, a middle-aged resident of Buffalo, New York named James Honeycutt took the 17-year-old daughter and 7-year-old-son of a coworker for what he assumed would be a pleasant, scenic boat ride on the Niagara River.

**SHOW PIC** As he had done many times before, Honeycutt pulled his boat five miles upriver from the Falls in Beaver Island State Park. Then, for reasons that will never be known, James Honeycutt shut off his motor.

Maybe he wanted to enjoy the scenery in peace and quiet, or perhaps he wanted to chat with the children without being drowned out by the motor's roar. Or it could be that he saw no point in expending valuable fuel to take them where Mother Nature would certainly carry them for free.

**SHOW PIC** The three talked and drifted for about an hour, and eventually floated under the North Grand Island Bridge, the marker that serves as the unofficial point of no return.

At some point, James Honeycutt decided that it was time to start his motor, turn around, and head for home, but soon discovered that 7.5 horsepower was no match for the mighty Niagara. **SHOW PIC** Even at full throttle, the boat continued to creep backward.

The situation went from bad to worse when the overtaxed propeller was ripped completely off the motor. Honeycutt grabbed two oars and began to row mightily toward land, fighting the most powerful waterfall on Earth. As they entered the rapids above the falls the boat struck a rock and capsized, throwing all three into the turbulent, frigid waters.

The teenage girl clung tenaciously to the boat, and when the torrent finally wrestled it from her grasp she found herself not terribly far from Goat Island, the huge land mass in the middle of the river that separates the American Falls to the south from the Canadian Horseshoe Falls on the north side.

A 44-year-old New Jersey truck driver who just happened to be viewing the Falls with his family from Terrapin Point (on Goat Island) that day spotted her and began to scream to the girl to fight her way to the island. “You’re fighting for your life!” he recalls shouting to her. At great peril to his own life, the man climbed over the rail thrust his left foot tightly between its bars, and dangled precariously over the cascading waters by that one leg in an attempt to reach the terrified girl.

As though scripted by a Hollywood screenwriter, on the child's third desperate lunge she managed to grab the man's thumb just 15 feet before she would almost certainly have plunged to her death. Another onlooker climbed over the rail, grabbed her by her life jacket, and pulled her to safety.

By now, her little brother had long since disappeared over the precipice. Experts later concluded that because the boy weighed only 46 pounds the momentum of the water (which travels through the rapids at up to 70 miles per hour) must have flung him far out beyond the falls and the jagged rocks below so that he landed in deep water.

**SHOW PIC** When he shot to the surface courtesy of his life preserver, he was spotted by a crew member of The Maid of the Mist, and rescued with only a mild concussion.

**SHOW PIC** That boy, Roger Woodward is now in his mid-60s and remains to this day the only person who has ever gone over Niagara Falls unintentionally and survived. **CLOSE PIC**

The entire episode is still known among local residents as "The Niagara Miracle." But there would be no miracle for James Honeycutt. His body was found three days later when it surfaced just a quarter-mile downriver.

James Honeycutt perished because he drifted too long, casually assuming that he could fire-up his motor and reverse course anytime he pleased and successfully fight the current.

His tragic ending serves as a vivid illustration of the insidious nature of drifting. We're only going to study 1 verse this morning.

Lets read v1 **1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.**

The title of this mornings message is Denying the drift  
Let's pray

Remember this book was written to Jewish believers in the 1st century. They had turned away from Judaism, from the OC, the OT, turned away from those things to a better priesthood, to a better sacrifice. To a better covenant, all through Christ.

Again imagine the struggle of being a 1st century Hebrew Chritsian. All your life you grew up being obedient to the law. Then you had come to faith in this Carpenter from Galilee, this Man you recognize as Messiah.

**SHOW PIC** And as a Hebrew Christian you're watching the sacrifices take place at the temple, and the sight of incense rising from the temple and might be thinking **CLOSE PIC**

All that is of no value now to you Lord? And on top of that, my Jewish family has cut me off. I'm an outcast because I trust in Jesus of Nazareth as Lord?

And all of chapter 1 the author is saying that Jesus is greater than the prophets, greater than any way God spoke in the Old

Testament, greater than the angels which played a major role in the OT.

And remember Jesus has sat down at the right hand of God, signifying the work of salvation is complete, forgiveness of sin is possible! Jesus reigns over all!

I mention all of that because as chapter 2 opens we have the first warning brought to us. We're gonna dissect v1, and you notice it starts with the word **therefore**. Which means because of all this, because of all of these facts, because of everything that was just laid out before us.

It says therefore **WE**. The author includes himself as he goes through this and gives us this critical warning. Which tells us this warning is for all of us, young or old, new in Christ or been walking with Jesus for 50 years. V1 is for all of us.

**Therefore we must**

That word must doesn't imply, you ought to try this, this is a good idea. It's we must, it's a necessity.

Jesus says in **John 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'**

Jesus didn't say, you ought to try being born again, maybe that'll work for you. Jesus doesn't say that.

Do you remember when Mary and Joseph thought they lost Jesus when He was 12 years old. They went back after 3 days, and they go back to the temple and find that He's teaching in the synagogue **Luke 2:49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"** Jesus didn't say 'sorry I freaked you out mom and dad but I thought I'd get a head start.' No he said I must be about my fathers business. Same word here in v1.

So please notice the thrust, the force of these words to open this verse.

The phrase immediately following says **give the more earnest heed**. In the Greek that means to apply your mind to something above all else. This is what's most important, this is what goes to the top of the pile.

And what is it we're to give the more earnest heed to? **to the things we have heard**-it's the applying of our mind to these things that we have heard about who Jesus is and what He's done and going to do.

Why is this so important? Why take an entire Sunday and only study 1 verse?  
**lest we drift away**.

And that word there drift means to slip by. **SHOW PIC** It was used to describe a boat or a ship being loosed from its moorings and drifting. **CLOSE PIC**

Notice V1 isn't a challenge or a warning about becoming an apostate. He's not saying you have to watch out so you don't commit murder, or become a fraudster. That's not what this is saying.

This is telling us there is something within us, because of our nature that we are all susceptible to. And that is a drifting from our moorings.

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Notice God doesn't drift away, we drift away.

Please know the bible never warns us unnecessarily. God knows our nature, and our tendency.

**SHOW PIC** Drifting is subtle. It is slow. It is unnoticed. Unintentional. There's no friction. It's just smooth. Quiet. **CLOSE PIC**

This is not describing a dramatic U-turn. 'That's it. I was on fire yesterday for Jesus, but today I'm tired of that. I'm gonna rob a bank tomorrow.' That's not what it's saying.

Nor is this well, I woke up this morning, made-up my mind. I'm gonna backslide. It's not saying that.

**SHOW SLIDE** The danger for the Christian isn't plunging into perversity, rather it's drifting imperceptively. **CLOSE SLIDE**

DA Carson said this, “people do not gravitate towards godliness, prayer or obedience to Scripture, or faith or delight in the Lord. Naturally, we don't gravitate towards those things. We drift toward compromise, and then we call it tolerance. We drift towards disobedience and then we call it freedom. We drift towards superstition, we call it faith.

Carson continues...

“We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and we call that relaxation. We slouch towards prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we've escaped legalism. We slide towards godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.”

See one of the problems with drifting away is that you have no idea if you're drifting unless you have a stationary point of reference. **SHOW PIC** You have to be able to look at the shore and see a tree. Or see a large rock. See something that is a stationary, and then you can realize you're moving. **CLOSE PIC**

If you're just out on the water with a bunch of other people in boats and you're all drifting at the same rate, you don't see anything moving.

That's important for us because we're living in a culture and we're living in a time where we're being told, oh the Bible is outdated, it's written 2000 years ago. That's not relative to our more modern and refined times today.

But v1 reminds us that we have a stationary point of reference that will never change. Christ, the Cross, the word of God. It's unchanging. And all of this is going to dissolve and pass away, and that will not have moved an iota for eternity.

This is saying we need to give this the more earnest heed, because if we don't fix our mind and thoughts to this, we're gonna start to drift.

And if you're hanging out with drifters, **SHOW PIC** I watched enough cowboy movies to know what drifters are. They're usually no good. If you're hanging with Drifters, you're not going to realize you're drifting. **CLOSE PIC**

The only way you know you're drifting is if you have a stationary point of perspective. That's why we can't look to the culture, we have to look towards Christ.

Now the tendency in a message like this is to begin thinking of someone we know and begin to think-they're drifting. But look drifting doesn't always mean that the person is no longer coming to church, doesn't mean they're not reading their Bibles. Folks there are people involved in ministry, pastors, who are drifting.

Jesus tells the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2

**Revelation 2:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found**

them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Just by looking at the church of Ephesus we'd say that church is on fire. They've got great ministries going. They don't put up with false teachers, they labor to the point of exhaustion, this church is really really something.

Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. You left your first love-not lost. You've left your first love. See Jesus never leaves us nor forsakes us, He's always there. He never drifts from us, we drift from Him.

Then Jesus gives a prescription.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Remember from where you've fallen, Jesus says, Repent, do the first works, lest I come and remove your lampstand your testimony.

The prescription to anyone who has drifted is to repent. It's to make up one's mind-I'm not gonna drift anymore. I'm going to take the more earnest heed to the things I've heard about Jesus.

Because nobody has to drift.

Hebrews 6 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

We don't have to drift, there is an anchor for our souls.

You know in a crowd this size, I know there's some drifting going on. Again it's not intentional, it's slow and unperceived in time. Time can do that.

We just saw in Revelation 2 Jesus rebuke the church at ephesus, that was only 1 generation from when the book of Ephesus was written which talked about high, marvelous holy things

One generation later, Jesus, has to rebuke the same church, saying you've left your first love.

Time will do that and it can produce a rut.

It tells us in Proverbs 24 30 I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; 31 And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down.

It's a dramatic picture. The field is slowly filling with weeds, until one day it's overgrown and it becomes hard to deal with. You know that can happen in our lives when there's neglect, we drift

slowly, and make no mistake-there's damage that comes from that.

That's not going out there robbing convenience stores. It's not doing a bunch of bad things. But we can get in a rut even when it comes to the things of God.

We can become so familiar with spiritual things and spirituality, we take 'em for granted and lose our awe and wonderment for Jesus.

When I really dedicated my life to Christ I didn't know the difference between an epistle and an apostle.

I remember I had someone explain 5 point Calvinism to me and I go-well that's dumb-there's no such thing as limited atonement. I didn't know much but I knew that.

I didn't know much but I just knew Jesus loved me, that I was a sinner going to hell. I didn't know all the rest of the theological stuff, I just wanted more of Jesus.

That's usually how it is. When we first get saved, we come to church, we're like wow, we're singing about Jesus, we're studying the Bible together, there's all these other people that love Jesus-this is awesome! Then you do that for 6 months, or 5 years or 20 years and now it's hey make sure we get our chairs-it's important.

Are we drifting? Is our love cooling? Are we going thru the motions on some things? Has it all become more about ourselves than Jesus?

I don't wanna play church do you?  
I want more of Jesus in my life

I'm gonna ask the worship team to come up, I'm gonna ask you to stay seated b/c I asked the team if they would play a specific song in light of this morning's text. I'll come back up and we'll close in prayer and song.