

An Impassioned Warning

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 2:1-4
Preached on: Sunday, October 9, 2016

I'd like to begin with a little story, it was when I was in my early teens. In fact, Mike Rutherford might have been with me during this particular trip. But there were times when we would go on canoe trips up at the boundary waters in Minnesota. We would pack up all the boys in these big trucks and there would probably be 20-25 of us and we would canoe the waters there on the border of Canada and Minnesota. But one day, some of us decided we would go do a little bit of exploring and as we were paddling along, we came to an area that continued to narrow and there was a large sign that says, "Dangerous rapids ahead! Do not proceed! Disembark and portage here." Well, that was a bit confusing because as far as the eye could see, the water looked nice and calm, very inviting. It was kind of nice to not have to paddle as much. The little canoe was moving along very nicely in the mild current, but what we couldn't see was the increasingly swift and powerful current that could suck your little canoe into a vortex and ultimately send you over a very very dangerous rapids.

Well, of course, the temptation was to ignore the sign and let the gentle current take us on downstream a little bit further so we wouldn't have to get out and carry the canoe so far and, after all, we were young men. I mean, we were 14, we were practically omniscient by that time in our life; we were completely invincible and so I remember we kind of laughed at the sign and dared each other to keep going, after all, warnings are just for sissys, right? Weany-armed, milquetoast, scared of their own shadow, not Herculean Navy SEALs like us. So after a sufficient amount of arrogant stupidity had been well stated, by God's grace we decided to obey the sign, so we beached our canoes and we portaged downstream from the warning sign and as we traveled, I remember hearing something in the distance and the closer we got to that rapids, the more we could hear what sounded like a freight train. The sound grew louder and louder until once we got there it was so loud you would have to scream at your friend in order to communicate. What we were hearing was the mighty rapids that could have destroyed us. And once we passed the rapids and we saw the wreckage of a number of canoes crumpled up in heaps on the rocks, we suddenly had more respect for the warning sign that we almost neglected, and I think we all experienced a slight check in our spirit concerning the need for a bit more humility, but that probably also very quickly vanished when we realized how smart we were for obeying the sign. You know how those things work.

Well, dear friends, what the writer of Hebrews has said in chapter 1 is like that warning sign only far more serious, a warning that if left unheeded, will have eternal consequences beyond human comprehension. And in light of that, the Spirit of God speaks through his inspired writer beginning in verse 1 of chapter 2 and says this,

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1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 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, 4 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.

In other words, don't drift away from what you have heard. Don't neglect so great a salvation. You must pay close attention. How will you escape inevitable judgment if you ignore the warning? If you refuse this invitation, this incomprehensible gift of grace?

Now, bear in mind the context here. Remember, the writer of Hebrews is writing essentially to three groups of people. One group, of course, were those who were truly born again; those who truly knew Christ. And then secondly, to non-believers who were intellectually convinced of the Gospel but had never committed themselves to him. Then, of course, to unbelievers who were still unconvinced. And this warning is directed primarily towards that middle group, non-believers, people who were intellectually convinced of Jesus, that he was the Christ, but they had really never committed themselves to him and, frankly, some of you are probably in that category. You know and believe the facts of the Gospel, you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came into the world as God Incarnate, you understand intellectually that he gave his life on the cross as a substitute for all who would trust in him as their only hope of salvation, you understand that he offers forgiveness, that through Christ you can have his righteousness so you can be reconciled to a holy God and spend an eternity in heaven, but you have never really committed your life to him. You continue to just live for yourself. You may even claim to be a Christian but you have never really embraced Christ as your Savior. You have no love for Christ or for his word, you have no hungering and thirsting for righteousness and you have no desire to joyfully submit to his Lordship in your life, and because of this, you have rejected his offer of salvation and unless you repent, you will ultimately perish in your sins, unless you embrace him with all of your heart and your life.

Well, this was the great burden of the writer to the Hebrews who offered this warning and it's a burden that I share as a pastor. To better grasp this impassioned warning, I would like to examine it under just a very simple outline that I pray will bring conviction to those of you that I have just described, and for those of you that really know and love Christ, I'm sure that this will renew our sense of celebration for the gift of faith that we

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have been given. As we look at this, the writer presents really three categories of damning evidence that they neglected; three areas where they failed to pay close attention. 1. The unfathomable glory of Christ at his saving work; secondly, the inevitability of divine judgment; and finally, the witness of God himself. And I must ask you: have you paid close attention to these realities or are you just drifting along in the current of life with so many other people, too proud to obey the warning sign?

Notice carefully verse 1, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it." Well, what is the reason? Well, it's what's been described in chapter 1 and I would summarize that with that very first point: the unfathomable glory of Christ and his saving work. He has described the fact that Christ is superior to the prophets. He is the fulfillment of all that was prophesied. He is the full and final and perfect revelation. He has described the fact that he is the Son of God, the radiance of the glory of God. He is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Consummator of all things. He is the one who made purification for sins and who sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. He is superior to the angels, indeed, everything is subjected to him. He is the unchangeable everlasting God and he's going to return again in power and great glory to establish his kingdom upon the earth. He's going to uncreate the heavens and the earth. He's going to roll them up like a garment and discard them and then create a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness alone will dwell. So he's saying, "Please pay closer attention to what you have heard pertaining to Christ, pertaining to the Gospel."

I would ask you: what kinds of things do you really pay attention to, pay close attention to in your life? All you have to do is go to the mall and watch people for a few minutes and you will see what most people pay close attention to. They pay close attention to their kids. They pay close attention to fashion, to the prices of the goods they want to buy. Of course, most people are paying very close attention to their cellphone; they hardly look up. You look at the young people, they pay real close attention to their hairstyle, to their image in the mirror every time they walk by it, to their wardrobe. A headline caught my eye the other day on Bloomberg, it said, "Americans now spend more time on Facebook than they do on their pets." I thought that was interesting. It went on to say, "Facebook says the average American now spends 40 minutes a day checking a Facebook feed." That's nothing compared with television which Americans spend more than five hours watching on a daily basis. It's amazing, isn't it? Many of you pay close attention to your favorite sports team, your favorite television program, your health, your bank account, your stock market, and the list can go on and on, but how many people pay any attention at all, much less close attention, to the unfathomable glory of Christ in the astounding message of the Gospel, truths that are necessary for the destiny of their eternal souls? It's mind-boggling.

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Now, we all need to hear the warning here in verse 1, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we," referring to national Israel, "what we have heard," in other words, all who know the truths of the Gospel, "so that we do not drift away from it." The term "drift" is interesting in the original language. It means "to flow past or to slip away." A very sobering picture of the danger that results when a man fails to pay close attention to what has been said about Christ and the Gospel and why one must personally yield himself up to Christ alone. And this was the problem with many of those in the early church, amongst those Jewish people. They were hanging around the periphery of the early Hebrew church, fearing persecution like their friends and neighbors who had truly believed. The Gospel had been clearly presented to them with signs and wonders. I read some of that to you earlier in Acts 2. They were intrigued by it. They were invited to embrace Christ as their Savior, to submit to him as their Lord, to lay hold of the Gospel in faith, believing, but they just weren't willing to go that far. But, folks, this alone is the anchor of the soul that can prevent a person from slipping past the safe harbor of salvation and drifting away into the current of sin that leads to eternal judgment.

When I was thinking about this, I was reminded of a hymn we used to sing when I was a little boy. It went like this,

"In times like these you need a Savior,
In times like these you need an anchor."

You know it, don't you? Some of you know that old hymn.

"Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips a Solid Rock!"

Remember that hymn?

"This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One;
This Rock is Jesus, the only One!
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!"

Some of you remember that. Oh, dear friends, how tragic to watch people drift away, to just watch them drift away. We can all tell our stories, can't we? We know people in our lives that are drifting away. It's not so much that they reject the Gospel outright, though many people do, but there's something far more insidious going on in their life. Because they do not pay close attention to what they must do to be saved, they quietly drift away

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into hell. This is such a burden to me. Some of you know the truth. You come here every Sunday. You listen to the sermons or at least you endure them. You nod at the right time. You smile. You sing the hymns. You do religious things in the church. But you have never aggressively, with decisive and full determination, laid hold of Christ and personally committed yourself to him as the Lord of your life, as the priority of your life. You're committed to all kinds of things in your life but Christ is not one of them. You, dear friend, have a Christless Christianity.

This is so easy to do in our American culture. In fact, it's kind of the American way. Have you noticed that? It's kind of country music Christianity that's just as shallow as dew on a pumpkin. Moreover, people in our country today live under the illusion that America was once a Christian nation. You hear them reading, for example, 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Well, dear friends, that has nothing to do with the United States of America. America isn't God's people called by his name. We are not ancient Israel in a covenantal relationship with God. We are not a theocracy. That text is speaking of Israel's national obedience when they will ultimately come to saving faith in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he comes to establish his earthly kingdom. Frankly the only thing Christian about America has been our, at least some of our values, and most of them are disappearing very rapidly. For this reason, almost anyone can preach about God and country, we can preach about traditional values, we can sing "God Bless America" and most everybody will stand up and applaud, but if you come along and preach Christ and him crucified, suddenly everybody gets real uncomfortable. It's like you just spit in their soup. People start getting offended.

That's politically incorrect but for the most part that's the way it's always been in our country. If you think about it, Christian values have always been far more acceptable in our American culture than our Christian Gospel. People don't want to hear about their sin nature, do they? People don't want to hear that everything they do and everything they are is fundamentally offensive to a holy God, but that Christ died for hell-deserving sinners and you must place your faith in him lest you perish in your sins. People don't want to hear that. So for years the Christian church has tried to become more culturally relevant by serving up a Gospel lite, by serving up what you might call an almost-Christianity. And sadly I fear that some of you have fallen victim to these lies. It's so easy to do in our culture, to become part of churchianity, that cultural Christianity, again, the stuff of country music songs, and it is this kind of phony Christianity that celebrates "one nation under God," but will never talk about the kingdom of God. Yet what were the first words of Jesus in his first sermon recorded in Matthew 4:17? "Repent," the very first word, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Oh no, no, no, let's not talk about that!

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Let's don't look at that too closely! Let's not pay attention to that kind of talk because somebody might be offended." So we jettison biblical orthodoxy to gain cultural credibility, we remove the offense of the cross, we rip out Hebrews 1 from our Bibles and we adopt the moral and the sexual ethics of our culture, we absorb that ambient culture into our lives and the church becomes indistinguishable from the world, the world that hates Christ. And as a result, untold thousands embrace a Christless Christianity and live under the illusion that they belong to Christ, and as a result they calmly and silently drift away from the harbor of saving grace.

I fear that some of you today are drifting away. You can't identify with those who truly know Christ as described, for example, in Hebrews 11:13, those that "confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." No, you feel very comfortable here. In fact, you really enjoy it. You really love it here. You're not longing for Jesus to return, after all, you've got too many fun things you're enjoying. And such a confession is utterly foreign to an almost Christian who believes an almost Gospel; who has never paid close attention to the glory of Christ and the truth of the Gospel; those people who have never committed themselves personally to the Lord Jesus Christ, to live to the praise of his glory. Think of all those in hell today that came so close but failed to pay attention to the truth about their sin and the Savior and just drifted away into eternity.

So, not only were there Jewish people who refused to pay close attention to, as I would say, the unfathomable riches of Christ in his Gospel, but the second piece of damning evidence they neglected was the inevitability of divine judgment. Think about that even today. People today are concerned about the economy, about jobs, about terrorism, about illegal immigration, about global warming, concerned about everything except divine judgment. It's like the days of Noah. It's just silly to think about that type of stuff.

Notice what the writer says here in verse 2, "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable," by the way, let me pause here, that's referring to, for example, the 10,000 holy ones that Moses described in Deuteronomy 33:2 that accompanied God at the giving of the law. "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?" Now, I want you to notice the two terms used to describe a sinful violation of the law of God. It uses the term "transgression" and "disobedience," similar yet different terms. One describes sins of commission, the other sins of omission. Look, for example, at the word "transgression." It literally means "stepping over" in the original language. It's to deliberately with full knowledge cross a line. That's the idea. It's a willful act of defiance. We know what God has said, but we intentionally choose to violate his law. That's a sin of commission. The word "disobedience" is a little bit different. It carries the idea of neglect or refusal. It's when you know you should do

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something that God has commanded but you just choose to ignore him, like refusing to obey his command to be saved and believe the Gospel and so forth. That's a sin of omission. Well, the point here is whether our sin is one of overt commission or neglectful omission, it's going to receive a just penalty. And what's the wages of sin? It's death. You see, folks, we must understand that God's law punishes all sin and all punishment is fair. Obviously given our sinful nature, God's holy standard of righteousness is beyond anything that we could possibly obey and that was, frankly, the purpose the law, to point to the fact that we need a righteousness foreign to our own. We need a substitute to pay the penalty for our sin and grant us his righteousness. Why? Because, as he says here, every transgression and disobedience receives a just penalty.

Now, as we read the Old Testament, I think we would all say that we are prone at times to see God as a bit too harsh, maybe a bit unfair, too severe in his punishments. I know I used to think that way as a young man. I mean, some sins just didn't seem worthy of death to me as I looked at the Old Testament. For example, if anyone cursed or blasphemed the name of the Lord, death. That's tough. If you have a habitually defiant child that fails to honor his father and mother, death. If you go to a medium or a necromancer, those were people who supposedly could contact and communicate with the dead, you'd be put to death. Acts of adultery, incest, homosexuality, prostitution, bestiality were capital offenses and you could kind of see that a little bit but so too was a man having sexual relations with his wife during her monthly period. You'd be put to death. Really? In Numbers 15, we have a story of a man found gathering wood on the Sabbath day and they brought him to Moses and to Aaron to find out what they should do with him and the Lord said to Moses in verse 35, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." Wow. Get put to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath? It seems excessive, disproportionate to the offense. In Jude 5, we read that after God saved his people out of the land of Egypt, he destroyed everyone of them who did not believe that he would continue to take them into the Promised Land, those who murmured against him. He destroyed them all. Wow, if you doubt God and you complain, it's a capital offense?

Folks, what we fail to understand is that God views every sin as a capital crime worthy of death. That's foreign to our way of thinking. We tend to categorized evil, and rightly so in our day. Crimes are classified in relation to the harm they produce in society, for example, we have misdemeanors and then we have felonies and there are various degrees of those things and some are worthy of fines, some are worthy of imprisonment, and some are worthy of execution. Unlike governments, however, God does not make a distinction between crimes and sins. Governments care nothing about sins which are acts committed against God, they only care about crimes which are offenses committed against men in society. But, you see, God looks upon sin not only in terms of the action

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and its consequences, but what he looks at is the heart attitude that animated those thoughts and actions; the rebellious heart behind the sin. And therefore any act of rebellion is high treason against a holy and a sovereign God therefore worthy of death, thus as the writer says here, every transgression and disobedience receives a just penalty.

You know, as you think about this, God is far more holy than we could ever imagine, isn't he? And we should all be humbled by God's grace that he doesn't strike everyone of us dead for our endless succession of acts of rebellion against him. Moreover, sins since all sins are worthy of death, what we have to remember is that all men desperately need to embrace and to experience God's forgiveness, his provision for sinners, forgiveness through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ who died on the cross, who therefore bore the, shall we say, capital punishment that should have been ours. So, indeed, all God's punishment is just. God is perfectly just by nature.

Let's go back to the warning here in verse 2, "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable," in other words, sure or certain, firm, "and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Well, the point is we won't. We can't escape. The point is, folks, you're not paying close enough attention to who Christ is and the offer of the Gospel. You're drifting away like your ancestors, which we will see in great detail in chapters 3 and 4. You've heard about salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but you're neglecting it.

Dear friends, this is such an important point and I must warn those of you who are like the ones being targeted here in this text. Those of you who have an intellectual understanding of the Gospel but have never committed yourself to Christ, your punishment in hell will be far greater than those who know little if anything about the Gospel. Do you realize that? Biblically we know that there are degrees of punishment in hell and with the most severe punishment, we see that that is reserved for those who have rejected the most truth. The more you know but reject concerning the glory of Christ and the Gospel, the greater the punishment.

Listen to Jesus' commentary on this in Luke 12, beginning in verse 47, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." Folks, this is why I grieve for some of you, those of you who sit under the sound teaching of the word and yet you still refuse to yield yourself to Christ. You're not paying close attention. You're drifting away and unless you repent, your punishment is going to be greater than those who have never really heard or understood the Gospel and, of course, God knows

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that they are still without excuse because of reason and conscience and certainly they did not want to know. By the way, this is why Jesus began speaking in parables. Do you realize that? That was an act of mercy, to conceal further truth from hard-hearted sinners.

Well, this is what animated the writer of Hebrews' impassioned warning to his countrymen. Jesus described this principle in Matthew 11:20 and following as well. He says, "Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.'"

You see, that was a colossal insult to the Jews. Tyre and Sidon were notorious Phoenician cities known for every imaginable kind of wickedness. They were heavily involved in the unimaginable atrocities of the Baal worship, the sacrificing of children and so forth. Tyre was even guilty of trading God's covenant people into slavery. It was so corrupt that God destroyed it completely. These were heathen people of the worst sort and yet Jesus is accusing the Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida of being even worse. "You have exceeded the wickedness of these other cities with your self-righteous indifference." And then Capernaum, well my goodness, that was Jesus' headquarters. By the way, all three of those cities are located there on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee around the River Jordan that flows into it. This is where Jesus spent most of his time. Capernaum was his headquarters. It was a thriving fishing village where Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead; where he healed the nobleman's son; where he delivered demons from the demoniacs, where he healed Peter's mother-in-law with her hemorrhage. It's where he healed the two blind men; that's where he healed the centurion's servant; that's where the paralytic was lowered through the roof by his friends. And many other things happened there. These three cities received unimaginable blessings from God through these signs and wonders and the preaching of the Lord Jesus who condescended amongst them and manifested his glory but what was their response? Was it repentance? Was it mass conversions? Did they fall on their face in humble adoration and praise and worship? No, their response was granite indifference. They were blinded by their self-righteousness, convinced that Jesus was not their Messiah. The supernatural works of Jesus should have driven them to their faces in worship and instead they just brushed him off. They ignored the sign. They just drifted along in the current.

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Here in verse 3, the first three verses of Hebrews 2, I should say, the writer voices that same concern. By the way, he expressed this again later in Hebrews 10, for example, in verse 26. He says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" Ah, but the shame of the cross was too much for them, that shame that was associated with the disgrace of crucifixion. You see, among the Jews for anyone to be hanged on a tree was to be under God's curse; you read about that in Deuteronomy 21:23. And such was the case, Jesus bore the curse for our sin plus the shame of this man from Nazareth, that can't be our Messiah so it was inconceivable for them to believe that the ignominious death of their Messiah would be his fate.

So they were neglecting the damning evidence of the glory of Christ, his atoning work. They were ignoring the inevitability of divine judgment that they had witnessed among themselves and even their ancestors had witnessed, and then finally, they ignored the witness of God himself. Verse 3, "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." I mean, think about it, Jesus Christ himself proclaimed the Gospel of repentance. In fact, in Matthew 4:23, we read, "proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every affliction among the people." This was what was going on with Jesus and by the time Jesus' ministry was over, there was hardly any disease in all of Palestine. For this reason Jesus said in John 10:38, "though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

And beyond the confirmation of his own miracles, God also empowered the apostles with, verse 4, "gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." These were miraculous gifts given to them to authenticate both the message and the messenger as being from God himself and they included primarily the supernatural gifts of healing, miracles, tongues and the interpretation of tongues, gifts that belonged exclusively to the apostolic era and not available to believers in general once the Gospel had been confirmed and the Canon of Scripture completed. Some might say, by the way, "So what does God use today to confirm his message of the Gospel?" Well, the answer is simple and it is also profound: he uses the supernatural power of his written revelation in the Bible. You don't believe that? Well, just unleash the word of God on some spiritual cadaver dead in his sins and watch the Spirit of God breathe life into that corpse and cause that person to be born again. It happened to us, didn't it? That's the miracle of the word through the power of the

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Spirit. This is why Paul would say, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

So, once the Gospel had been confirmed and the Canon of Scripture completed, the supernatural sign gifts also ceased. They were no longer necessary. 1 Corinthians 14:22 gives us a hint about this, "So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers." And again, it was a sign that gave authority to those who were preaching that they were from God, but it was also a sign that God was pronouncing judgment upon Israel as Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 28:11-12. He prophesied that a day would come when God would use men of other tongues, that is, foreigners speaking unknown languages as a sign to unbelieving Israel who "will not listen to Me."

Now, think what it would have been like to have heard Jesus preaching the word. Think what it would have been like to have seen some of these miracles and then later on with the apostles. I think of Acts 14:3. Paul and Barnabas, it says, "spent a long time there," that was in Iconium, "speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands." In 2 Corinthians 12:12, we read, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles."

So the point is there is no excuse to ignore what God has done. He has confirmed his message by his own Son with signs and wonders, and by testifying through his apostles with the same. So he's saying, "Pay close attention to what you have heard pertaining to Christ and the Gospel. Heed the warning. Lay hold of eternal life. Anchor your soul in the solid Rock lest you drift away. You have heard the Gospel, now yield to it in faith believing. Commit your life, commit your very soul to the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is my impassioned plea to each of you who perhaps have never personally committed yourself to the Lordships of Christ: please, I beg of you, in the name of Christ to pay closer attention to these truths. Don't be an almost Christian who believes in an almost Gospel. Don't ignore the warning sign that you have heard today and drift away into eternal judgment because, remember, all sin must be punished. Trust in Jesus who bore the punishment in your place.

Then finally let me close with this, just a challenge to you believers, those of you who know and love Christ: folks, don't be ashamed of the Gospel. I know you hear this from time to time, let me say it again: don't be ashamed of the Gospel. You know, we have such a great opportunity for the Gospel right now. Think of this presidential chaos. You know, everybody is all worried about if their candidate is going to win or whatever and

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An Impassioned Warning

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 2:1-4
Preached on: Sunday, October 9, 2016

they're all worried about the direction of the country and all that is is rearranging the deck furniture on the Titanic, but people are all worried about this stuff. When these conversations come up, you have a great opportunity. For example, if somebody says, "Well, what do you think about the election? Or who are you going to vote for?" "You know, all I can say is it makes me long all the more for Jesus to return in all of his glory." Boy, say that in a barbershop or the beauty parlor and see what happens. "You know, I just rejoice knowing that Christ paid the penalty for my sins on the cross and I rejoice that I'm a citizen of another kingdom. I rejoice knowing that he rose again and that he is going to come again in power and great glory to judge the nations and establish his kingdom. That's what I'm looking for."

"Pastor, if I say that, they'll think I'm crazy." True. That's a good thing. That's a good thing. You know, in the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples were often said to have been mad. Do you remember when Paul was before Agrippa? Agrippa said, "You're insane." Why? Because he preached Christ. He preached him crucified. He preached him resurrected from the dead. Beloved, never compromise the Gospel. Let the scandal be the Gospel, not your life. Let people be offended by the Gospel that you preach and you live, not by your life. I want people to think I'm crazy because I believe that God came and died and rose again and he's coming again, I don't want them to think I'm crazy because my life doesn't match my message, because I'm selling prayer clothes and I'm marching in the streets to moralize America and all that silly nonsense. Oh, we serve a glorious God, don't we? And praise God that by his grace, he caused us to see the sign, to read it, to obey it. I pray that will be the case for each of you.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. I pray that you will cause them to bear much fruit in every life. I pray for Jesus' sake and in his name. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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