

The consequence of neglect

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Neil Shaw

[0 : 00] Hebrews chapter 2 at verse 3, how shall we escape this neglectful great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

Now in this first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews that we read together, the writer speaks of the excellency of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the apostle now in the chapter, in this chapter 2, proceeds to show the reality and uniqueness of our Lord's humanity.

He emphasizes at the very outset of the letter to the Hebrews the fact that Christ is God, that Christ is man.

Yes, the epistle emphasizes the superiority of the priesthood of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ over the priesthood of the Old Testament and the sacrifice of the Old Testament economy.

[1 : 14] But you see, the uniqueness of Christ's ministry, the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood and of his sacrifice therefore is found in the fact that he is none other than God with us.

That is what gives efficacy, eternal efficacy to all that Christ does. That is what gives eternal efficacy to the one sacrifice that he offers once for sins.

The salvation or the cleansing that came through the Levitical priesthood was but temporary. It was for time, it was for ceremonial cleansing. And the priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood was but for time also.

It was to pass away. It was to be superseded by a greater priesthood. And the sacrifices they offered was but typical of that one great sacrifice that our Lord Jesus Christ was to make.

Now we're the priest forever is God's word. God himself says, now we're the priest forever. Not after the Aaronic line, but after the order of Melchizedek.

[2 : 28] And this is the great high priest brought to us in the scriptures. Spoken of here by the writer to the Hebrew. The one who is God and the one who is man.

God in our nature. God with us. The word became flesh. Dwelt among us. Now, as I said in chapter 1, the writer speaks of the excellency of the divine nature of our great high priest.

And he now in chapter 2 proceeds to show the reality and remakeness of his humanity. He is the God-man. But before doing so, he makes a, if you like, a practical application of what he has already said.

In regard to Christ. He has spoken or written many things about him. About his deity.

Being greater than the angels. And so on. You see, what he does is he stops, as it were, in the midst of this wonderful discourse that he is giving on the person of Christ.

[3 : 39] And he applies what he has said in no uncertain way. And this is something that we all must remember, that God's word must be applied to the conscience, to the soul, to the mind, to the life.

It is something we must never forget, any of us. That when we read God's word, when we hear God's word preached, we must apply it to our own consciences, to our own lives, to our own souls.

Both as believers and unbelievers would seek to do this always. Now in verses 1 and 4 here, we have, as it were, an interruption in the apostles' discussion of Christ's relation to angels.

And in digressing from that subject, the apostle impresses upon us the necessity of what?

The necessity of giving good heed to the gospel. Friends, we all have to give heed to the gospel. We all must hear what God, the Lord, has to speak to us.

[4 : 59] Because it is a fearful fact that many of us, and sad to see all of us at times, although we hear the gospel, do not take heed to what the gospel is saying, and so we go on in our folly.

Although the apostle is very concerned for doctrine, he is unfolding the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ throughout this epistle, in a wonderful way.

But, he does so for his practical application to the life and conduct of those who are to read this epistle. He is concerned for them.

He is concerned that they are no longer as steadfast in Christ as they once were. He is concerned that they are no longer glorying in Christ as they once were.

And he is concerned that some among them do not even know Christ. And so as he expounds these glorious truths concerning Christ and his priesthood, he applies the truth.

[6 : 11] And I want to notice how the writer to the Hebrews here applies the truth that he has already spoken, saying, therefore, because of what is true about Christ and his superiority to all others, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we've heard as to at any time we should let them slip.

For of the words spoken by angels were steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?

I want to look at these words with you tonight then, briefly. And notice with you that we have here a great salvation, first of all.

And secondly, a great responsibility. And thirdly, a great neglect. First, a great salvation then. Now, the apostle had just been impressing upon these Hebrew Christians in the letter here, their need of giving earnest heed to the things which they had heard.

And these had brought before us in the second half of verse 3 there, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

[7 : 53] That is, the things that they had heard about Jesus Christ. The word of salvation. The New Testament teaching regarding Christ. The truth declared by Christ himself in his life, and confirmed by the apostles in the written word.

Now, what he is saying is this. The reference is definitely to the preaching of the gospel. The gospel of salvation. What he is saying is this.

If, under the Old Testament economy, which was essentially the same, wherein essentially the same gospel of peace, but not in the same fullness, and if it was true that under that dispensation, those who rejected the word of God spoken by Moses, or the word of God given in the law and by the law, and in that legal dispensation, if such as neglected that dispensation, suffered the consequences thereof, how shall we escape if we neglect the salvation that is ours, the same salvation, but given in much greater light than the Old Testament saints ever knew?

How are we going to escape if we are going to neglect the salvation that is in Christ? God, he says, He says, He spoke in time passed unto the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son, whom he had made air of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. He spoke to them by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son. And how shall we escape if we neglect the salvation that is in Christ?

[9 : 52] There is no escape for us if we do. The gospel of salvation. How shall we neglect so great salvation?

We believe the salvation is that which we have in the gospel. Of course, there is no other salvation. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved, but Jesus Christ.

And the gospel is his gospel. It is the gospel of Christ. The gospel of salvation. The gospel of salvation is such because it is a gospel that is salvation, compared with the law, which ministered bondage, you must remember.

The law could save no man. And yet disobedience to the law brought its own recompense, or its own reward, if you like. That is, its own punishment.

But here we have the gospel of salvation. The gospel of Christ, which brings salvation. And it is the gospel of salvation because whatever is needful to salvation is contained in it.

[11 : 01] What is the gospel? It is the gospel. It is the gospel. It is the gospel. It is the gospel that tells us that God so loved the world, as I thought, sought to emphasize this morning with you.

That he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Now we heard that word. We know these words. But are we giving heed to these words?

Are we listening to these words? What is our response to these words? How have you responded yourself today? How have I responded to the truth that we considered together? What fruit has it

borne in our lives?

Are we any better off for it tonight than we were when we heard these this morning? Are we any better off for it having heard it all these years even? And tonight I knew. Are we going to be any better off on having heard it?

How are we going to escape if we neglect it, if we reject it, if we refuse it? That's the great question. It is a great salvation. It is the gospel which God has appointed for the salvation of people.

[12 : 13] In it is brought to us the salvation that is in Christ. Would you be saved? Well, salvation is in Christ and in none other. Oh, friends, if only we would get away from ourselves.

We are so attached to ourselves, to our own works and our own deeds, even as God's people. And as we go on, we realize this more and more. That there is this awful, the awful difficulty that confronts us all the time of getting away from saving ourselves.

Instead of looking only unto Jesus. Instead of trusting in him alone. Instead of looking to his finished work alone because he died on the cross to save us. Let us not add to that or take from that.

Every time you and I turn to our own self-righteousness, what are we doing? We are offending God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit who devised such a wonderful salvation for us.

And as those of us who are, who ought to be all more mature than we are. Isn't it true that so often when sin lies at the door, what do we do? We begin to try and deliver ourselves from our sins by our prayers perhaps or something or other.

[13 : 24] We are no better than those who do penances at times. Oh, I am not saying we should not pray. But we should pray a prayer of repentance. We should come in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus Christ in whom alone there is salvation.

Who alone is our Savior. He is the atonement for our sins. He is the propitiation for our sins. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved.

How shall we escape if we neglect this salvation? Oh, that we would cease to neglect it. That we make more of it. How much do we think about it? How much do we meditate upon it? How much of our lives are spent in, as it were, learning more about this salvation?

Friends, let us get away from the elementaries, if you like. Let us dig deeply into the Word of God, the truth of God. Learn more about the atonement. Learn more about the salvation that is in Christ. Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ. And glory more in the Christ of God who died and gave himself for us, and yet who lives to intercede for us.

[14 : 30] That was the truth. That these Christians, these Hebrew Christians, had to relearn for themselves. That Christ was risen. That their salvation was in Christ and in another. You see, these words are written to Christians as well as non-Christians.

The Christians were neglecting the salvation that was in Christ as much as anybody else. Because they were going back to the rudiments of legalism and formalism.

Oh, how formal we've become. How cold we've become. How little we make of Christ. How little we glory in Christ. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would lead us again to look unto Jesus.

That we may run with patience the race that is set before us. Laying aside every weight and the sin that has so easily beset us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. That our eyes would be upon him.

And thereby we would be delivered from the materialism, the worldliness, the coldness, the ritualism that has crept in upon us and awares and left us to be what we are.

[15 : 34] How shall we escape if we neglect so great? Great in so many ways. Oh, that word great. It encompasses so much when we think of Jesus Christ, my friends.

Great in the context in which it's given because it was spoken by the law. Lord, the law was given by angels. But the gospel is spoken by the Lord.

God in these last days has spoken unto us by his son, Jesus Christ. He is speaking still. Attested by the apostles again.

And then accompanied by signs and wonders. But I want to consider with you the greatness of this salvation tonight. In one or two other ways.

That's the ways in which it is mentioned as being great here. Spoken by the Lord. And then attested by the apostles. And it was accompanied with signs and wonders. Great things were happening, in other words, throughout the ministry of our Lord.

[16:39] And in the early days of the church, there were these signs and wonders accompanying the truth of God. That's still so. There's still signs and wonders accompanying the truth of God and the gospel.

When a person is born again of the spirit of God, what a wonderful miracle that is. What signs accompany that. Signs of the new birth. The manifestations of God and so on.

But we also see the greatness of this salvation when we consider what it saves from. What this salvation saves us from.

What does this salvation that is in Christ save us from? We talk of salvation. We talk of being saved. And people being saved. But what are people saved from?

Well, first of all, we're saved from God's displeasure. Ah, but people tell you, God is not displeased with anyone in our day. God is a God of love who loves everybody.

[17:39] God is not displeased with me. Be all of the love of God in our hearts, we're told. Well, that doesn't, my Bible doesn't teach that. And if you read your Bible, you'll find it doesn't teach that either.

God is displeased with man because of sin, my friends. With you and with me because of our sin.

How little we realize how displeasing sin is to God. How offensive sin is to God.

It is that abominable thing that he cannot stand. It is that which robs him of his glory. It is that which he looks upon as an unclean thing. All sin, all sin is offensive to God.

And there is none that doeth good, no, not one. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. And so God is displeased with man as he is in his sin.

And with the sin that is in him. But this salvation that comes to us in the gospel, the salvation brought out by Christ, is that which saves us from God's displeasure.

[18:44] God says, save man from going down to the pit. Why? I have received a ransom. The price of redemption has been paid in his totality. We have been redeemed not by corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ.

Christ poured out his soul unto death. He was made a cash for us. He died on Calvary. Poured out his lifeblood that we might be saved. He suffered all the consequences of our sins.

God is eternally pleased in all that he does there on the cross for us. Christ praised the price. And God is no longer displeased with us.

Why? Because he is pleased with his son. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, he says. I am well pleased with him in his person. I am well pleased with him in his life.

And his resurrection proves that God was well pleased with the sacrifice that he gave once and for all on the cross of Calvary. He poured out his soul unto death there making atonement for our sins, paying the price of our redemption.

[19:54] Oh, that we would realize this. That he paid the price due for all our sins, past, present and future. God saw all our sins.

He knew what was necessary. He knew that nothing less than his own sons coming into the world to die for our sins would be sufficient to meet all the requirements of his own nature.

All the requirements of his own attributes. And in his son he devised a means whereby he was right, he was just, he was true in saving his people from their sins.

Are you satisfied with the satisfaction Christ gave God on the cross of Calvary for your sins? Oh, yes. You say, I am well. Praise God that you are.

Neglect this no more. He saves us from the displeasure of God then. We are pleasing in his sight.

[20:53] And it's so difficult at times to lay hold of that. It is so difficult for us to believe that God can possibly be pleased with me. He will not be pleased with you and with me outside his son.

But as he looks upon us in Christ, he is pleased with us. He cannot be otherwise. He cannot be otherwise but pleased with us in him. And he saves us.

He saves us. He saves us. He saves us. He saves us also from a depraved nature. We have a nature that is depraved and if left to itself will become all the more depraved.

But the process of depravity has been arrested in the lives of those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And instead of becoming more depraved, the soul that has been arrested and brought back by the salvation that is in Christ into the favor of God is now being sanctified.

He gives us a new heart, if you like. He writes his law upon our hearts. He gives us, instead of the heart of stone, a heart of flesh. Now that doesn't mean to say that he gives us a new heart the way we hear of heart transplants in our day.

[22 : 09] We have a soul and a mind and a body. We are made up of these three elements, if you like. But what he does is this, that in our souls he begins a work.

A work of grace. That begins the day we are born again, regenerated by his grace. And as we believe in Christ and we trust in him, there is this new nature.

A new principle. And that is one that will develop, and does develop, and is developing. How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation, friends?

A salvation that removes the displeasure of God and turns a depraved sinner into a saint.

This God does, through the gospel, by the gospel. He who has begun a good work in you, will bring that on, or accomplish that. He began the work, he will bring it on.

[23 : 09] The process of sanctification goes on. And that's not an easy thing. As we go on, we learn more about ourselves and our depravity. And when we consider ourselves, we're afraid before God.

But, when we look to Jesus, our fear vanishes. Because we know that in him we have the Savior who is working in us to do and to will according to his own good pleasure.

It saves us then from these two, and it also saves us from punishment. From eternal punishment. Ah, friends.

If only we realized what a dangerous place the soul is in on account of sin. On the very brink of the pit.

That's where grace finds the soul. But then we're saved from being lost forever. Through the salvation that is in Christ.

[24 : 13] We are saved from being lost forever. Through the salvation that is in Christ. Do you know you are a sinner?

Well, there is a Savior from sin. In Christ there is one who is able to save, through whom God is able to save to the uttermost. All who come to him.

We're saved from God's displeasure. From a depraved nature. From the punishment due for sin. But then it is a great salvation when we consider what it raises us to.

We are raised to a state of pardon. Full and free. Everlasting life.

Forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Fellowship with God. Justification. Peace. The enjoyment of God's favor. The reality of peace with God.

[25 : 21] For we are peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are raised to heavenly places in Christ. We are raised above condemnation.

And you know friends, ultimately we are raised to perfect purity and perfect happiness. With God forever in heaven.

That's what salvation brings. That's what salvation brings. You and me. Now are you the sons of God?

Are we the sons of God? The children of God? We know not yet what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. Now are you the sons? This is what we are.

The sons. Joint heirs with Christ of heaven. If we believe in Christ. But I want to notice with you tonight, secondly, that there is here a great responsibility.

[26 : 20] How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? God's word brings us this salvation. Tells us all that Christ has done for us.

What he's delivered us from. What he has raised people to. The Bible brings this wonderful news to us. This salvation that is in Christ. The gospel when it is preached brings this to us.

How shall we escape then if we neglect it? We hear it. We've heard it. We've had it among us. How have we responded to it? Friends, how much fruit has it borne in our lives?

Are we any better off tonight because of the fact that this salvation has come to us? That we've heard it preached among us? Are we any better off tonight? Are we saved in other words?

Or have we neglected the gospel? Have we having heard it trampled it underfoot? Have we gone our own way? Have we done our own thing? Have we said I don't care? I'm not bothered?

[27 : 18] Oh, I'm not going to listen to that. Have we gone home and said well that was a nice sermon. It was all right. Or maybe sometimes we've gone home and said that was a terrible sermon. But then, through it all, have we neglected Christ?

Friends, how shall we escape if we neglect it? Privilege brings responsibility. Those who hear the gospel have been raised above those who haven't. We have stepped up in our privilege.

And we can never be the same again because of that. What have we done with Christ? What have we done with the gospel? Where is the fruit we ought to be bearing? We will be judged.

And we are judged already in the light of the new knowledge that we have in the gospel. Friends, all of us must take to heart that we will stand before God in judgment.

I will stand there. I must give an account of what I have done with the gospel. You must stand there.

[28 : 26] You must give an account of what you have done with the gospel. I won't stand there for you. You won't stand there for me. And it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And we shall. Unless we receive Christ as he has freely offered to us in the gospel, we will suffer forever for our rejection of Christ, our neglect of the gospel.

God is not mocked, my friends. We at times foolishly think we can mock him. We at times foolishly think we will get off with this, that or the other thing.

We at times say sin is not so bad. It's only a little one. But friends, sin is always an abomination to God. And you and I are going to suffer for our sins unless we repent and believe the gospel and bow down before him as nothing in the dust.

Because we belong to the dust and with the dust we will return. Friends, how can we escape? We cannot. If we go on neglecting this gospel, the gospel of Christ, the love of God in Christ.

[29 : 35] How can we escape? And there is this great condemnation. If we neglect it, not reject outright, but even neglect it, just letting it lie, remaining indifferent to salvation.

Neglect is in a sense worse than reject. Those who reject may think again. They may think again and they may come to see, well, I was wrong in that.

But neglect? Neglect. Neglect is letting opportunity slip. Friend, how often have you allowed the opportunity to slip? There have been preachers here before me who have brought you this same gospel.

I'm not bringing you anything new. God forbid. I hope I never will. This is what's wrong with us.

We're looking for novelty. Well, we won't get novelty. We're not going to get something new.

We have everything in the gospel that we have. And we're either going to take it or reject it or suffer the consequences or be saved. Are you here and you're waiting for something extra?

[30 : 41] Are you something like the Jews of old who said we require a sign? You won't get one.

None of us will but the sign of the prophet Jonas, who spoke of Christ being three days in the grave, and then rose victorious.

Ah, friend, there is nothing for no one can save but Christ. Christ, the blessed Lord, who died that we might live.

And you will either reject him, neglect him, or receive him. The onus is altogether on you and on me.

You see, tomorrow, and so will I if I'm not careful. Will we see tomorrow?

Will we see next week? Will we see another day? God alone knows that.

[32 : 01] how often God's word emphasizes that today is the day of salvation. That tomorrow is promised none.

And this is what is so wonderful. And you know, this is what ought to melt down your heart and mind. And all that the Holy Spirit would indeed take the word and melt down our hearts.

Instead of going home tonight once again, well, there it is again, once again, once again, that we would realize the love and mercy of God to us in that he is speaking to you and me tonight in the gospel and warning us against neglecting this one moment longer.

Warning us against the consequence of hardening under the gospel. For those who neglect, there is the mystery of having missed eternal life because they could not be bothered.

They couldn't be bothered. They couldn't care less. And in a lost eternity, that will be. That will be forever.

[33 : 14] forever. Before their eyes and their minds, their intellects and their souls, adding to the torment that they already have.

They would not make the effort. Friend, it's time that you and I, together, remembered the exhortation of God's word.

Strive to enter at the straight gate how shall we escape if we don't?

There can be no escape if we neglect and reject Christ. believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Amen. May God bless his word to us. O Lord, grant this night that thou wilt bless thy word to our hearts and that we may know that thou art our God who has caused light to arise in the gospel of thy son.

[34 : 30] O glory be to thy name for all that Christ is and all Christ has done. Help us that we may trust in him and look to him and be saved.

They look to him and light and wear not shamed where their faces. This poor mankind hide God heard and saved him from all his distresses. We thank thee for every soul among us who has tasted and seen that God is good and we pray that more and more would come to see and to glory in the Christ of the gospel.

Be with us and take away sin for Jesus' sake. Amen.