

“Drifting Is Dangerous”—Hebrews 2:1-4

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take your Bible and meet me in Hebrews 2...

Today we have come to the first of several famous sections of Hebrews known as the “warning passages.” Each of them presents their own interpretive challenges and, I would argue, they are some of the most misunderstood and avoided passages in the New Testament as a result. They’re called warning passages because that is their function—they warn us about the dangers of falling away from the faith and, by extension, any hope of salvation. They occur often enough in the letter that I’ve heard it claimed that the letter to the Hebrews is basically one long “sermon on the theme ‘Do not fall away.’”¹ It’s hard to argue with that. These warning passages leave no doubt that this is certainly a central concern for the author. So with vivid and memorable language, he lays on us some sobering truth that at times is, quite frankly, downright terrifying. But my hope is by the end of our series they will have had their intended effect on us and we would find ourselves resting securely in the faith.²

One of the reasons people struggle to interpret these passages is because they don’t read them as they were intended to be read. They read them in isolation instead of in the context of the larger argument the author is making. This is a letter. Letters are meant to be read from beginning to end. So the author doesn’t expect us to know what he is going to say, for instance, in chapters 10 when we are reading chapter 2, but he does expect us to remember what he previously said in chapter 2 when we get to chapter 10. In other words, one of the keys to interpreting these challenging texts is to see them in context and therefore in sequence. When we do that it limits the interpretive options that are available to us. When we do that we discover that they can’t mean what a lot of people claim they mean.

All of this will make more sense when we get to some of the more challenging warning passages down the line. The first of these warning passages, here in chapter 2, is by far the easiest to interpret, but that does not mean that it’s easy to hear. It’s quite difficult to hear. I suspect most of us will feel some conviction under the weight of these words, which we will spend the next couple of weeks absorbing.

But to begin, let’s listen to what God’s Word has to say. I’ll read the whole passage, the first four verses of chapter 2, but we won’t get to all of them this morning. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 1. This is God’s Word...

“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Interestingly the word and theme of “escape” also shows up in the final warning passage, which begins: “See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25).

The author seems to use “escape” as a framing word, which further confirms my suspicion that we are meant to read all these warnings passages together and that they all are making roughly the same point.³

Now consider the first one here in chapter 2. It might surprise you that this is the first time in Hebrews where the reader is actually told to do something. And what are we told to do? Pay attention. The author writes, “*we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard...*”

But notice that this warning begins with the word “*therefore*.” There’s an old adage that reminds us that when we see a “therefore” we should ask what it is there for. It’s a connecting word that introduces this warning as a logical application of the previous section. It shows us how the theology of chapter 1 should make a practical difference in our life. “Given the superiority of Christ over the angels and his identity as the divine Son of God [chapter 1], Jesus both demands and deserves to be heard [chapter 2].”⁴ That’s the idea. If the saints of old were quick to listen to angels when they carried a message from God, then how much more should we listen to God’s ultimate messenger, His very own Son? So pay attention. Listen. Consider what God has said by the Son.

While that’s the ideal response to chapter 1, it’s not the inevitable response. There is another possibility. Instead of paying attention to what we have heard, we can instead “drift away from it.” Isn’t that what verse 1 says? “*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*”

The word used for drifting here is a word that’s used in a variety of contexts. It can describe water leaking from a broken vessel unexpectedly or a thought slipping out of our mind. It’s used in at least one place of a ring that slips off a finger. But most often it’s used in nautical contexts to describe a boat whose anchor breaks or whose captain dozes off allowing the ship to veer off course and drift around aimlessly at sea, never reaching its destination.⁵ But Richard Phillips makes this keen observation: “One of the key ideas here is that this drifting away is something that happens largely unnoticed. While it is happening the changes are imperceptible; only later do its consequences become clear.”⁶ And what are the consequences? You get lost at sea. You never reach your destination, if no course correction is applied.

So if salvation is the desired destination, then there are at least two ways we can miss the mark. One way is to blatantly reject Christ and renounce His free offer to save you. There are many who have chosen that course and are floating around blissfully on the Titanic of life completely oblivious to the glacier ahead waiting to crash their party.

That’s one way you miss the mark. That’s the obvious way. And because it’s so obvious, many people wrongly assume that this warning has nothing to do with them. They reason that they don’t hate Christ and are not actively trying to live their life in defiance to Him. They may even identify with Him by checking the “Christian” box whenever called upon and darkening the doors at church whenever they get enough rest and no better Sunday activity awaits itself.

But please notice that drifting away is likened to neglecting so great a salvation. So he’s not merely talking to the atheist blogger or the college student who renounces the faith of his parents to all who will listen. He’s talking to people who are guilty of neglect. That’s an interesting word because it’s the same word that Jesus used in a parable that makes a similar point. In Matthew 22 Jesus told the following parable:

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’”

⁵ *But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,* ⁶ *while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.*” (Matthew 22:2-6)

The word translated “*paid no attention*” is the same word used in Hebrews 2 for “*neglect*.” The ones that pay no attention to the invitation never enter the wedding feast in the end, which represents the Kingdom. But what does their neglect look like? What does it say? They failed to enter the feast because they found their time on the farm or their business more interesting⁷. They had better things to do, other things to pay attention to. Herein lies the tragedy of our age. We’ve got better things to do. That’s the malignancy of our day that’s wreaking havoc in the souls of men and women, who feel comfortable neglecting the invite of the King because they’re on the membership rolls of some church or because other matters seem more pressing. We know there’s something else offered to us, but we neglect it. We drift. We drift further and further away from salvation’s harbor.

And perhaps you *do* possess a saving faith. You were genuinely converted in the past. But somewhere along the way you began to treat that salvation as the deed to your house or the title to your car. You signed it in the past but now it’s buried in some drawer somewhere (you hope), but it’s not a great thing to you. It’s not something that occupies your mind each day. It doesn’t really affect your day-to-day life.⁸ You don’t pay attention to it. You neglect it.

The good news is that I believe the book of Hebrews teaches that genuinely converted people don’t drift indefinitely. They come to their senses. They stop neglecting their great salvation. Their concentration on Christ is renewed. They don’t fall away in the end. So I would count it a good sign if your conscience is feeling pricked this morning and you’re recognizing that you have been drifting or at least have the propensity to drift. You grieve that reality and are looking for help in this text.

But I would be very worried if you feel no desire to guard against such drifting. You may recognize that you have been drifting, but there is no real sense of conviction. No urgency. No focused listening this morning. Your eyes are more drawn to your phone than the Savior. You’re drifting. You’re *not* standing still. You’re drifting away. And if that doesn’t bother you, I assure you that you are inching ever closer to destruction because drifting is deadly.⁹

No one is neutral though. I feel like I have to keep pressing that point home because some of you may still think this text is not speaking to you because you go to church. You know who else went to church? The original audience of the book of Hebrews. So if these words were relevant to them, it stands to reason that they could be relevant to you. If you’re not paying close attention to Christ and attending to your great salvation, then you are drifting.¹⁰ If you don’t, by God’s grace, pay attention to the spiritual condition of your heart, it will deteriorate on its own.¹¹

Al Mohler, the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, explains it like this:

“In the ocean, those who row in the wrong direction are not the only ones who fail to reach their desired destination; it’s also those who do not row at all. There are only two options in the Christian life: we can either sail forward in fidelity or we can drift backward in faithlessness. There is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life.”¹²

That’s exactly right. Life is not a lake, it’s a river.¹³ If we are not moving, we are being moved. John Piper put it this way: “There is no sitting still in the river of indifference. Its currents run downstream to the falls.” Are you sensing the urgency of this text then? Here’s what you have to see: this drifting can be subtle and unintentional. It can result from “inattention and carelessness”¹⁴ or just “spiritual laziness”.¹⁵ Someone else has written, “Hell is undoubtedly full of people who were never actively opposed to Jesus Christ, but who

simply neglected the Gospel.” What a tragedy!¹⁶ But it’s all too common to find people who get so distracted by the things of the world that they “drift past the harbor of salvation and are lost forever.”¹⁷ As C. S. Lewis remarked in *Mere Christianity*,

“We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in your mind. It must be fed. And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?”¹⁸

But whether one misses the shores of salvation by avoidance or by mere apathy, the inevitable shipwreck that ensues is equally destructive to both passengers. In the words of Hebrews, “*how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?*” (2:3). The implied answer is we won’t escape! So pay close attention to what we have heard because no one drifts to their destination. Drifting is a sure way to miss your destination every time, because the currents of this world are always running against you. Richard Phillips is right,

“There is a current to this present evil age, pulling strongly out from the safe harbor of salvation in Christ. We do not have to actively betray Jesus or renounce our faith. Simply by not paying attention, by becoming preoccupied with the sights and sounds of this world, we can be easily drawn out until we are swept away forever.”¹⁹

Kent Hughes describes this current in terms of waves that cause spiritual drifting. He talks about the tide of years, the tide of familiarity, and the tide of busyness. The tide of years is just the idea that if you live long enough you see many people who start out strong, but as they age “the years have carried them far away from their devotion.”²⁰ They don’t finish strong, if they finish the course at all. If we live long enough, there will come a day when we can physically do less than we once did in service to the Lord. But may it never be said of us that our strongest seasons of devotion to the Lord are behind us. We may not be able to do as much as we once could in our youth. But there is no reason we should not be more fully devoted to the Lord Jesus today than we were in all our yesterdays. Don’t let the tide of years cause you drift away and neglect your great salvation. And never forget that discipleship is not coasting.²¹ If you’re content to just “go with the flow,” trust me, you’re going in the wrong direction.

But for some of you the problem has been the tide of familiarity. Here’s what Hughes says about that:

“It is natural for us to come to regard the familiar as commonplace. Your first tour in London will leave you dazzled: Parliament, the British Museum, Covent Garden, the Savoy. But will it be so on your twentieth tour? The initial venture into the mysteries of Christ will leave us exhilarated. But with the repeated journeys, some become bored tourists. Granted, some find joy in their familiarity with the mysteries of Christ. But familiarity has both danger and its reward. It depends on us.”

But I suspect the most dangerous current working against most of us is the tide of busyness. We get so preoccupied with trinkets and trivialities that we neglect our great salvation. The tyranny of the urgent keeps many away from the anchor of Christ. “A snowflake is a tiny thing,” writes Hughes, “but when the air is full of them, they can bury us. Even so, the thousand cares of each day can insulate us from the stupendous excellencies of Christ, causing us to begin a deadly drift.”²²

We can think of hundreds of other things to do on Sunday morning because paying attention to what we have heard in Christ doesn’t make the priority list of the drifter. If you wake up and go with mind racing on all things you have to accomplish today and chief among them is not pressing into the Lord, you’re drifting. That’s the way it happens. Slowly and subtly, but surely without focused attention. You stop reading your Bible. You stop praying except at meals. You stop gathering to worship and fellowship with other believers.

You fail to pursue discipleship. And before you know it you are in deep trouble spiritually. Maybe some crisis alerts you to this. Maybe some need. Maybe a friend who cares enough for your soul to say something. But if that's the dangerous road that you are traveling, what a mercy that God has you here this morning! Have you considered that? Your presence here when we are talking about this text is God's grace to you. So listen. Pay careful attention. God is warning you this morning to bring you back. He is offering you help. But you have to listen.

And that's what the writer of Hebrews is saying to us. What is the solution to spiritual drifting that, but for the grace of God, would lead us to everlasting peril? Verse 1: "*we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard*". That's the antidote. Pay attention. Paying much closer attention to what we have heard is the opposite of drifting and the solution for neglect. The first command in this book is not to labor for Christ, but to listen to Christ.²³ Therefore, John Piper has rightly stated,

"The Christian life is first and foremost a life of contemplation—listening to Jesus, considering Jesus, fixing the eyes of our heart on Jesus. Everything in the Christian life grows out of this. Without this the Christian life is simply unlivable."²⁴

So we have to ask, what exactly does the author have in mind when he refers to "*what we have heard*"? The answer is what God has revealed in these last days by His Son (1:1). And what did the Son reveal in action and in word? The Gospel. The good news of our salvation.

Notice that just as drifting in verse 1 is further defined as neglecting in verse 3, so also the message we have heard in verse 1 is called "*such a great salvation*" in verse 3. In other words, drifting away from what we have heard is the same thing as neglecting so great a salvation. So the thing God has revealed by the Son is the message of our great salvation, the Gospel message.²⁵ This is then elaborated further in verses 3 and 4 (but we will save that for next week). The point I'm making now, because I believe with all my heart it is the point of this inspired author, is that spiritual drifting occurs as we drift away from the Gospel. Therefore, the only solution is to pay closer attention to what we have heard, namely, the Gospel message, the message of our great salvation, which Christ proclaimed, embodied, and accomplished. This Gospel is "the anchor that secures our salvation" and "the rudder by which we safely steer the ship of our souls."²⁶ Reflecting on the Gospel and living in step with the Gospel are the oars that keep us on course and fighting against the currents of spiritual drift.²⁷

And what is this Gospel? It's the good news that God has provided a way to save us from our sins and the wrath that we are owed as sinners. That way is not through our efforts. That way is through His Son, who took on our humanity and died in our place. He took the punishment that our sins deserved so that we could be forgiven. And He rose from the dead so that we too might find victory in death. He saves all those who sense their great need to be saved by Him alone, who take that need to Him in faith, receiving Him as Lord by forsaking their sin in repentance. He doesn't save put together people. No such person exists. He saves broken people. Desperate people. Wretched sinners. Scoundrels who believe their only hope in life and death is found in His saving work. That's the testimony of every Christian, not just some of them. All of them. Is that your story? If not, it certainly can be today if you will turn to Jesus for your salvation. You don't bring anything to the equation, except your sin. All you need is need. Will you trust Him? Do you want to speak with someone about that? You can today, if you want. You can even fill out a response card from the pew and we can set up a time to get together and discuss this more in person this week. Don't leave without taking a step toward Jesus. Don't drift. Trust Jesus to anchor you. He will. He delights to be the anchor for people just like you. We are not so different. Believe me. Your need is no greater than mine. My need is every bit as desperate. But Jesus is enough for us both. Taste and see.

What about you, my Christian friend? Are you preaching this to yourself? No wonder you're drifting. Are you putting yourself in a position to be reminded of this regularly? Or are you guilty of neglect. There's hope for you too. But you must, as the Apostle Peter writes, "*be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election*" (2 Peter 1:10). Look for the present reality of faith. Is there a present disposition in you of trusting in Christ for your salvation? There's your anchor. Not some past decision. Not some certificate of baptism. Not your name written in the records of some church registry. Present faith. Active trust in Christ. Present rest in the truth of the Gospel. Renewing your mind and hope in the Gospel truth communicated by the Son. Do you see that in your heart right now, presently? If so, give thanks to God. If not, believe in Christ. My job is to point you to Him. Like Peter, "*I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder*" (1:14).

The language in Hebrews 2:1 is very strong in the original Greek. It's the language of obsession.²⁸ We were never meant to hear and receive the Gospel God's Son unfolds only to move on from it to bigger and better things. No, no. We never graduate from the Gospel. We never move on from it. It's not the ABCs of the Christian faith. It's the A through Z. And this is one of the many passages in the Bible that reminds me why it is so vital for us to be a Gospel-centered people.

Our mission statement at Southern Oaks is that we exist to glorify God through Gospel-transformed lives. How do we, by God's grace, seek to accomplish this? By actively embracing the three GCs—the Great Commission (i.e., the call to be and make disciples, who make disciples), the Great Commandments (i.e., the call to love God with everything we've got and to love our neighbors as ourselves), and Gospel-Centrality (i.e., the call to keep the Gospel at the center of everything we do and shape everything we do as a church).

That's not merely clever alliteration from your leaders. It's the biblical call for the people of God. It's not the new statement that comes because a new pastor is in town who needs to put his stamp on the church. No, it's a matter of biblical calling for a healthy church. And this text is yet another text that reminds us why Gospel-centrality is absolutely vital. Why must we keep the Gospel at the center? Because to not do so is to drift away from what we have heard and to neglect our great salvation, which can lead us to inescapable peril. We are a Gospel-centered people because we are a people who do not desire to drift. We're a Gospel-centered people because how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Never forget that. We forget that at our own peril. If ever a day comes where we refuse to keep the Gospel, and the Savior at it's heart, at the center of our church, this church will die. Maybe not overnight. Maybe not by means of closing up shop. But it will die, as it should. It will drift away from orthodoxy and fidelity. But may it never be. May we never forget what is of first importance: "*that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared*" to many eyewitnesses and eventually in our own hearts (1 Corinthians 15:3ff). And all God's people said? Amen!

Be here next week because the author gives us two incredible incentives for us to pay more careful attention to what we have heard. And there is a remarkable thought that never really occurred to me until this past week of study. I'm looking forward to sharing it with you. So come. Bring a friend. And if you are looking for some devotional reading this week, let me recommend a sermon on our website preached in January of 2016. It can be found on the sermon page in the "The Three GCs" sermon series. It's a sermon on Galatians 2, entitled, "The Peril of a Central Gospel Drifting to the Margins." Check it out (www.welovethegospel.com).

Let's pray...

¹ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2006), 47.

² “Warnings are not designed to rob people of hope, but to steer them away from danger in order to preserve them so that they might persevere and inherit what has been promised.” Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* (AYBC; Yale University Press, 2007), 209.

³ Many have made exactly this point, including Thomas Schreiner, who also reminds us that in the New Testament “the word ‘escape’ is used in relation to the end-time judgment (Luke 21:36; Rom 2:3; 1 Thess 5:3).” Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation Commentary; Nashville: Holman Reference, 2015), 82.

⁴ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2017), 24.

⁵ E.g., Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (BST; InterVarsity Press, 1984), 47; Schreiner, 79; Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 1989), 64n.19; Phillips, 47.

⁶ Phillips, 47.

⁷ Schreiner, 82.

⁸ John Piper, “Spoken, Confirmed, Witnessed: A Great Salvation,” a sermon preached to Bethlehem Baptist Church on May 5, 1996, and accessed as of January 14, 2018, at the following website: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/spoken-confirmed-witnessed-a-great-salvation>.

⁹ John Piper, “The Danger of Drifting from the Word,” a sermon preached to Bethlehem Baptist Church on April 28, 1996, and accessed as of January 14, 2018, at the following website: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-danger-of-drifting-from-the-word>.

¹⁰ This is also true for churches as denominations as well. “Sadly, we witness theological and spiritual drift all too often. It is the story of many denominations, churches, families, and individuals. Even the most cursory knowledge of church history demonstrates that heresy and theological liberalism do not capsize denominations and churches with one revolutionary wave. Instead, churches and individuals end up on the wrong side of the doctrinal equation by drifting a little at a time. Churches once orthodox in their theology slowly minimize and relax their theological convictions until they become unwilling to draw boundaries or speak clearly on issues essential to orthodox Christianity and the evangelical gospel.” Mohler, 25.

¹¹ Phillips, 48.

¹² Mohler, 24. John Piper makes the same point and reminds us why preachers must keep the thought ever before their minds as they seek to shepherd the people in their circle of influence: “We must remember this: there is no standing still in the Christian life. Either we are advancing toward salvation, or we are drifting away to destruction. Drifting is a mortal danger. ‘Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it’ (Heb. 2:1). If we do not point our people to the inexhaustible riches of Christ so as to stir them up to go forward into more of God. If we do not unfold ‘the whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27), then we encourage drifting downstream where they will make shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim. 1:19). There are two possibilities in Hebrews 2:1-3: either we give heed to the Word of the Lord (vv. 1, 3), or we drift away from it.” Piper, “Brothers We Are Not Professionals” in *The Collected Works of John Piper* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 3:282.

¹³ Piper, “The Danger of Drifting from the Word.”

¹⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (PWS; Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 48.

¹⁵ Karen H. Jobes, *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 135.

¹⁶ John Calvin writes: “It is not only the rejecting of the Gospel, but even the neglecting of it that deserves the severest penalty in view of the greatness of the grace which is offered in it.... God wishes His gifts to be valued by us at their proper worth. The more precious they are, the baser is our ingratitude if they do not have their proper value for us. In accordance with the greatness of Christ, so will be the severity of God’s vengeance on all despisers of the Gospel.” William B. Johnston, trans., *Calvin’s Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 19.

¹⁷ Michael P. Andrus, “Angels Are Son Worshipers,” preached to November 1, 2009, and accessed online as of January 14, 2018, at the following web address: <http://firstfreewichita.org/sermons/sermon/2009-11-01/angels-are-son-worshippers>. Martyn Lloyd-Jones describes the tragedy: “Some have come face-to-face with the gospel; they have felt an interest in it; they have, as it were, been at the entry into the harbor. They simply had to go a little further, and they would have arrived in the port. But alas, for some reason or another, they have not committed themselves, they have not accepted it, and they have allowed themselves to drift past it. What a horrible thing it is to be in sight of the haven only to drift past!” Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *A Merciful and Faithful High Priest: Studies in the Book of Hebrews* (Kindle Locations 138-141; Crossway. Kindle Edition).

¹⁸ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 124. (Also cited in Hughes, 48).

¹⁹ Phillips, 47-48.

²⁰ Hughes, 48-49.

²¹ Piper, *Collected Works*, 3:542.

²² Hughes, 49-50.

²³ Piper, “The Danger of Drifting from the Word.”

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Kindle Locations 247-254; Phillips, 50.

²⁶ Phillips, 50. He describes the Word of God in this way, which he admits is the more general way to describe the Gospel. He then writes, "This is a principle we vitally need today. People are looking for power from God to change their lives and assure them of salvation. Yet many Christians seem intent on using every method except the one highlighted for us all through the Bible, including this very passage: diligent study and understanding of the Word of God. Many people seek to come close to God through some intense emotional experience. Others follow disciplines, rituals, or special formulas that are guaranteed to make them more godly or secure. But look at the emphasis of the writer of Hebrews: 'We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,' that is, to the Word of God.... We should fear to be separated from the anchor of God's Word, or to have any other hand on the wheel of our lives than the Captain of our salvation, who speaks in the Bible. To drift away is ultimately to invite the judgment God will inflict on those who neglect his saving message in Jesus Christ." Ibid., 50, 55.

²⁷ Mohler makes a similar statement regarding orthodoxy and obedience, which in my mind is just another way of saying the same thing as I have said above.

²⁸ Timothy Keller, "Christ: The Final Word," in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013), accessed via Logos Bible Software.