

November 1, 2009 by Steve Brandon

Don't Drift

Hebrews 2:1-4



1. ... because Jesus is better (verse 1).
2. ... because you won't escape (verses 2-3a).
3. ... because God has spoken (verses 3b-4).

On August 24, 1988 in Ontario, Canada, friends Janelle Spain and Karen Himmel were enjoying a camping trip just off the Welland River, which is a tributary of the Niagara River. Only a week earlier, Janelle had purchased a boat, which they brought along on their camping trip. They had taken the boat out for a spin.

They spent the afternoon on the boat. Much of their time was spent with the engine off, basking in the warm sun, drifting along in the river. When evening came, they watched the sun go down. Then, they proceeded to boat back to their camp. However, they were disoriented in the dark, traveling down the river, looking for the canal, leading them back to the Welland River where their campground was located.

Sheila and Tom Hodges were traveling by car along the river above Niagara Falls. They happened to see a small boat traveling toward the falls. From the road, they sensed that something was wrong. Tom said, "I don't think that anyone in their right mind would go beyond that point with just one ... engine [in their boat]." The two women on the boat approached the control gates that regulate the flow of water to the falls, about a mile upstream of the falls.

These gates are about a mile from the Niagara Falls and are often called "the point of no return," because any boat or person caught in the current beyond them will be carried right over the falls. The two women on the boat had mistaken the gates for the canal that led back to the Welland river. So, rather than traveling into the Welland, they ended up going right through the control gates and over the dam. They were in "the point of no return."

Sheila Hodges, who watched what took place, was convinced that they were dead as they dropped down some ten to twelve feet over the dam. She was astonished that the boat couldn't have traveled through the violent waters in the control gates and remain upright. Tom and Sheila watched the two women turn the boat around and head up towards the control gates. But, there was no way that the women in the boat were going to return from where they came, the current was way too strong. Tom ran to get help, while Sheila stood and watched what was taking place. She said, "I was shaking from head to toe. And I really had little hope that they would be saved. I just kept imagining what that would feel like ... being at the brink and knowing ... knowing you're gone."

Quickly after 911 was called, rescue workers arrived at the scene. They shined their flashlights out and spotted the women about 500 yards from the falls. At this point, they were out of the boat, drifting toward their certain death. One of them, Karen Himmel, began to swim toward the light and was making some headway swimming sideways as the current was taking her downstream. When the rescue workers saw what was happening, they screamed, "Keep swimming. Keep swimming! Keep swimming!" Eventually, she was able to grab a rope near the retaining wall, and was lifted up about 20 feet out of the water and pulled to safety. When pulled from the water, she had a deep gash in her leg from the boat's propeller and was in shock, but she was safe.

The other woman, Janelle Spain, was assumed to have been dead. But, the firefighters from the Niagara Falls Fire Department had joined in the search for her. The captain of the department had instructed the workers to take a drive down the river to see what they could see. When they stopped, they could hear Janelle screaming. She was about 350 yards from the falls, exhausted and unable to swim. So, a rescue worker tied a rope around his waist and went to rescue her. Unbelievably, Janelle was unharmed. The only thing that was wrong with her was that she was wet. Thirty seconds after Janelle was saved, the boat reached the edge of the falls and went over. For every rescue made at the Niagara Falls, certainly, there are others that end in tragedy. [\[1\]](#)

Our text this message is found in chapter 2, verses 1-4. In this text, we have a warning. It's a warning not to drift. It's a warning not to get too close to the falls. It's a warning to pay attention to the sun going down, so that you don't lose your bearings and miss your way into the canal.

Appropriately, the title of my message this morning is entitled, "Don't Drift." Indeed, this is the message of our text. As you read it, I want for you to look for it.

Hebrews 2:1-4

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 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? 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.

You can see the warning right there at the end of verse 1, "so that we do not drift away from it." This is the first of five warning passages in the book of Hebrews. Five times throughout the book of Hebrews, the writer interrupts his treatise on the superiority of Jesus Christ to warn his listeners of the dangers that face them.

Often the warnings are parenthetical, meaning that he will get back to his main point when the warning is done. In this case, we are not done speaking about angels. In verse 5, the writer goes back to speaking about how much better Jesus is than the angels, "He did not subject to angels the world to come, conceding them to speak." The world isn't subject to angels. But, the world is subject to Jesus. Jesus is better than the angels. We'll pick that up next week. Here is the first warning: Don't drift.

As mentioned earlier, there are five warnings given in this book. The second warning comes in chapter 3, "Do not harden your hearts" (3:8). The third warning comes in chapter 6, "let us not become like them" (6:1). The fourth warning comes in chapter 10, "Don't set Jesus aside" (10:29). The fifth warning comes in chapter 12, "Do not refuse Him who is speaking." (12:25).

You can easily argue that each of the warnings get stronger and stronger. The warning today is a small warning. It's a warning against drifting slowly away. The warning in chapter 3 is a bit stronger. It's a warning about hardening your heart and refusing to believe. The warning in chapter 6 is stronger yet. It's a warning about putting Jesus Christ to open shame (6:6). The warning in chapter 10 is stronger still. It's a warning about sinning willfully, with a defiance in your sin. It speaks of how "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). The warning in chapter 12 is the strongest of them all. It says that "our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29).

In many ways, these warnings are the key to the book of Hebrews. The author didn't set about to write a nice little talk on the greatness of Jesus. No. He wrote with a reason. There were those who were in danger of forsaking Jesus and the gospel that had been proclaimed to them. He shows the greatness of Jesus, so that he might call his listeners to pursue Jesus. Or, as I have put it, "Jesus is Better, So Press On!"

The warning in our passage today is a warning not to drift. You can easily picture the boats in the river, drifting along, just like Janelle Spain and Karen Himmel, who spent the day on the Niagara River, drifting along, trolling along in their boat toward the falls. Now, obviously, our text this morning isn't warning us about getting in boats, and drifting down the river. It's OK to ride in boats. It's OK to shut off their engines and drift along in the river. The writer here is using a metaphor, describing one who drifts in his faith.

Drifting is easy to do. It takes no effort. You sit back, do nothing, and just slip away.

I had an experience this summer of spending a day on a beach along the riverside. I'd never spent a day on the river like this before. It was a great day relaxing upon the slowly moving Mississippi river. While we were upon the beach, another boat came and docked a bit south of us, downstream. A man, a woman, and their dog got out of their boat, and began to walk upstream past us. As they walked by, we noticed that they were wearing what looked like huge baby diapers. As they walked, they tended to spread their legs apart from each other, so as not to chafe their legs upon these "diapers." In actuality, they were life preservers that you could sit in the water and would float.

Anyway, these people walked by us further upstream and proceeded to get into the water. And they sat in their diapers (which were not underwater holding them afloat) in the water and began to float down stream. They had some drinks in hand and were enjoying the drift down the river back to their boat. With no effort, they were slowly drifting downstream. Their dog was in the river as well with them. They would occasionally throw him a stick, which he would swim after. A bit later, they had drifted beyond their boat and came to shore, only to repeat the process.

It took no effort for them to move downstream while they were in the water. And that's the danger from walking away from the Lord. See, you don't need to be violently opposed to the gospel to suffer loss. [\[2\]](#) You merely need to ignore it and become bored with it and become indifferent. Then, you make choices. You reduce your Bible reading. You pray less. You turn on the television more. You stay up late, being too tired in the morning to spend time with the Lord. You choose a late Saturday night activity that inhibits your church attendance the next day. You fill your life and become too busy to meet with the church when it gathers. You stop attending the Bible Study that you used to attend. You stop attending the prayer meeting that you used to frequent. Rather than having people from church over for fellowship, you spend it watching a movie by yourself.

That's how you drift. You just let it slip. See, it's not usually one radical decision that people make that turn them away from the Lord. It's many small decisions, which in and of themselves aren't anything to be alarmed with. See, it's no great sin to read your Bible a bit less today because things are extremely busy for you. It's no great sin to pray a bit less today because of early morning commitments. It's no great sin to stay up late at night. It's no great sin to miss church on any given Sunday morning. It's no great sin to skip a Bible study. It's no great sin to neglect a prayer meeting. It's no great sin to rest and relax, instead of fellowshiping with people in the church.

The danger is when it compounds. The Bible reading becomes less and less and less, until eventually, you aren't reading your Bible any more. Your time of prayer becomes less and less and less, until eventually, you aren't praying at all. Late nights become your habit, so you are physically unable to get up early enough to spend any time with the Lord. Church attendance becomes spotty, and then, not at all. Skipping one Bible study leads to skipping another and another, and soon, you aren't gathering at all for any sort of small group encouragement. Your attendance at prayer meeting becomes less and less and eventually, not at all. Your neglect of fellowship becomes a habit, until soon, you never share your time with people in the church at all. You merely keep to yourself and lack the encouragement that you need to survive in your faith. The result of these things is tragic. As one commentator said, "inaction in spiritual things is fatal." [\[3\]](#)

John Piper said it well, "The life of this world is not a lake. It is a river. And it is flowing downward to destruction. If you do not listen earnestly to Jesus and consider him daily and fix your eyes on him hourly, then you will not stand still, you will go backward. You will float by." [\[4\]](#)

So, what's the cure? The cure is to pay attention. The cure is to be alert. The cure is to keep your mind engaged in the things of God. I say this because this is what the writer to the Hebrews says. Look there in chapter 2 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." In other words, the cure for drifting is paying attention to Jesus and the gospel. The writer here doesn't tell us to pay attention to anything new. He doesn't tell us to keep alert for the latest book on the shelf. He doesn't tell us to be engaged with the latest theories of sanctification. No, he tells us to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard."

What have we heard? We have heard about Jesus. We have heard the message of salvation. We have heard the good news. We have heard the gospel. God's divine counsel to us is to pay attention to these things. Think about it. Ponder it. Don't forget it. "Consider Jesus" (Heb 3:1). "Fix your eyes on Jesus" (Heb 12:2), and remember what He has done!

Remember the message you have heard. You have a grand and glorious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah promised long ago in the writings of Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah. He is the son of David who will rule upon His throne. He came to earth in the form of a man. He lives a perfect life among us. And yet, many hated Him and put Him to death. But, that death is the very means of our salvation. His death upon the cross wasn't merely the execution of another criminal. No. His death upon the cross was a sacrifice for sins. His sacrifice upon the cross was for our sins that we had done. We need merely to believe in Jesus and we receive His forgiveness.

Our forgiveness isn't a small thing. No, it's vast and complete. He has "forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col. 2:13). And our forgiveness isn't based upon anything that we have done. It's a completely free gift. There are no regrets in God's mind. Nor is God in any way hesitant about His forgiving us. He isn't in heaven saying to Himself, "Should I really have done that? Should I really have forgiven them anything?" Instead He says, "I'm going to show my great love to these people, even when it is undeserved." When we believe in Christ, we are justified in His sight. We stand before God holy and blameless. We can look forward to being with Him forever and ever! We all have the need to pay attention to what we have heard.

And I want for you to notice how emphatic the writer is here at this point. He doesn't merely say that we need to "pay attention" to it. He doesn't merely say that we need to "pay much attention" to it. He doesn't merely say that we need to "pay close attention" to it. No. He adds a double comparative. "We need to pay *much* closer attention to what we have heard." The double comparative is there for effect! We need to really engage our attention and our minds upon these things if we are to stay alert and not drift away.

At this point, the writer is being like the parent, who takes his child by the hand, looks him straight in the face, eye to eye, and tells the child something very important, "I want for you to listen to what the baby sister says. Please obey what she says. Please obey for her own sanity." Such is the importance of these words.

Listen! To lose focus off the gospel, or to forget the gospel, or to be bored with the gospel, or to be so convinced that you already know the gospel that you no longer engage with it in your minds—puts you in great danger. If this is you, you are in danger of drifting. Pay attention, so that you don't drift.

In our text, the writer gives us three reasons why it is that we ought not to drift. The first is ...
1. ... because Jesus is better (verse 1).

I direct your attention to the first part of verse 1. "For this reason ... we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard." You say, "What's the reason?" The reason is everything that he just wrote about in chapter 1. In fact, all of chapter 1 is building up to this point. Nowhere in chapter 1 do we see any command. There are no practical applications to what was said in chapter 1.

Chapter 2, verse 1 contains the first point of application in the entire book. "We must pay much closer attention." But, there's a link. It's these words, "For this reason." These three words tie us back to chapter 1. You might well paraphrase these words like this: "For the reason of everything that I have just said in chapter 1, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard."

So, you ask, "What is in chapter 1?" In case you have missed the last three weeks, I will tell you. Jesus is in chapter 1. He is the heir of all things (1:2). He is the creator of the universe (1:2). He is the radiance of the glory of God (1:3). He is the exact representation of God (1:3). He is the sustainer of the universe (1:3). Jesus is the one who made purification for our sins (1:3). Jesus is the one who sits in the highest place of authority in the universe, at the right hand of God (1:3).

He is the Son of God (1:5). He is the object of worship among all the angels (1:6). He sits upon an eternal throne, and will reign as king forever (1:8). His reign is a perfectly good reign. His reign will endure forever and ever and ever and ever. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). That's the reason why we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard! Jesus is Better than anything or anyone in the universe.

When the president of the United States rolls into town, you give attention to his visit. You read the newspapers. You listen to the radio reports. And, if he comes and does something personal for you, you pay even greater attention to his visit. Suppose he comes and honors you for some community service that you have done. Or, suppose he comes and honors you for some heroic act of bravery that you did, like running into a house to save an infant. My guess is that you would pay close attention to his visit.

But, the president of the United States is far different than the king of the universe. Sure he is powerful, but Jesus is far more powerful than any earthly ruler. The president is a mere man like us. He is a sinful man like us. We may easily disagree with his decisions and policies. But, Jesus is perfectly righteous. All of His ways are true and just. In the end, we will all say that Jesus acted justly and fairly with great grace and compassion.

And to make matters even more significant, Jesus has done something personal for us. He has purified us from our sins. He has died in our place, for the sins that we committed. That means that He has taken into account all of our sins and has borne them Himself upon the cross. He has visited us personally. How much attention ought we to pay to Him? We must pay much closer attention to Him!

There is no excuse for drifting away from Jesus, because Jesus is better. But there is a second reason why we ought not to drift, ...
2. ... because you won't escape (verses 2-3a).

This comes in verses 2 and 3. Look there.

Hebrews 2:2-3a

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?

This is a rhetorical question. In chapter 1, verse 5, the writer asked a rhetorical question, "To which of the angels did He ever say, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You?' None of the angels is the obvious answer. In chapter 1, verse 13, the writer asked a rhetorical question, "To which of the angels had He ever said, 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet?'" None of the angels is the answer.

And now, in chapter 2, verse 3, we see yet another rhetorical question, "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" We won't. There is no escape. It's easier to escape from Alcatraz than it is from the hands of the Lord when you neglect so great a salvation that He has provided for you. There is no escape if you drift from these things! So don't try! Pay attention to what you have heard. Don't drift! Church family, I'm calling you today not to drift!

Well, let's look at the author's reasoning here in verse 2 and 3. He argues from the lesser to the greater. Those of the Old Covenant didn't escape when they sinned. How then, will we who have heard the news of the glorious of Christ ever escape if we neglect it? We won't. The law back then came with swift judgment. They didn't escape. God's grace has come to remove the judgment from us. If we neglect such grace, then, certainly, there is no escape for us!

See, it's one thing to neglect a law that's bringing punishment upon you if you disobey. Any law stirs up within us the desire to rebel. We see a line we cannot cross and instantly we are all drawn to cross that line. But, it's another thing entirely to neglect a gracious offer of a gift. To refuse God's gracious gift is to insult Him. Surely, you won't escape punishment in this case.

In verse 2, the writer brings up the circumstances surrounding the Old Covenant. He said first of all that the law was "spoken through angels." It's an interesting phrase, as there are only a few hints of this in the Old Testament. It is said that Moses was in the "midst of ten thousand holy ones" when the law was given (Deu. 33:2). This is probably a reference to angels. Perhaps Psalm 68:17 has a similar reference as well. It speaks of the myriads of chariots of God that were present on Mount Sinai. It's not so clear whether or not these are angels. However, the New Testament writers speak in unison about this. Paul wrote (in Gal. 3:19) that the Law was "ordained through angels." Stephen said the same thing when he was preaching to the hostile Jewish crowd (Acts 7:53). And right here, in verse 2, we see how the law was "spoken through angels."

We know how highly the Jews held angels in their minds. They knew that angels were mighty holy warriors, who are awesome in strength. To have a word spoken through angels helped to make it quite reliable. Indeed, that's what the writer said, "The word spoken through angels proved unalterable." That is, it was firmly established. It was fully binding. Indeed it was. The law ruled over the people in Israel. Every time the law was broken, it came with a stiff penalty.

Typical of this was the story in Numbers 15 of the man that they found "gathering wood on the Sabbath day" (Num. 15:32). He was brought into custody (Num. 15:34) and then, "stoned ... to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded" (Num. 15:36). Furthermore, the law said, "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 21:17). This is the sort of tyranny that the law placed upon those who lived under it. Every transgression, every over-step of the law required a just penalty. Every disobedience, every under-step of the law required a just penalty.

Paul called the Old Covenant "the ministry of death" (2 Cor. 3:7). He called it "the ministry of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:10). No longer do we have this cloud hanging over us. No longer do we need to live under the constant threat of punishment. God, Himself, has borne the penalty of every transgression and every disobedience in the cross of Christ. Paul calls the New Covenant the "ministry of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:2) and the "ministry of righteousness" (2 Cor. 3:4). With so much greater glory, this is the gospel!

Jesus, upon the cross, removed the cloud of condemnation from us. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Certainly, we sin. And certainly, we are remorseful about our sins, but our remorse doesn't earn our forgiveness. Certainly, we confess our sins, but our confession doesn't earn our forgiveness. But, here is the glory of the gospel: we face neither punishment for our sins nor do we have to pay anything back to God to set things straight between us and God. What Jesus did upon the cross has made us right before Him! There is no longer separation. There is no longer contention. Rather, there is harmony between us and the Lord! Through Christ, by faith, we are made righteous.

This truth has massive implications upon how we live. It has massive implications upon our future. We don't have to walk through life on eggshells. We can live in light of God's great love for us. We can look forward to a life of joy with Him, forever!

Rightly does the writer of Hebrews identify this as "so great a salvation"! The more I live, the greater have I seen this salvation to be. The more I think about it, the more it thrills my soul. Oh, our salvation cost the death of Jesus. It is so valuable to us that we will sell everything that we have to obtain the pearl of great price! We have "a great salvation"!!

Now, can you imagine neglecting this salvation? Can you imagine yawning at such good news? Can you imagine not caring about it? It's inconceivable.

I remember as a child watching a Peter Sellers Pink Panther movie. Peter Sellers, was playing the role of inspector Jacques Clouseau. He was performing an interrogation of several people over some type of crime that had taken place. For some reason he was in the room with some other people, and a fly (or a bee) was buzzing around. It landed on an expensive-looking grand piano. Perturbed at the bug, he took a big swing at it with a club and knocked a hole in the piano, as the piano fell to the ground with a loud crash. One of those with him saw him do this protested and said, "That was a priceless Steinway!" And inspector Clouseau responded almost nonchalantly, "Not anymore." And then, he went on his way. It was incredibly funny, because he made light of something so valuable. He was so clueless. [\[3\]](#)

But, what is funny in a movie is far from funny with God. To neglect to care about the gospel is like spitting in the face of God. Where will you land if you spit in the face of a police officer? You will be brought quickly to jail. To drift away from the gospel to the point where you don't even care about it any longer will bring similar disgrace to God. In chapter 6 of Hebrews, the writer will describe those who know of salvation and turn their backs on it as "crucify[ing] to themselves the Son of God and put[ting] Him to open shame." (Heb. 6:6). When you drift from the gospel, you put Christ to open shame.

In chapter 10 of Hebrews, he will say, "Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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?" (Heb. 10:28-29). When you drift from the gospel, you insult the Spirit of grace. See, grace ought to draw us to God. If we rebel away from Him, it brings Him shame. Bringing Him shame will bring certain judgment upon you.

So, church family, don't drift. Don't drift from this great salvation. Don't drift, because Jesus is better. Don't drift because you won't escape. Finally, don't drift ...
3. ... because God has spoken (verses 3b-4).

And in speaking, He has confirmed His word to us. This great salvation that we have in Christ is firm and secure, because God has secured it with His word. That's the thrust of verses 3 and 4. Look in the middle of verse 3. ...

Hebrews 2:3b-4

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.

Jesus spoke it. Those who heard it verified it. And, God sealed it with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts.

Look there in verse 3. "It was at first spoken through the Lord." The message of salvation that we believe was first spoken through Jesus, who walked among us and taught us. Right at the beginning of His ministry, His focus was upon the good news.

"After John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14-15). When Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth, He preached His first public sermon. He first opened to the book of Isaiah and read the Scripture, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor." He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18-19). After sitting down, Jesus said, "Today this

Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). In other words, "There is freedom to be found in Me! I'm your savior."

As He walked through the villages and towns, He always focused His attention upon the need for and the means of salvation. He said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). He said, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them. Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me" (Luke 7:22-23). Jesus provided the sure way to heaven, through faith in Him.

But, the great salvation that we have wasn't only spoken through Jesus. Look there at the very end of verse 3, "It was [also] confirmed to us by those who heard." The author of the book of Hebrews had first-hand contact with those who knew Jesus and saw Jesus. Their testimony confirmed that everything that Jesus had spoken was true. He really had the power to heal. He really loved like no man loved. He really did rise from the dead.

But, further than Jesus speaking and further than those who saw him giving testimony, we also see God giving testimony to the truthfulness of these things. Look there in verse 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." Here, we see God taking the witness stand and confirming the truthfulness of the message of salvation. He confirmed it through the miracles that He worked in the first century.

You read through the book of Acts, and you are amazed at the miracles that took place. People spoke in languages unknown to them (Acts 2). A lame beggar, got up and walked in the name of Jesus (Acts 3). Ananias and Sapphira, who lied, both died soon after their lies were known (Acts 5). Ananias, the paralyzed man was healed in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:32-35). Tabitha was raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-42). All of these miracles were God's way of saying that the salvation that we have in Christ is true. As true as you have seen and witnessed these miracles, so true is my salvation.

And so, I come back now to my main point. Are you going to drift? Or, are you going to pay attention to Christ and the salvation that He has brought?

As I close my message, I want for you to consider the famous hymn, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." The words of this hymn were written by Robert Robinson, who was converted under the mighty preaching of George Whitefield. Robinson became a pastor and was greatly used of the Lord. You can see his heart of praise flow in the first stanza,

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise His name! I'm fixed upon it,
Name of God's redeeming love.

He reflects upon God's great salvation that came to him with: "Never ceasing streams of mercy." Such mercy calls us to respond to the Lord with loudest songs of praise to Him! This is true worship: praise that flows from a heart that has experienced the mercy of God. In the second stanza, Robinson placed his trust in God's sustaining power to lead him home to glory.

Hitherto Thy love has blest me;
Thou hast bro't me to this place;
And I know Thy hand will bring me
Safely home by Thy good grace.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Bro't me with His precious blood.

In the third stanza, Robinson expressed his own struggles.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Sadly, these words proved to be prophetic, as Robert Robinson drifted away from the faith. He lapsed into sin and even flirted with the heretical doctrines of Unitarianism. But one day, as tradition holds, Robinson was riding a stagecoach when he met a young woman, who was engrossed in reading a hymnal. After a bit of conversation, she asked him, "What do you think of this hymn that I have been reading?" Lo and behold, it was this very hymn. He said, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then." She assured him, "But these 'streams of mercy' are still flowing." According to one source, Robinson was later restored to fellowship with the Lord. [1] However, we don't know for sure. We can only trust that this is the case. He was a drifting soul.

Are you drifting this morning? You may well be past the control gates. You may be on your way to destruction, over the falls. You may be merely buying time until you hit the falls. I would encourage you today to look to Jesus. Fix your gaze on Him. Consider Him. He is your only escape.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 1, 2009 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] You can watch the recounting of this dramatic story here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr6VWmbcXN0> (part 1) and here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUJueE-_JM (part 2).

[2] Leon Morris, Expositors commentary, Volume 12, p. 21.

[3] Ibid.

[4] John Piper in a sermon preached on April 28, 1996 entitled, "The Danger of Drifting from the Word." You can read it here: http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/SermonsByTopic/54/955_The_Danger_of_Driftin_from_the_Word/.

[5] If you are up for a laugh, you can view the entire scene here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek44W0Dqjg>.

[6] Warren Wiersbe, p. 283, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2.
http://books.google.com/books?id=qXOCpY9AplcC&pg=PA282&dq=sermon+illustration+Hebrews+2:1+drift&source=bl&ots=M_PO2jUS6u&sig=ZE_CuQEIDy9CIAgwWl_Boc1CZXs&hl=en&ei=4_sSujgAYfMLbniQM&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAwQ6AEwADgK#v=onepage&q=&f=false