

NEGLECTING OUR SALVATION

Hebrews 2:2-4

Introduction: I am sure that you are aware that things tend to change over time. I once came across what is called "**The Stages of a Cold**," that illustrates how things tend to change over time. It describes a husband's reaction to his wife's colds during *the first seven years of marriage*.

In the first year when a wife gets a cold, the husband says, "Sugar dumpling. I'm really worried about you. You've had a bad sniffle and there's no telling about these things with all the strep that is going around. I'm putting you in the hospital."

In the second year the husband says, "Listen darling. I don't like the sound of that cough and I've called the doctor to rush over here. Now you go to bed and be a good girl."

In the third year the husband says, "Maybe you better lie down, Honey. There's nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I'll bring you something. Do we have any canned soup?"

In the fourth year the husband says, "Now look dear, be sensible. After you feed the kids, do the dishes and mop the floor, you'd better get some rest."

In the fifth year the husband says, "Why don't you take a couple of aspirins?"

In the sixth year the husband says, "I wish you'd just gargle or something instead of sitting around barking like a seal all evening."

Then in the seventh year the husband says, "For Pete's sake, stop that sneezing. What are you trying to do, give me pneumonia?"

As I said, things tend to change over the years. However, one thing that has never changed is the "greatness" of our salvation.

"SO GREAT SALVATION" because...

- **Announced by Incomparable Preacher** - vs. 3, "by the Lord"
- **Attested by Infallible Proofs** - vs. 4, "signs, wonders, miracles, gifts"
- **Accomplished by Infinite Price** - vs. 9, "Jesus... suffering of death"

In Heb. 2:1-4 we have a warning about our salvation. The emphasis of this warning is the *neglecting* of our salvation. We are told "to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb 2:1). The word *slip* means *letting something carelessly flow by*.

In verse 3 this danger is further expressed in the words "if we *neglect* our salvation." The word neglect means "to make light of." In Matthew 25 we have the parable of those who were invited to a wedding. The invitation was sent out and we read of the response of those invited: "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise" (Matt 25:5).

This warning is often used as an appeal for people to be saved. I do not think that when it is used in this manner that there is an injustice done to the Scripture. Sinners should be exhorted not to neglect God's offer to be saved. However, the words are actually an appeal to those who are saved.

Notice carefully the use of the personal pronoun "we." The writer is including himself in this appeal. He is not saying that he needs to be saved. No, he is addressing those who are saved and warning them about the danger of taking lightly the salvation that is possessed.

Let's look at this matter of why we should not neglect our salvation.

1. THE SIN OF NEGLECTING OUR SALVATION

Verses 2-3a, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." The writer is thinking of the Law that had been given by God; the commands that God gave His people.

A) The Deliverance of God's Commands... The writer speaks of the "word spoken by angels." This speaks of how God delivered His law to Moses.

B) The Disobedience of God's Commands... In verse 2 there are two words that describe the obedience expected. **First**, there is the word *transgression*. The word speaks of stepping over a line. God put certain boundaries around our life. The **second** word is *disobedience*. The word speaks of an unwillingness to hear, a deliberate shutting of the ears to what has been said. You have heard; **it goes in one ear and out the other**.

2. THE SERIOUSNESS OF NEGLECTING OUR SALVATION

The writer not only describes the sin of neglecting our salvation, but also how God views the matter. We are not to take our salvation lightly and God does not take lightly when it is taken lightly. He describes:

A) A Proper Punishment for Disobedience... In verse 2 we find the statement, *"a just recompense of reward."* This statement is found three times in Hebrews (2:3; 10:35; 11:26). It speaks of a requital for either good or bad. In this case, obviously it is a requital for that which is bad. He is speaking of how God punishes those who disobey Him. It is a punishment that is right and proper.

B) A Personal Punishment for Disobedience... In verse 3 we read, *"How shall we escape."* In the Old Testament there are many examples of God judging sin. These examples reveal that God will not tolerate sin, but as a holy and righteous God, He punishes transgression and disobedience.

3. THE SHAME OF NEGLECTING OUR SALVATION

A) The Origination of the Message... In verse 3 he states that the message *"first began to be spoken by the Lord."* The message of our great salvation came directly from the Lord Jesus. He came to this earth to both provide and proclaim the message of salvation. It is a message that is the very voice of God in His Son, Jesus, proclaiming to all men that they might be saved.

B) The Proclamation of the Message... The writer also states that the message *"was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him."* The word confirmed means to *"establish."* How was the message of salvation established? The disciples that heard Him went out and told others what He said, and they told others. This has always been God's way of making the message of salvation known.

C) The Affirmation of the Message... We read in verse 4 that when those who were given the message to proclaim that they did so, *"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."* The word witness means *"to testify."* As they went forth proclaiming the message of salvation, God testified to the truth and reality of the message. The writer describes the various way that God verified the message they proclaimed.

Here is the shame of neglecting our salvation. It is a GREAT SALVATION. We should be ashamed that we would take so great salvation lightly. Something that is so great and glorious should never be taken lightly. For one to be given such a wonderful salvation, to take it lightly is indeed a shameful matter. The writer speaks of our salvation as *"so great salvation"* (2:3). Everything about our salvation is great! It is great in what has been done **for** us. It is great in what has been done **in** us. Our salvation is indeed a great salvation.

*Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary.
Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan! Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!
Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.*

Oh, blessed hour when the message of God's salvation was brought to us. The writer speaks of the message of salvation we heard:

I recently read a story about the English explorer William Edward Parry who took a crew with him to the Arctic. They had carefully chartered their course but decided to go farther north to learn even more about this largely unexplored part of the world. So they calculated their position by the stars and began a treacherous and difficult journey. They walked hour after hour after hour until they stopped from sheer exhaustion. Once again taking their bearings from the stars, they discovered that they were farther south than they had been when they started. They had been walking on an ice floe that was imperceptibly moving south faster than they were walking north.