

How Shall We Escape If We Neglect So Great a Salvation?

If you are ever tempted to give up your conviction, turn your back on Christ, throw in the towel and quit, remember this question: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3). The question, so pertinent to first century Christians who were facing persecution, is just as relevant and timely for souls in the 21st century.

People have not changed that much over the centuries. We are of like passions as our forefathers. We are faced with temptations just like they were. There is no new sin—just the same transgressions in new clothing. What they needed, we need. Where they hurt then, we hurt now. They loved and laughed and we do, too. Sickness is here. Death is ever before our eyes. You confront nothing that is original or unique. If you have been through it, someone else has as well. There is nothing new under the sun.

In the Scriptures we see the writer of Hebrews exhorting, cautioning, and warning brethren against falling away. Leave Christ and you leave any and all hope for eternity (Eph. 2:12). There is no new way of salvation. No new source of spiritual truth (John 14:6). No other Savior but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

If, in the first century, you renounced the Savior to save your physical life, Jesus would have no part of you on Judgment Day: “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 10:33). Nothing has changed. Despite the truth to the contrary, men and women are still trusting other sources for salvation. Some may think that goodness and morality will save. Yet, not a single person is sinless, and no soul good enough to merit salvation (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Others may be neglecting the salvation freely offered in Jesus Christ while they wallow and revel in lives of sin. Some people enjoy sin. It is no secret that sin has pleasures—but only for a season (Heb. 11:25). The longer one stays in sin, the more comfortable he finds it. The Bible warns repeatedly that the heart may become hardened to truth and unresponsive to the Gospel. Carefully consider these passages:

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-13).

Yet, the end of sinful lives, hard hearts, and seared consciences (1 Tim. 4:2) is still eternal damnation. The meaning of our text is clearly seen by looking at the verse preceding: “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward” (Heb. 2:2).

Think about it. If the Word of God has proven stedfast (and it has), and if neglect of God’s will resulted in punishment (it did), then “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” **We will not!**

Lynn Parker
New Braunfels, TX

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

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GOD’S GRACE IS EXCLUSIVE

While God wills that all men be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), this is the statement of his **ideal** will. His **ideal** will and His **conditional** will are not the same, however. He created us with free will, and our free will stands between these two. Mohammed gains converts by force. Jesus employs persuasive love—never compulsion: “Come unto me, ...and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28). The end of God’s grace is man’s eternal salvation, but only “few” will be saved at last because only few will so **choose** (Mat 7:13-14). We therefore correctly conclude that God’s plan of grace is conditional, thereby **excluding** certain ones. Although millions believe the doctrine of “irresistible grace,” it is fatally false. Since Eve in Eden, all have had the power of choice when confronted with God’s will. Paul begged the Corinthians to “receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). Those once in the grace of God can fall therefrom (Gal. 5:4). The following passages summarize the bases of exclusion from God’s saving grace:

John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!” Jesus excludes from God’s grace all who are not born of water and the Spirit.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Jesus excludes all unbelievers.

Luke 13:3: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.” Jesus excludes all who refuse to repent of their sins.

Mat. 10:33: “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.” Jesus excludes all who do not confess their faith in Him.

Mark 16:16: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” Jesus excludes all who are not baptized in order to be saved.

Luke 9:23: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up cross daily, and follow me.” Jesus excludes all who will not live for Him daily. God’s grace is conditional, depending upon the decisions we make, whether to obey or disobey Him (Mat. 7:21-23).

—Dub McClish, Denton, TX

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

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Today, the third Sunday in June is recognized in this country as "Father's Day," a day to honor fathers. The following articles center on the kind of fathers that Christian fathers ought to be.

FATHER

F is for FAITHFUL. Fathers should be faithful to God first, then to their families. As a child growing up, I didn't have to worry about my father and mother not being faithful to each other. They realized marriage as for life or "unto death do us part."

A is for AFFECTION. There were a lot of worldly possessions that I did not have as a child but I didn't realize it at the time. The greatest of all possessions was to experience the warmth and love of both my father and mother. The bumper sticker asks, "Have you hugged your kid today?"

T is for TIME. We hear so much about time and rightly so. There is nothing equal to the fact that as a father you spend time with your children. Little Johnny or little Suzie will be grown before you know it!

H is for HERITAGE. What are you, as a father, leaving behind for your children? Have you worked above and beyond to give your child material things, but neglected their spiritual well being? The greatest heritage a son or daughter could have would be the privilege of having a Christian father.

E is for EXAMPLE. As you know, your example is powerful. My own father's example as a kind and compassionate man has influenced me greatly. Also his example in regular church attendance instilled within me the great importance of putting the church first.

R is for REPROVE. Reprove means to correct or to rebuke. So often we as parents believe that if we reprimand our children that we do not love them, but the Bible teaches right the opposite. Fathers have a great responsibility to see that their children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We, as sons or daughters, are indebted to our earthly fathers. This is especially true if they are the type of fathers that God would have them to be. We should respect the wisdom of the "hoary head" and never refer to our dad as the "old man."

Author Unknown

FATHER'S DAY!!

Ten Precepts For A Father

1. He makes himself responsible for his children's behavior.
2. He is never blinded by love to his child's faults - he knows he serves his child's interest best by recognizing and correcting weakness.
3. He makes his child feel secure.
4. He shares his child's activities.
5. He has his child's complete confidence.
6. He is always available to help solve youthful problems.
7. He doesn't demand filial devotion - he wins it.
8. He recognizes and accepts, as largely his, the responsibility for his child's mental and spiritual development.
9. He contributes to making the home his child's haven.
10. He strives to be the man his child thinks he is.

I took a piece of living clay, and gently fashioned it day by day. I molded with all my power and art, a young child's soft and yielding heart. I came again when years had gone; it was a man I looked upon. He still that early imprint wore and I could change it nevermore!

Author Unknown

Father's let us never forget that the greatest example of a father is found in our heavenly Father and in the love that he has shown.

Happy Father's Day

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett's mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues. She awaits her appointment with a pain management specialist for therapy on June 25. Jack Peebles is home, but is not progressing as well as he would like. The Gibsons were not out Sunday, as Jim had a problem with his eye that was making it difficult for him to see. Janice Wilson was sick and unable to be out Wednesday evening.

Rachel Fitzpatrick was out of town last Sunday in Tennessee.

Natalie Aaron responded to the invitation Sunday evening, asking for the prayers of the church. Saturday, June 23, 2007 will be an afternoon "get together" beginning around 2:00 PM, with a Low Country Boil to be served about 4:00 - 4:30 PM. Plan to be a part of this time together.

(With the opening of the Billy Graham library a few weeks ago in Charlotte, NC, I thought the following appropriate. – K.J.C.)

A CHURCH OF CHRIST MAN

J. M. Powell, who formerly preached for the East Chestnut church of Christ in Ashville, NC made a ten week around-the-world missionary tour during the summer months several years ago. He has reported some interesting events which occurred as he preached from country to country. One especially caught my attention. While he was in Hamilton, New Zealand, he met a Christian by the name of John Gerrand. John, however, had not been a Christian until after Billy Graham had visited the island. But, we quote the remainder of the story from Brother Powell:

One night Graham was preaching on the subject of "repentance" and cited Acts 2:38 as a proof text. He repeated only the first word. John was within a few feet of the speaker and had a New Testament in his hands. He stood up and said, "Mr. Graham, quote the rest of the passage." This irritated Graham, who said to Gerrand, "Get out of here you 'church of Christ' man." John said this was the first time he had ever heard the expression. He made contact with the local church of Christ and was baptized into Christ (*Gospel Advocate, August 11, 1975*).

Here is a man who was rebuked and called a "church of Christ man" because he believed the Bible and wanted a whole verse of scripture quoted rather than just a single word from the verse. Although he had never heard of the church of Christ at that time, he was identified with it because he wanted all of Acts 2:38 quoted. If believing the Bible and wanting to hear all preached instead of just part makes one a "church of Christ man," then we gladly put ourselves into that category! (**Denominationalism versus The Bible**, Terry M. Hightower, "Words Too Hard For Billy Graham To Preach" Shenandoah Lectures, Shenandoah Church of Christ, San Antonio, TX p. 168).

(Sadly, many have been misled by Billy Graham, and others, who have refused to preach the whole gospel and will be lost – because they chose to follow the teaching of a man and not the divinely revealed message of the Gospel. – K.J.C.)