

Hebrews 1, 2 & 3 - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of heeding God's word and establishing our position on unshakeable ground, so that we can weather the ultimate crisis and remain steadfast in our faith.

Duration: 27:21

Scripture: Matthew 24:2-25, Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:1, Hebrews 12:25-27

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not missing or neglecting the message being conveyed. The letter being referred to is likely a biblical letter, possibly the book of Hebrews. The speaker highlights the repeated use of words like 'earnestness,' 'warnings,' and 'exhortations' throughout the letter. The main theme of the letter is the need for Christians to remain steadfast and not drift away from their faith, especially in times of trial and crisis. The speaker also mentions the significance of having something from the Lord that will see believers through difficult times, using the analogy of a ship in rough waters.

Transcript

Lord, we do now adjust ourselves to the deepest truth, that only thou thyself can make us understand thine own things. It is not possible for the natural man to understand the things of the Spirit of God. Only the Spirit of God can give that understanding.

And unless thou here in this very hour dost do that with every one of us, we have come in vain. Lord, do thou the speaking. Beyond all human instrumentality, may we be given to hear the Lord speaking in our heart.

That will be fruitful. We pray that it may be so. In the name of our Lord Jesus, amen.

Will you turn again to that letter from which we have already read, the letter to the Hebrews, in chapter 2? Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest happily we drift away from them. For if the words spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which, having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that have God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will? Will you turn to the end of the letter, chapter 12, and verse 25? See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that

warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him that warneth from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth.

But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. This word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Those words, of course, sound very terrible. They are almost like holding a threat over people, and you might feel that they are not too encouraging a beginning for a time like this. I have read them with one object, and I think they constitute a very good starting point for such a consideration as is before us at this time.

No one will question the solemnity of those words. There is something almost terrible about them. When you hear them, you say, Well, you cannot, you dare not, fail to recognize that we are in the presence of something very serious.

There is something very serious on hand when such words have to be spoken. We are not in the presence of some just light, superficial, pleasant matter and interest. We are evidently in the presence of something momentous, something which, if on the one side can be put into such a language of fear, fear.

For it says, let us fear a fear, a warning, solemn and terrible warning, possibility of something awful happening. If on the one side it is like that, you do not talk like that about anything unless it is something of tremendous value, something of very glorious possibility and consequence. To miss that something is said to be the most terrible thing that could happen.

Therefore, it must be something tremendously important. Now, I am not exaggerating, I am not making that up. There you are.

I started at the beginning of the letter. Let us fear less. I have gone right over to near the end of the letter.

And the same words or similar words occur again as summing up and in between the beginning and the end, you just have any number of these earnest entreaties, these solemn warnings, examples taken out of the life of others who did not give heed and go through. And what happened in their case? You have all these exhortations, entreaties, admonitions, warnings, beseeching, and we shall come on to those in particular probably before we are at the end of these gatherings. What is it all about? Now, therefore, friends, I suggest to you that this letter must be a very vital letter.

If that is the nature of it, the realm of it, if that is the portent, something tremendous in view for Christians which can be missed. That is what it is all about. I, this afternoon, will occupy my time mainly in talking about the letter.

Later we will get into the letter itself probably and talk about it. Now, you see, when you have language like that, when someone is speaking in this way and it is put on record and turns out to be, allow me to put it in this way, not man writing or speaking but God, you surely must be in the presence of a crisis. It must be a crisis that is on hand.

That is, a terminal point on which and at which tremendous issues are at stake, one way or another. When you hear something has got to happen, it is the ultimate that is brought to bear upon this moment, this situation. Now, we know, of course, that this letter itself took its rise from a crisis.

But it is impressive to realize that not only was it related to a historic crisis, but the Holy Spirit took hold of that and introduced the ultimate crisis, built upon that the ultimate issue. Perhaps you need that explained. The historic crisis was this.

This letter was written probably about approximately two years before that full scattering for the whole of this age of the Jewish people, the destruction of Jerusalem which the Lord Jesus had foretold. Things, notice in our reading, which were in the first place spoken by the Lord himself. Give the more earnest heed.

And some of the things which were spoken by him related to this crisis. He said, the day is coming when they will cast up around you their siege. They will leave not one stone upon another.

That whole terrible twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel, spoken by the Lord, was bearing upon the thing that was now within a year or two of actual fulfillment. When the Roman legions besieged Jerusalem, brought it to starvation, destroyed its temple, so that literally according to a Jewish historian, they did not leave one stone upon another. It is on record that as they went about their work, they literally leveled the whole thing to the ground.

And the temple finished, all the temple worship finished, priesthood finished, the sacrifices finished. The people scattered to the ends of the earth, never to be recovered again in the dispensation. It has been like that according to the Lord's word.

Your house is left unto you desolate. It has been like that these two thousand years. That's the historic crisis that is here.

The shaking of the things of the earth that can be shaken. Now the Holy Spirit takes hold of the historic and superimposes upon that something bigger. Shaking of the heavens also.

The heavenly things. This is Jewish Christianity. Now look, Christianity as a whole will be shaken at the end.

This is an end of one phase. Another phase is coming when everything in Christianity will be shaken, shaken to its foundation. This tremendous two-fold crisis is the occasion of this letter.

Why did the Lord cause this person, whoever he was, we won't debate who he was, to write this letter at that time? And this is where it comes to us. With just as much force it ought to come as it came to the Jews at that time, or was intended to do. The time will come.

It is fixed in the counsels of God when everything in this creation and in this universe is going to be subject to a tremendous force. Tremendous shaking. It's going to happen.

It's going to happen. Peter speaks about it in terms of the atomic age as you know. Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved.

The elements on fire and so on. It's coming. Now the issue is this.

When that comes, if that comes, what that we have will abide the shaking. What will go through it all and survive? Unshaken. Unshaken.

What have we got that let the greatest shaking in this universe come to never be moved? Will never go. That will come out all right. Unshaken.

A kingdom which cannot be shaken. What have you got like that? Now this letter was written to these Hebrew Christians. It was a great effort of the Lord to get their feet established upon ground that could never be shaken.

You see, they were wavering. They were wavering. They were already being shaken.

They were being moved from their steadfastness. Some of them were thinking of going back to the old associations and the old Jewish system. Like this.

The Lord inspired this letter with the one objective of getting them established. So established. When this terrific storm broke, these winds were let loose.

They carried away, carried away, so many and so much, there would be that which would stand the storm and abide. And as I have said, he used the historic as the occasion for bringing in the eternal. He leads on to this for all Christians.

Now dear friends, there are two things about that that are important for our notice. One is this, that you cannot, you cannot settle that matter when the storm breaks. If you have ever been in a storm, a real good storm, you know very well that that's not the time to get things settled.

If you haven't got them settled before then, you are just going to be all at sea indeed. The forces would be too much to cope with. Far too much to cope with.

You would just be thrown all over the place. An emergency is not the time to quietly get down to our foundations. We are caught up in things too much.

It's like that. It's not all settled beforehand. If you don't know where you are beforehand, when this thing breaks, you'll not be able to see to it then.

That's important to recognize. Therefore, this letter would say, in the light of testings which will come, in view of that which is bound to break upon us sometime, now's the time to make sure that our position is an absolutely sound one, an absolutely true one. That there is nothing doubtful about our position at all, no question about it.

We know where we are. We are not at the mercy of other people's judgments and ideas and what not. We know the Lord.

We know the Lord for ourselves. We know where we are. Let everything go to pieces.

We know. Now that is a thing that has got to be settled. And it cannot be settled when everything is going to pieces.

But the other thing that is important, and I sound very serious, don't I? But it's very important that we should recognize that it may not be necessary for the great ultimate upheaval and chaos and cataclysm to

take place in order to bring that issue out. Is not this the heart of every trial that comes into the Christian life? Any day, any day, a temptation or an adversity, some suffering, something that just is calculated to throw you all over the place. Now, in any such experience, the question arises, what have I got of the Lord that's going to get me through this? What have I really got now of the Lord that will stand me instead in this crisis? Maybe something in any day life, family matter, a business matter, a church matter, a personal matter, something that is most testing, unsettling, upsetting.

It comes like a shock or a blow could knock you to pieces. What have you got of the Lord that is going to see you through it, that will not go with the wind, will not be carried away in this hour of trial? It will stand. It will remain.

Now, that is the issue of this book, you see. Whether it's a historic crisis in the life of Israel or Jure or in the ultimate experience of the church and its coming and its already come to multitudes of the Lord's people on this earth. That's the position today.

In a large part of this world, the test is, what have we got that will see us through this, this terrible time? It's the question for many today in the East, but it's the ever present question. And that is the message of this book. And so it has to be solemn, it has to be serious, it has to use words like these.

Let us give, we ought to give, we ought to give more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest happily we drift from them. Now, that is a poor way of interpreting the original language. Our English language just so often fails to give us the real sense of the words which were originally used.

Here it is, lest happily we drift away from them. And the picture there in the original language is the picture of a ship. A ship in rough water with strong currents and heavy winds.

And that ship is having a very difficult time, and it is trying to make calm water. There are moorings there in the harbor, moorings there. Only she can make those moorings and lay hold on those moorings and get moored up.

She's all right, but here she comes. And those responsible are a bit careless about it. And just as she comes up on the moorings, they are too careless to grasp them, to lay hold on them, and to fasten them.

And she drifts past, and she drifts past. That's actually the picture behind the Greek words here. We ought to give them more earnest heed, lest, you see, on this strong adverse current, these conditions of trial, through not being

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