

A Fatal Gamble

by Fred Tomilson

This sermon emphasizes the danger of spiritual drifting, using the analogy of a couple on a raft ignoring a warning sign, symbolizing how many Christians drift away from God. It highlights the prevalence of self-idolatry in today's culture and its infiltration into the church, leading to a lack of true biblical Christianity. The speaker urges listeners to wake up to their spiritual condition, emphasizing the need for a genuine relationship with God and a commitment to living according to His Word.

Scripture: Hebrews 2:1, 2 Corinthians 4:10, Psalm 119:105, James 4:8, Ephesians 5:14

Topics: "Spiritual Drifting", "Self-Idolatry"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the danger of spiritual drifting, using the analogy of a couple on a raft ignoring a warning sign, symbolizing how many Christians drift away from God. It highlights the prevalence of self-idolatry in today's culture and its infiltration into the church, leading to a lack of true biblical Christianity. The speaker urges listeners to wake up to their spiritual condition, emphasizing the need for a genuine relationship with God and a commitment to living according to His Word.

Transcript

Here I stand for the second time speaking to a virtually empty room. It's not entirely empty, I have my faithful recording man Stephen Chen and the congregation exists of Peter Boyle sitting over to my right. Otherwise the room is empty and this is not an easy thing for me.

But I am being encouraged each week to share some message that I can believe the Lord has given to me and this is for the benefits of our own fellowship people who are obviously not able to attend our meetings which don't exist and for people far and wide who do find their way to our website and we welcome you. While I'm speaking about you, maybe I could just express our appreciation when we hear from any of you just to know that there are people out there tuning in, listening and sometimes to see whereabouts you are located is very encouraging. I can assure you that if you do ever contact us, we have no intention of writing back to people unless they were to ask us to and we most certainly will never be looking for financial support so you'd be most welcome.

Anyway, may the Lord bless each and every one of you and keep you healthy as we trust him to keep us healthy also. I'm reading a verse of Scripture. Excuse me, I am healthy actually.

The verse of Scripture is from the book of Hebrews, just one verse from chapter 2 and verse 1 which reads, For this reason we must pay closer attention to what we have heard so that we do not drift away from it. I remember seeing a cartoon drawing that was depicting a couple who were sitting together across a table and they were sharing a meal together and obviously enjoying one another's company and laughing and talking and it was all very good by the looks of things except that in the drawing the table and the chairs that they were sitting at was actually situated on a raft which was floating on a river and as a result of being so distracted by one another and their conversation and what not they completely missed the fact that they were just passing a large sign just on the bank at one side which read, Beware of the Falls. And they were just ignoring that and proceeding.

And it seemed to me, and it seems to me again today that that illustration very powerfully symbolizes the spiritual status of many, many people who would profess to be Christians. They are guilty themselves of just drifting. And as in the cartoon, there's always danger ahead when you allow yourself to drift.

And I'm thinking in terms of spiritual things just now. As I'm saying this, I'm thinking of myself and my own life. I know a little bit about drifting myself.

My early life was blessed. Both my parents were Christian people. We attended an excellent Bible church.

I made a commitment to the Lord through the Christian gospel. And in due course, I was baptized. In my early 20s, I married my longtime girlfriend.

And we had a little boy at this particular time that I'm thinking about. Just one boy, but there was another boy who was on the way at that time. Of course, he would in due course be followed by two sisters.

But I had a career which for me at that time was a dream career in the Liverpool City Police. And we had a nice house. And we continued attending church.

In so many ways, we were the typical Western Christian family. Life was good. But spiritually, I was drifting.

Maybe there are those who are listening to me this morning who have a similar kind of story. Perhaps you've never really thought about this issue before, or at least not recently. I want to remind you about it this morning.

Drifting is the easiest thing in the world to do. All you have to do to drift is nothing. You just do nothing and you will drift.

It's a slow process. Usually, we're unaware of what's taking place. We're just going with the flow.

Let me dig just a little deeper into this. You know, what I'm about to say is very important. But the prevailing culture in which we live is a culture of self-idolatry.

It's all about self. It's all about me, is the way people think of it, and so on. But this culture, which we'll call the world's culture, stands in complete opposition and contrast to biblical Christianity.

They both represent, if you like, kingdoms, powerful kingdoms. I'm not equating them by any means, but they both represent powerful kingdoms, the kingdom of self, the culture of self. And biblical Christianity and the kingdom of God.

This sobering reality that I want to draw your attention to at this point is that this culture, this culture of self, has succeeded in seducing its way into the professing Christian church of today. The church is being squeezed into the mould of the culture that prevails around us. This is evidenced, I believe, in the teaching that is so common.

It's evident in the worship, as we would refer to it. It's evident in the programs which are part of the process. The seductive culture is permeated everywhere.

And it seems to me that very few people are really noticing what's been going on or what the state of affairs is at this particular time. Listen to me carefully, because I believe this very deeply. And that's this, that true, authentic, biblical Christianity is completely impossible while we're relaxing in a lazy sort of downstream drift.

In other words, we're doing nothing. We're just drifting. And in that condition and in that posture, it is completely impossible to experience the kind of Christianity that the Bible presents.

It's very evident and clear that it's impossible to just drift into conviction of sin. It is equally impossible to drift into victorious Christian living. It's impossible to drift into spiritual purity.

It's impossible to drift into biblical holiness. And it's impossible to drift into a true knowledge of God. It can't be done.

That requires a work of the Holy Spirit of God. But there's something else. If you're drifting, you're actually gambling.

I think this was illustrated in the cartoon I've referred to already. They were just choosing not to pay attention to their surroundings at all. They were preoccupied with that which was the destruction of the moment.

And they passed the sign, the warning sign, as they're going and they were headed for calamity. The gamble that I'm thinking about really is a gamble that there is in fact no consequence for our foolish drifting. We gamble that that's true.

We gamble that there's no final accountability for our lives. But the Bible is very, very clear. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 10 it says, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

We can rejoice in the fact as people who've responded to the gospel in some measure, we can claim biblically that we're redeemed by the grace of God as a free gift to us. But when the Bible speaks here of judgment it's referring to our works being judged. We're redeemed by grace.

We're judged by our works. We're not judged for our sin. We're judged for our works, the way we've chosen to live our lives.

Along the way, because God loves each of those that he's calling, he loves them deeply, he loves you deeply, and for that reason he arranges what we could refer to as wake-up calls, events in the course of our journey. It's quite possible that you listening to what I'm saying this morning could actually be a wake-up call from God himself to you. It could be that God is speaking through my stumbling words but he's speaking into the depths of your heart with the intention of waking you up to your spiritual status, your spiritual condition, and your need to get right with God.

You know, just this past week I was chatting on the telephone with a lady from our church. As a matter of fact, she's 94 years of age. And in the course of the conversation she made what at first seemed to be an outrageous statement.

She said, I like funerals better than weddings. And I couldn't help making a response to that. And I said, well, it really depends on whose funeral it is.

No, she said, I mean it. She said, funerals are more real than weddings. They make people stop and think.

And then she continued and said to me, I remember you telling me of your friend preaching at a funeral and leaning over the pulpit and pointing down to the casket and saying to the congregation, you will all come here. It's only a matter of time. That's a wake-up call.

I think it's quite feasible to say that what's happening today, the virus that is pandemic, life as we have known it has come to a virtual standstill. The very fact that I'm standing here talking to a virtually empty room is proof of that. Because I'd never choose to do this under any other circumstances.

But I believe that even this very tragic development is an event which God will be using. And our prayer is that God will succeed greatly in using this very situation as a wake-up call. Something that will stop people in their tracks and think more deeply of how fragile life is and how fragile our culture is.

And everything else about our lives. But we're trusting that God will succeed in penetrating deep into people's hearts, maybe into your heart this morning, as you consider your own spiritual condition and your own relationship and walk with God. I'm so grateful myself that back in those moments I was referring to at the outset with my own life, that God fired a shot across the bow of my raft and woke me up to my true spiritual state in spite of my church attendance and all of the other benefits that I was enjoying in my life.

And he woke me up to spiritual reality. And I'm grateful to God for doing that. And I pray that there'll be those who listen to me when they listen to this message who will sense that God is firing a shot across the bow of your life today.

It's time to wake up. It's time to get serious. I encourage you, whoever you are, to yield your life to him, to God.

And you can rest assured insofar as you do this from the depths of your heart, he'll lift you off your raft. He'll lift you out of that drifting situation and he will establish you on the solid ground of truth and reality. He'll plant your feet on the rock that will not move and cannot be moved.

Allow God to take control of your entire life. Be prepared to make big changes in your life and in your circumstances as God leads you by his Spirit. Be courageous.

Choose friends who are men and women who are filled with the Spirit of God. Godly people. And find a church where they live and they preach the truths of the true Gospel.

Or perhaps that which is sometimes referred to as the deeper Christian life. Let's just pray. Father, you know every individual that is listening to this message as I speak or as they listen to it later.

You know those who are drifting, Lord. We thank you together for your great love. We're with you, love.

Those, Lord, who you're calling into your family in these days. And we pray, Lord, that you will succeed in firing that wake-up call, that wake-up call shot across the bows of their lives. Wake them up, Lord.

Awake a response in hearts, we pray. And grant, Lord, that they will pay close attention to these words, just as the text read earlier. We pray, Lord, that you will likewise give them courage to turn around and to take a new course and choose a new course for their lives.

A course of complete yieldedness to God and the development of that union with God that brings victory and purity and holiness and that deep, deep sense of satisfaction and security. I pray for this, Lord, and keep them from slipping. Keep them from drifting.

As the days go by, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/dExjQm-BjLc.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fred-tomilson/a-fatal-gamble/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net