

Christian, Are You Refusing God?

by Tim Conway

The sermon emphasizes the importance of heeding God's voice and not refusing Him, as it leads to apostasy, disobedience, and spiritual death.

Duration: 1:08:23

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:22, Job 9:4, Ecclesiastes 8:11, Isaiah 40:15, Matthew 15:8, Luke 14:17, Philippians 2:9, Hebrews 2:2, Hebrews 10:28, Hebrews 12:25, James 1:22

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Faithfulness To Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not refusing God's voice, drawing parallels between the consequences faced by those who rejected God's warnings in the past and the greater accountability for those who reject Him today. The message highlights the unshakable nature of God's Kingdom and the need for gratitude, acceptable worship, reverence, and awe towards Him. The urgency to cling to Christ, heed His voice, and run the race faithfully is emphasized, warning against the dangers of drifting away and the necessity of surrendering all to follow Him.

Transcript

Hebrews 12.25 See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject Him who warns from heaven. At that time, His voice shook the earth.

So that ought to give you a good idea right there, that Him who warned them on earth is not primarily speaking about Moses. It's speaking about the God who thundered from Sinai as we saw back up in verse 18-21. At that time, His voice shook the earth.

But now He has promised, yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken. Anything shakable is going to be removed.

That is, things that have been made, in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Now my sermon is entitled, Are You Refusing God? I think you can probably see that I get my title from the first part of verse 25.

Do you see it? Let's look at that again. See the first sentence in verse 25? See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. Who is speaking? God.

If you say God, that certainly is a right answer. But go back to verse 24 just for a second. Undoubtedly God is speaking.

But our author introduced the idea of speaking right before this. So we don't want to come in on verse 25 and forget the context, or leave off the fact that in verse 24 you have this. Verse 22 starts, You have come to, you jump to verse 24, one of the things you have come to is what? To Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks.

It speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. Think about it.

Is it not by Christ that God's voice trumpets the very best and the final revelation? Do you all remember how Hebrews starts? Long ago, right? At many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers, how? By the prophets. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by the Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He created, He created all things, He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of His nature.

By His word, He upholds the universe. By the word of His power, after making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of majesty on high. He is the one that speaks.

Yes, it's God who speaks. He speaks by the Son. He speaks by the blood.

You need to see this isn't God just saying anything. This is God speaking the best. The final revelation that's found in the Gospel.

That's what's at stake here. That's what this is all about. And listen.

Oh, I got to thinking as I was sitting here. I probably should call this, Christian, are you refusing God? In fact, let's make it the title. Why? Because you know, you think about this, the sprinkled blood, who refuses it? And you see, you look out there and you see the world.

And you think about them refusing the Gospel. But you need to remember here, Hebrews is not written primarily to the lost out there. Know who it's written to? Us in here.

It's written to holy brothers. It's written to those who have come to Christ. Who are staggering.

Because it's gotten hard. That's who it's written to. You need to remember that.

The sprinkled blood of Christ. It has to do with salvation. Salvation by the slaughter of the Son of God.

You don't want to refuse that, Christian. That's the idea. The blood.

The blood is our only escape. You don't want to go somewhere else. You don't want to begin to turn back.

You don't want to deviate. You don't want to drift from that. That so great salvation, that we need to, in the beginning of this letter, we need to pay much closer attention to the things we've heard.

Because what can happen? You go on with life. It gets long. It gets weary.

The race gets hard. And what can happen? You begin to drift away. You need to go back and pay much closer attention, once again, to what God is speaking by way of this blood.

And this is to professing Christians. Not only. If you're lost, it's to you as well.

But this is dealing with those who have already identified with Christ. And to begin a deadly drift. A weariness is set in, that if it's not healed, it's going to be put out of joint altogether.

And some of the most fearful warnings in our Bible come at us in this book concerning the dangers of falling away from the living God. This is blood. It speaks something.

Without it, there's no remission. We don't want to turn from it. We don't want to get tired in the race and begin to divert ourselves to other things.

And so our author says, see that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. First, what I want to do is I want to say seven things to you about those two words. Look at verse 25.

The first sentence. Do you see those two words side by side? Refuse Him. Fix your eyes and minds on those two words.

Refuse Him. I want to give seven thoughts right off here on those two words. Refuse Him.

The first is this. Remember, this is not primarily the lost guy out here. This is the Christian who gets to a place where he refuses God.

Refuse Him. As I thought about that, you know what I see? I see two wills. Right? You have a confrontation of two wills here.

You have the will of God. You have two wills. His and mine.

Or His and yours. That's what this warning has to do with. How your will squares up with His.

God has a will for you. You have a will for you. What we're being told here is that our will for ourselves ought to be in line with God's will for ourselves.

When you refuse Him, God has a will for you. You have another will for you. You go with your will.

That's the picture here. God is speaking. You don't want to refuse Him who is speaking.

What does He have to say to you? He has to say something personally applicable to you. God speaks to you. He speaks to me.

The living God has a will. I have a will. He expresses His will to me, for me.

That's the idea. But my will for me is different from His will for me. I simply don't want to do what He wants me to do.

That's the first thing I want to say. You need to see what this is. When we refuse Him, it is a battle of the will.

Here's a second thing. It's interesting. I look at this word.

When I have substantial words in the passages that I'm looking at, I do a Greek word study. Do you know where this word shows up? Refuse. Don't turn there.

But I'm going to tell you the verse. I'm going to read it to you. Luke 14, 17 At the time for the banquet, He sent His servant to say to those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready.

But they all alike began to make excuses. Guess what the word, same word in the Greek for our word refuse over in Hebrews 12. It's the word excuses.

They just began to make excuses. The first said to Him, I bought a field. I must go out and see it.

Please have me. Here it is again. Excused.

Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen. I go to examine them. Please have me.

Excused. You know what? Refusing God, it's not like Pharaoh. Just this outright stomping of feet.

Outright defiance. Who is the Lord that I should obey Him? No, it's not that. You refuse Him when you just get to the point.

The race is hard and you make excuses. It's just excuses. The Lord will understand.

It doesn't have to be that open defiance. It's just excuse. Why you shouldn't heed His voice.

Well, certainly He'll understand. This is going on in my life. They did this to me.

He's put me in this situation. Certainly He'll understand. Just making excuses.

You refuse Him very easily by just ignoring what He says. And most people try to convince themselves as they're going wrong, well, maybe God doesn't really mean what He said. He couldn't mean it for this situation.

Oh, by the way, you know what's interesting to me? You know what the author of Hebrews is warning against? Point of no return. He's warning that if you go on sinning deliberately, there's no expectation at that point that this certain destruction is possible to get to a place where you can't repent anymore. Guess what happened in that parable where they were making excuses.

The master of the household was angry and he said, those who were invited now cannot come. Same outcome. The very same thing.

Take heed. Take heed. Making excuses is bad business.

It's bad. This is a path to apostasy. It usually doesn't happen overnight.

Disobey the Lord. You keep disobeying the Lord. You keep making excuses.

You imagine God's going to understand. It just makes the master of the household angry. He expects that you heed His voice no matter what.

A third thing. Refusing God. You can draw a line.

If you go down to verse 28, you see the idea of worship. Awe and reverence. Worshiping God.

You know you can draw a line between refusing Him and worship. Why? Because the idea is when you don't refuse Him, you know what? When things get hard and you obey Him and you trust Him and you

continue to walk with Him, that is the greatest worship that you can give. Why? What does worship have to do with? Worship, it comes from old English words, worth Skype.

It has to do with the worth of God. That's what worship is all about. It's about the worth of the thing that you worship.

You know, we were singing the songs. Right? We were singing songs about worthy is Your name and come let us adore Him. But you know what? We can come and we can gather around and we can sing and it can be just lip service.

Worship. Brothers and sisters, let me tell you this. When life gets hard and you continue to say, Christ means more to me.

I will suffer though I have to shed my blood. I will suffer though they torture me. I will suffer no matter how hard this road gets.

I will continue because Christ is worth it. Do you know when that is the case, God is most honored. When things get a little bit hard and you dive out of the race, when things get a little bit hard and you refuse His voice, God doesn't understand.

You discredit God. You tear down any perceived worth in Him. When you show this world, it's by your good works.

It's when the world is watching and they see He doesn't deny Christ for money. He doesn't deny Christ for ease. He doesn't deny Christ for money.

He doesn't deny Christ when things get hard. He doesn't deny Christ when people laugh at Him, when people mock Him. He doesn't deny Christ when family abandons Him.

He doesn't deny Christ when the cost is high. Wow! Wow! I mean, He's really suffering and He is standing by Christ. The Lord is greatly honored.

I mean, think about this. In Matthew 15, verse 8, this people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

You see, when we begin to set up our own standards, when we begin to set up our own rules, when we begin to not listen to Him, but we listen to ourselves, we listen to other men, that's when our worship becomes vain. I know this is rather lengthy, but listen to this. I want to drive this point home.

Grace Community Church, it is not your aggressive evangelism. It is not a great burden for missions. It is not that you show up at church.

It is not that you have Puritans in your library. It is not those things that primarily impress God. It is not, through and through, time and again in Scripture, do you know what the thing is that brings Him the most reverence and glory and honor? Is that no matter what your situation is, you heed His voice.

You don't refuse Him. You say, I know God wants me to do this, and I'm going to do it. Somebody says, yeah, but it's going to be hard.

But the Lord said, Here's God, back in the prophet Isaiah. Think about this. What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? You see, sacrifices is that outward form of worship.

What to me is your church going? What to me is your evangelism? What is all that? Not that there wasn't a proper place for the sacrifices, or a proper place for missions or evangelism or coming to church or having Puritans on your shelf. But listen, what to me is the multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord? I've had enough of burnt offerings, of rams, the fat of well-fed beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or lambs or of goats.

When you come to appear before me, who is required to view this trampling of my courts? In other words, when you come into my courts, and it's with a disobedient heart, it's with a heart that is far from me, you trample my courts. You're not welcome here. That's what he's saying.

Your new moons, your appointed feasts, my soul hates. They become a burden to me. I'm weary of bearing them.

When you spread out your hands, your prayers, they stink in his nostrils. I will hide my eyes from you, even though you make many prayers. I will not listen.

Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves. Make yourselves clean.

Remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good.

Seek justice. Correct oppression. Bring justice to the fatherless.

Plead the widow's case. Come now. Let us reason together, says the Lord.

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Now listen to this.

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you see, that's it. Refusing Him.

If you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. What does He want? Does He want all their sacrifices? Does He want all their outward religious exercise? He doesn't. He wants a heart in love with Him.

A heart that trusts Him. A heart that is looking to the blood of Christ and finding there their hope and staying steadfast and true through this life. That's what He desires.

Listen to this. You know this. Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? In other words, you're not obeying.

You call Me, Lord, again, which is a great religious exercise. Sounds good coming off the lips. You acknowledge the Lord one way.

But He's saying, why don't you do what your lips acknowledge? You all know this well. Saul comes back from fighting the Amalekites. He spared Agite.

He spared the sheep. The best of the cattle. 1 Samuel 15.22 Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice

and to listen than the fat of rams.

You see what's happening? The Christian Hebrews that the author of Hebrews is writing to, they're drooping and it's hard. And you know what? Our author says so. You've endured hard suffering.

He says so. Back in Hebrews 10. He knows it.

It's hard. And he does say in chapter 12 it could get harder. You haven't yet resisted unto shedding your blood.

This battle against sin. This striving against sin. He knows it's hard.

But you know what? If you refuse His voice, it doesn't matter how hard you suffer. Now I know that when we suffer, the temptation is all the greater. The temptation to disobedience.

It's greater. The temptation to try to fix things in our own power. The temptation to just coast or I need to rest.

This is just too hard. I'm going to take a break. I'm going to go to sleep for a little season.

I'm not going to continue what I know the Lord wants me to do because after all, He knows how much this has cost me so far. And he's saying, look, worship. Worship.

Don't refuse Him. Don't refuse that voice. Exalt Christ.

All the worth. Remember how it was with Jesus? We found this back in Hebrews 5. He learned obedience by what? He suffered. That doesn't mean that He was disobedient and had to learn to be obedient.

But what does it mean He learned obedience by what He suffered? It means that as He was going along through life, the suffering intensified. And at every step, when the suffering intensified, He obeyed. He was learning obedience at a new level.

Why? Why? Why? Because watch the temptations of the devil. You're hungry. Change it.

Take a way out other than what God wants for you. Take a way out. But at every step, Christian, we are called to follow Him.

Which means what? You are to be learning obedience at a new level. This is upward. Upward and onward to glory.

You can expect that through many tribulations and you can expect that they're going to get harder and harder and harder. But do you know what? Every step it gets harder. And you bring out the scales and you put Christ in there and you put ease, recreation, coasting, not hurting, that you're perceived that you'll have if you don't follow Christ.

Every step it gets harder. And you bring out the scales and you say, I want Christ. Christ is just magnified.

And it gets harder. And you bring Him out again. I still want Christ.

And it gets so hard that it's ready to cost you your life. They're going to take my head off as it was with Paul. They're going to crucify me as it was with Peter.

And yet, I still want Christ. You see, that's worship. Do you remember how it was said of Peter? That it was told him by what way he was going to glorify God.

It's when the cost of following Christ is beyond anything you've known and you still say, it may be that it's going to cost me my health. It may be that it's going to cost me my money. It may be that it's going to cost me my freedom.

But I want Christ more. And I'll tell you, to the degree we trust and obey Christ when it's hard is the degree to which we worship Him. So our author says, see that you do not refuse Him who is speaking.

The fourth point I would make here, there's no wisdom in refusing Him. Job said this in Job 9.4, God is wise in heart, mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against God and succeeded? I mean, you tell me.

Job's asking the question, who's hardened himself against God and succeeded? Who's ever hardened themselves against God and been blessed? Who's ever hardened themselves against God and prevailed? You see, refusing Him is not in our best interest. There's no wisdom. Pharaoh resisted Him.

What did it get him? Did it turn out well? They came to him and they said, Egypt is undone. Egypt is wiped out. Egypt is destroyed.

And God wasn't done yet. No one has succeeded. I mean, you even think, I was thinking in my mind about those who came out.

Remember the night that Jesus was obeyed and here come the soldiers? And I was just thinking about them. Well, you know, here they are resisting Christ. Aren't they getting their way? Do you know what that meant when they all fell down? That meant you could not succeed here unless God wanted you to succeed here.

I mean, the only reason any of them got up off the ground was they should have recognized, wow, this is only because God's letting us. I mean, God could drop them in a second into hell just like He dropped them to the ground. It does no good to refuse Him.

Behold. Doesn't God say this? Behold. Think about it.

Think about it. Refusing Him. Refusing Him.

What are we to Him? What is He to us? Isaiah 40.15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket and accounted as the dust of the scales. 40.17 All the nations are as nothing before Him. I mean, remember Nebuchadnezzar? He says, I got to the place where I came to my senses.

At the end of days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven. You know what he says? My reason returned unto me. It's insane to resist God.

It is wisdom. It is sanity. It is reason to come to the point where you look up and you recognize, whoa, nobody can stay His hand.

Nobody can say, what are you doing? I mean, he came to recognize who God was, not to be resisted. I mean, do you remember when Job even got a little bit, I mean, he was throwing some things out there, and God comes to him and says, Fault finder? I mean, you gird yourself up like a man. I want some

answers from you.

He says, where were you when I laid the foundations for all this? Where were you when I do this? Where were you when I do that? When I call forth the storm? When I call forth the hail? When I raise up these animals? Where were you, Job, with the heat? Do you know where that comes from? The wind, do you know where that comes from? The lightning, the thunder, the rain? Do you have some idea about that? I mean, you go and read those last four chapters of Job, and it sets you recognizing, refusing His voice does no good. Oh, don't we think of ourselves in ways we ought not to think? And we think of God very little? You begin to read in Scripture, and you understand, this God, you cannot succeed in refusing Him. And why would we want to? Only if we're not in our right mind, like old Nebuchadnezzar before he got set straight.

And remember, this is for Christians. Professing Christians. Fifth, let me say this fifthly, it's like I just said, why would you want to refuse Him? To refuse Him is to refuse your own good.

I mean, the amazing thing is that to refuse Him is to refuse His kindness to us. To refuse His mercy. Doesn't God speak to us, not out of His own severity, but for our own safety, security, salvation? To refuse Him is to refuse our own good.

Don't you find it? So His voice is a tender voice. Oh, it becomes threatening when we refuse Him. But to those who don't refuse Him, to those who will come, to those who heed His voice, it is all salvation.

It is all safety. It is all security. It's all goodness.

I mean, don't we get that blessing? Blessed are the servants whom the Master finds awake when He comes. Truly, I say to you, He will dress Himself for service, have them recline at table, and He will come and serve them. And you remember, again, I want to emphasize, keep coming back to this, that the author of Hebrews is speaking in the first place to professing Christians, to those who have already identified with Christ, but who have become weary and drooping and drift-prone.

To us! He's saying to us, don't refuse Him. Don't refuse Him. There's such kindness.

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. Sixthly, Christian, we can fall into this and oftentimes we may think of the lost here, but don't misinterpret God's patience when you refuse Him. Do you all recognize that refusing Him may seem harmless at the moment? Why? Because we refuse Him? Nothing happens.

Many of you know the text from Ecclesiastes 8.11 because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily. The heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Men find it easy to make excuses in refusing the voice of God.

Why? Because they refuse it and they go eat dinner. They eat a hamburger. And it was good.

And they enjoyed it. And they feel sleepy. And they go to bed.

And they wake up refreshed. And the day before, they refuse the Lord. And look, a lot of times, we tend to relegate that to people outside the church.

But oh boy, let's bring that back in here. Because you know what? If the book of Hebrews is about anything, it's about the perseverance of the saints in not refusing His voice. And you know, we have this

once saved, always saved mindset.

And it creeps in and it's in here. I don't doubt it. You know what happens? We reason like this.

I'm a Christian. And so any kind of disobedience today, what is that? I'm forgiven. I'm justified.

But that is not the way Hebrews argues. Hebrews argues that if you consistently, persistently, as a practice, are not refusing that voice, you'll make it. But if you live a life refusing, brothers and sisters, we need to be really careful that we, by a bad doctrinal thinking, just don't even hear what Scripture says.

I mean, you come across these verses. I was just dealing with this in family devotions this week. Salt is good.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be salted? It's good for nothing. It's not good for the ground, the dirt, the dunghill. It's good for one thing to be cast out.

It's useless. You look at that and you say, what's that all about? I'll tell you what it's about. It's about your life one time seemed salty.

It had that appearance. It had a pungency about it. It had flavor about it.

It had a preserving effect to it. And it lost that. How can it be salted again? Christ does not seem to be indicating there that it will be.

Or that it can be. Not by His answer. You know, we read these texts like you put the hand to the plow, Luke 9. And you look back.

What is it? What does that look like? What does it look like to be salty and lose it? What does it look like to put the hand to the plow and look back? I'll tell you what it means. It means you came. You responded to the voice.

And then you didn't. That's what it's all about. You begin to refuse His voice.

What He tells you to do? You quit hearing. And look, like I said before, this isn't just the out-and-out defiance of Pharaoh. You just get to the point where, Lord, would you please have me excused just this one time? And then it becomes two times.

And three times. And four times. And suddenly, you've looked back and you're not worthy of the kingdom.

You've lost your saltiness. And it just happens so subtly. He's talking to professing Christians.

Don't misinterpret God's patience. Just because you have started refusing His voice and nothing's happened doesn't mean that you are not in deadly peril. You say, this sounds like works.

Listen, it's a matter of faith. This is a matter of faith. Because if you really believe that sprinkled blood is what it is and you believe Christ is what it is, it's like this, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? See, if I don't do the things He says, what does it mean about what I believe about His being Lord? This is not about works.

This is about faith. And this is about what true faith produces. Have you stopped believing that Christ is worth paying the highest price for? You say, I thought it was free.

It's free, but it costs you everything. Unless you forsake all that you have, you can't be His disciple. That's what happened right before the saltiness section.

Why? Why must it cost you everything? Because you must be weaned of all other loves, of all other gods, of all other kingdoms. Don't presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, is what Scripture says. God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

Our brother Tawfiq hit this note last week. I gave her time to repent. Did you ever think about the her? Yeah, it's Jezebel.

But did you ever think about where she is? She's in the church. God gives people time not just out there. God gave her time in the church to repent.

Something had gone wrong. And she was given time to repent. You see, sometimes we just get this once saved, always saved mindset.

We're in! We're in! No. Your faith, you must persevere. You must endure to the end.

You must. I gave her time to repent. She refuses to repent.

And guess what? She got to the point now she was not allowed to repent. God was going to make a bed for her. Not a good bed.

Look, it may seem like God isn't taking notice when we begin to refuse His voice, but we need to remember right back in Hebrews 4, what? No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account. And the seventh point I would just make right here, you will surrender anyway. I mean, the way I read in Scripture, Philippians 2.9, Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Look, again, last week I remembered that Tawfiq said, Satan knows that he doesn't have much time. Have you ever thought about this? Much time before what? Before he's going to be thrown on his knees and the rest of the crowd. Before that! Until he'll be right there with every one of us on earth, under earth, over the earth, whose knees are bent before the high majesty of the true King.

That's coming. That's coming for every one of us. Why? Why resist Him now? And it's not like He's a tyrant.

I mean, come unto Me all you that labor in a heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Does that sound like a tyrant to you? Eternal life? Does that sound like a tyrant? This day you'll be with Me in paradise? Does that sound like tyrant? So, look at the text again. Hebrews 12.25 I want you to notice the way that our author argues here.

For if they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, much less will they escape if we reject Him. If we reject, we and the church, if we reject Him who warns from heaven. This is a common form of logic.

Now, I want you to think about this. Common form of logic. It's arguing from the lesser to the greater.

It's very common in Scripture to find this. If God so closed the grass of the field, that's the lesser thing. If He so closed the grass of the field, how much more is He going to close you, you little of faith, right? Isn't that how we find that kind of reasoning often in Scripture? If a man on the Sabbath is going to lift his animal or his ox or whatever up out of a pit, how much more should be done for a man? That's the kind of argument.

If while we were enemies, we were reconciled. If at that level, how much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved? The lesser to the greater. If we know how to give good gifts, we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children.

How much more? You see, it's that how much more argument. It comes at us much in Scripture. Now, I want you to remember this.

If these people, when God spoke on earth, now remember who those people were. Again, they were the people of God, right? They were the people that God identified as His people. They were the people that would identify themselves as God's people.

They were the people that came out of Egypt. They were the people that went through the Red Sea. They were the people that stood under the shadow of the pillar of smoke or the pillar of cloud.

They were lit by the pillar of fire at night. These were the people of God. These were the people.

And what happened? And they perished. You see, if you go back to Hebrews 3, that's what this is all about. It's about the people who are identified as the people of God not making it.

That's the example. And He's saying to us, oh, if they didn't make it then, how much more us? How does the logic work? Well, think about it this way. If I give a law, let's say I have some authority.

I'm the chief of police in San Antonio. There's a law. I come tell you that law.

And here it is. And you break it. That's what happened back there.

That's what happened out there. Commandments are given. They broke them.

And what happened? Bitten by fiery serpents. The Levites went through, hacked them to pieces. Plague fell on them.

Fire fell on them. Ground opened up and swallowed them. All manner of things happened.

Eventually, millions of carcasses out there in the wilderness, they perished. They did not reach God's rest. Okay, you break the law.

You deserve to be punished. You deserve it. Justice demands it.

But I come along and I crush My Son to provide you a way out. To provide you pardon. And you turn your back on Him and ignore Him.

That's the argument here. It's the argument based on the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, all you have to do is look back at chapter 10.

This is exactly the argument. He throws this argument at us three times in Hebrews. Hebrews 10, 28
Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy.

Wow, they broke the commandment on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse! Do you see that? Again, arguing the lesser to the greater. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who is trampled underfoot the Son of God and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified and has outraged the Spirit of grace? And again, I emphasize, this is speaking about sanctified people.

People who have been set aside. People who are marked out as the people of God. People who have joined themselves with the holy people of God.

People who are experiencing, as it says back in Hebrews 6, they're experiencing the power of God, the power of the Spirit, the power of the Word. They have great privilege and great light and great illumination. How much worse! It's the blood.

This is the sprinkled blood that was speaking. It outrages the Spirit of grace. Same argument.

Worse punishment. Again, remember back in chapter 2? I mean, jettison back there just a moment. Hebrews 2.2. Same argument.

"...For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable..." And here it is. "...Every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" You remember what happened right before this? All of chapter 1. What's that all about? The glories of Christ. The supremacy of Christ.

It's put out there. I mean, if they broke His commandments, how much more that His glorious Son of God sent to earth, made to drink the cup of God's wrath, stricken, smitten, and afflicted. God poured out His vengeance on His Son, made Him sin in the place as a substitute for sinners.

How much more? You break My commandments and justice has your head. But now if I provide by the blood of My own Son a way of rescue and a way of pardon, and I beseech you, I beckon you, I tell you, be reconciled to Me. I've come with terms of pardon.

And I say, surrender. And you turn your back on My Son. What is hell going to be like for men and women? Not only who broke God's commandments like the demons did, but they have turned their back on the remedy.

And do you know what's worse? Not the guy out there in Africa who never heard the name of Christ. He may have turned his back on the light of nature, the light of conscience. But do you know what is true of those who have dwelt within the congregation of God's people? You see, it isn't the guy out there who has broken the law.

Had Christ set forth, just slammed the door. People in the church, they've been there a while. These people have been there.

These people have been able to examine truth through and through. They've been able to look. They've been able to examine the Gospel at close proximity.

They've been exposed to the workings of the Spirit of God. They've been exposed to good preaching over and over and over and examined the claims of the Gospel for themselves in seeing Christ. And after that, to finally get to the point, you're looking at Christ and you're looking at the shed blood.

You know, Lord, would You have me excused for the field? It may seem like an excuse. And that man doesn't even have to walk out the door. He can be right here.

She can be right here, right in our midst. She's checked out that way. Something about the world.

Something there that I... Something got the heart. This is to professing Christians. You know what happens.

We just don't think God's going to do anything. Why? I'm a Christian. I'm forgiven.

I'm forgiven. It's going to be okay. If you come to the place where you can refuse His voice, you've checked out and it becomes a pattern, the next step is hell.

No matter what you believe you were. That's what this is saying. It's saying Christ is precious.

And our faith needs to cling to Him. And though the road be long, cling to Him still. He's worthy.

Worship. Worthy. You cling to Him.

You don't let go. I mean, He is altogether lovely. There is beauty.

There is salvation there. Hold tight. That's what this whole book was about.

Oh, look at Him. He's supreme to angels. He's better than Moses.

He's better than all those high priests. He's better than Aaron. He's better.

His sacrifice is better. His covenant is better than that old covenant. It was built on better promises.

Oh, it's better. It's better. His blood is better than Abel's.

Just better. He's altogether better. He's better than everything.

And He's your salvation. Your salvation alone. Cling to Him all the way to the end.

Cling to Him. Don't be deceived. Don't see Him coming as a babe in a manger.

Don't see Him compassionately laying His hand on the leper. Don't see Him in all the compassion, in all the love, in all His tenderness, and think that if you refuse His voice, He's going to continue to be tender to you that way. Because the time He's giving you is meant to... Look, you have a space of time to repent, come back.

This is what David was talking about. This is the very kind of... Somebody wanders away. You bring them back.

This is happening in the church. They wander. Brethren, don't be misled.

Don't be misguided. Don't think otherwise. You and I need to understand this the right way.

We need to see it for what it is. He goes on to say this in Hebrews 12.26, At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens. This phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken.

That is, things that have been made in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship and reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. I'll tell you this, God is not safe.

That's what that means right there at the end. God is not safe. Oh, He is your safety, your high tower, your mighty fortress, as long as we cling to Him and our faith is obedient.

We're trusting. We're calling Him Lord, Lord, and we're doing what He says. I mean, have you not heard? Did you not hear what David said? Did you not hear what it says there in James? You're hearers of the Word and not doers, deceiving your own selves.

Brethren, have we lost the voice of God? Has our saltiness began to diminish? Have we taken glances back when we put our hand to the plow? All this is about running this race and getting our eyes set back on Jesus Christ. Running this race well. Running this race straight.

Think about it. Unshakable. I mean, what do we have to do with? We have to do with not this little babe in a manger.

This God who is a consuming fire. A God who is dangerous. A God who is mighty.

A Christ who is mighty. Christ. Unshakable Kingdom.

He is unshakably God. He is the mighty God. He is an eternal Kingdom.

It can't be shaken. This is no weakling of a Savior. This is not somebody you want to abandon just recklessly.

He's the radiance of the glory of God and His blood has been spilt. And it's powerful. Absolute.

Unshakable. Think about Christ. He is this unshakable reality that you and I have to do with.

We can't get away with it. There's no checking out. You can't just say, I don't like this.

We were born. He created us. We're here.

And everyone is in the valley of decision. Christ is the Savior and there is no other. You don't want to turn away.

You don't want to go some other place. You don't want to revert. You don't want to make excuses.

You don't want to go back to the law. You don't want to go to your ox and into your field. Anywhere.

Anywhere other than Christ. It's death. And you know what? I know.

I know that when we suffer, there's a temptation not to want to heed His voice. I mean, I've had this picture in my mind often times. It's like Christ is saying, come, follow Me.

And as we're trying to follow Him, sometimes it's like we put our face against the millstone. It's like the more I try to follow Him, the more it hurts. And there's a tendency to want to pull back.

That's where these people were. Just let me rest. Let me drift.

Let me coast. But we're not to the end yet. We're not there yet.

We need to heed His voice. His voice. There's lots of noise in this world.

There's lots of voices. There's lots of religious leaders. There's lots of media.

There's lots of stuff coming at us. But look, have you got to where you've tuned Him out? I mean, do some of you remember when you first came to Him? And it's like, oh, you were exact. Oh, you came to it.

And you find it for the first time. I'm supposed to obey the government. I'm going to do it.

Well, you come to something else. Sell your possessions. And you say, I'm going to do that.

You come there. Don't lay up treasure on earth. Lay it up in heaven.

I'm going to do that. And you're going through and you're seeing what He says. And there's reaction.

Oh, that's worship. He is so pleased. Look, He jumps.

Watch when He gets in the Word. He jumps. She jumps.

She moves. She reacts. Did you get to the point? It's kind of your daily exercise, right? Got to read Scripture.

Read through it. Go on with your life. No changes.

You're just not even hearing that voice anymore. You're just lost in all the voices and the noise of this world and work and television and all the garbage and the stuff that comes in and the radio stations and all of it. Can I tell you something? Our Lord Jesus Christ intends this Christian race to be hard.

You know why? Because the harder it gets and you keep obeying, the more it just honors His worth. Because it's you and me as it gets harder and the heat gets turned up at every new intensity. And you say, I still want Christ more.

Oh, He's glorified. If there is reverence and awe in anything, it is in that. He's designed it that way.

He intends for life to be difficult. And in the midst of all of it are our ears tuned. When it gets hard, it can be easy to want to just go home, turn on the TV, kick back on the sofa.

It can be. It can be easy to want to check out. Lord, it's just hard.

It's hard pastoring. Lord, it's hard. I need a sabbatical.

Not just a literal one. You just say, I'm justified to check out for a season. You know the problem with that is sometimes you can look up and you are so far gone and a lot of times, you don't recognize you're not.

It's just God's done with you. He gave you a time to repent. It's serious.

That's what this book is all about. Cling to Christ. Cling to Christ.

Cling. We must turn from all those voices. Turn from the world.

Those things are going to be shaken. I mean, doesn't Peter say it? Since all these things are thus to be dissolved. What? What manner of people ought we to be? I mean, it's all going to fall away.

The things we chased after in this world, they're all going away. They're all going to shrivel up. They're all going to get burned.

They're all going to decay. They're all going to suffer rust or thief or whatever. We're going to die.

We're going to leave it all behind. I mean, I heard somebody just say, 30 seconds after you die, I think it was Charles Leiter, 30 seconds after you die, everything's going to be in proper perspective. The things that you gave attention to that were worthless, suddenly you're just going to recognize how worthless.

Things you ought to have given yourself to. Brethren, we need to hear Christ afresh. Hear His voice.

What's He calling us onward to? What have we grown reckless with or careless with or coasted in that you know the Lord wants? You know the Lord wants us diligent. He wants us awake. He wants us alert.

He wants us fighting. He wants our loins girt. He wants us prepared with the armor of God.

He wants us advancing. He wants us standing. He wants us running.

That's what He's calling us to. God offers us, think brethren, this day you will be with me in paradise. It's not like we run this race for trivial things.

We run this race, think about it, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. We're not out for trinkets here. And this thing is not to be won by trinkets either.

It's going to cost you everything. Everything. We have to forsake every other kingdom and every other God.

All other loves as primary. Jesus was not kidding when He said that unless you hate mother and father, hate your wife, your son, your daughter, brother, sister, your own life. Are you... Look, if you're listening, if you're in tune with His voice, He's saying die.

Carry your cross and die to my voice. Isn't that what that's all about? You die to your desires and your agenda and your plans and live to my voice. That's what denying self and carrying cross is all about.

It's a call to us to go back afresh. Lord, what are you saying? Not just some subjective thing where we go out and stand under the stars. Lord, speak to me.

Where we actually just go back and listen to what God says in His word all over again. And do it. Don't just call Him Lord.

Don't just come in here and sing worship and sing adore. Unless you're all afresh running after His voice and following His voice, it'll cost you everything. But what a bargain it is, right? I mean, this is the race of races.

How many people don't even get into the race? You will rue the day if you actually got into the race. And you check out to be near to the kingdom and not make it. Remember, brethren, the kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field.

That man, for joy, not out of misery, not out of sorrow, not out of drudgery, not out of duty, for joy, he went and sold everything. Father, I pray, help us. May our ears hear.

Be tuned to that voice. We see a God who is a consuming fire, not safe at all, but good. God who is a consuming fire and yet in love has determined to save those who will flee to Christ and trust Him.

Lord, make the sprinkled blood precious to us. Make Christ altogether lovely that in joy we sell out everything else. Lord, help us all to finish well.

If there are those that are coasting here, Lord, You're giving them time to repent. Oh, Father, I pray that they would indeed repent. I pray that they would come back.

I pray that they would hear. I pray that You would give grace. Lord, I pray for them.

Lord, they know who they are. And if they don't know who they are, I pray, Lord, You'd wake them up. Please, Father, have mercy upon us.

May Your Word be living. May it be active. May it pierce, even today, deep.

May it cut where cutting is needed. Father, we trust You. We trust You to see us through to the end.

In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

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