

Hebrews chapter 5. No lie, this is a thick one tonight. It is a thick one, and it is a weighty one. And I won't apologize for it, but we'll leave weighty, I promise you that. Because there's no way to teach and get into this without feeling the weight of it. And so, while you're turning to Hebrews 5, I have just one quick announcement for you. Off to my right, your left, hangs a series of banners that we call our family traits. And what I mean like that is like when my son or daughter, if you see them, you'll go, "Oh yeah, he's got his mom's blue eyes." So, my children look somewhat like me, and these are our family traits. This is what we want to look like. This is who we feel called to be. And if you'll notice the last one is "community," and that's because we believe that Scriptures teach, in fact we don't believe it, we know it that the Scriptures teach that to follow Jesus means not only an inner conversion of the soul but a conversion to a group of people. So that we're transformed by the power of Jesus and drawn into a group of people, that the way of Jesus works itself out in community, that when we are truly known, then we can be encouraged, we can be rebuked and we can grow into maturity in Christ. If we're not going to take the risk of being known, then Christianity has a way of losing its power, its weight, its hold. So, we've had some tough goes. We have never wanted to grow as large as we've grown. There has never been one meeting where we got together and said, "Let's get big." In fact, we work our tail off to try to make you leave here. There is a quarterly "quit coming here" sermon. There is "you're not allowed to park here." There is "don't ever come to this service or we will kill you." I mean, we have done all that we can to make you leave, alright.

And the thing we continue to be blown away by is it seems like the harder we press and the meaner we are, the more you keep coming. So, we might switch up the philosophy. We might just get sweet and go, "No, come to any service." No, we'll work on it. We'll think through something, alright. The reason I'm telling you this is because we've got some things to figure out because of our belief about community and because we are approaching the 3000 number. And so with that, you have to start asking the question, "How do you really have community in a church of 3000?" Specifically when we get back up to 5 and 6 services, because you're already spread out. In fact, you could come here a month and not see the same people twice. And so, how do we build community? Well, Gilbert Montez, our small groups pastor, our ambassador of community if you will, and his team, after a lot of study and prayer and seeking the face of God, we've decided to divide the home groups into geographic zones. And once a quarter, we're going to get those zones together. And they'll be all sorts of things that happen at those zone gatherings. There will be everything from fellowship to teaching to, even we've kicked around missional things for that area. So you can get to know, not only people at large at the church but people who live in the same community you live in. You'll hear me say over and over again that you need to be where you are and minister where you are. It's why if you sit through our membership class, you will hear me say if you live outside of a fifteen mile radius of this place, we will eventually ask you to leave. That we are hoping to plant a church in your area with a similar philosophy and ask you to go give your time, energy and talents to that place. So, right now we've got 8-10 families driving from Rockwall, which blows my mind because I think you need a passport to do that, alright. But we want you to be where you are.

It's hard to engage your community and love your community and plug your community into the bride of Christ when you live 45-50 minutes away. And so, one of the things these zone gatherings are going to do is let you meet people in your community whose kids go to the same school your kids go to... And by doing that, we can foster a little bit better community that we so desire and we think is so needed here at the Village. So, I think we sent out 2,200 letters on this subject this week. Here's my promise to you: we are going to pummel you with this information. We're going to be everywhere. You're going to look in your purse, and we will have stuffed something in there, alright. We are going to be

everywhere on this thing, because you gotta buy in. You've got to. Attendance gets all the plaudit and all the press these days. We are not concerned with attendance; we're concerned with connections. Are you tracking with me on that? Like, if all you do is come to church, you're like an engaged guy, alright. You got all the troubles of marriage with none of the benefits.

Alright, so there's a funny kind of fear. Right? There's all kinds of fear. There's fun fear. There really is. It's why we go to scary movies, alright. We go to scary movies because we like to be afraid. There is a kind of fear that's fun. Like when my wife and I stay in hotels, what I'll do is, hotel rooms can get really, really dark, darker than most of the rooms in your house. And so, I will make sure a light is kept on that is away from the bed so that when she gets into bed and turns off the lamp, there's still a light on and she's like, "Oh, there's still a light on." And I'm like, "Oh, I'll get it." And what I'll do, is I'll go turn off the light so it's pitch black in there, and then I just won't come to bed. And so, she'll be like, "Matt, I know you're in here." And I just keep quiet. And she'll eventually start kicking and screaming, and I rarely step away from the light switch. I just stand there and....that's fun for me. It's a fun fear. Sometimes she'll call to me from the other room, and I just won't answer her. Now, she will say this is not kind of a fun fear; this is her husband being a twelve year old, alright. But I think it's hysterical. There is a kind of fear that is fun. It's why guys strap rubber bands to their ankles and jump off stuff. It's why we bungee jump. It's why we parachute. The whole kind of X-Game motive is built around this idea that to endanger one's self produces an adrenaline rush that is fun. There is a kind of fear that is fun that most of us seek, alright.

There is a kind of fear that is bad. There is a kind of fear that will paralyze you and restrict you from being able to have kind of real deep relationships, or even sometimes it will rob you of the ability to even function in culture. And there are tons of people who have had to work through fear issues, mistrust issues. There is a kind of fear that can paralyze you and rob you of life. Are you tracking with me on that one? That you can get so afraid of being know, so afraid this or that, that really the fullness of life and the goodness of life is lost on you, because you are petrified, you can't move.

And then, all parents know this one, there is a good fear. There is a fear that will make you run from danger into safety. There is a kind of fear that will save your life. There is a kind of fear that would have you run or fight imminent death and danger in order to survive and to live.

Now, why am I telling you this? Because the passage of Scripture that we're going to be in tonight is terrifying. It is one of the most difficult, one of the most weighty texts in all of Scripture. And I knew I was going to have to get into it when I said we were going to we were going to preach through Hebrews. But here's what I'm going to promise you tonight: we're going to read it word for word, I am not going to apologize for it and it should produce in all of us good fear.

So, let's get going. Hebrews 5, starting in verse 11. I'm going to set up the situation at hand or really, the writer's going to set up the situation at hand. I don't even set it up; he's going to set it up for me. And we'll get into what the problem is and then a word of warning and then a plea. Verse 11, "Concerning him," Melchizedek, and we talked about him just a little bit two weeks ago and we'll talk about him a whole bunch more in the next couple of weeks. "Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

Now, here's what's happening: the writer of Hebrews, I believe it's the apostle Paul, Paul is saying here, "I've got so much more about Jesus that I want to tell you; there is so much more to know; there is a deeper reality to walk in; there

is more life; there is deeper water; there is more beauty; there is more to be in awe of, and I would love to teach it to you, and I would love for your soul to grasp how infinitely large and beautiful and big and mighty God is and to fill that soul of yours up with Him, but I can't even begin to explain that to you. I can't begin to explain that to you, because you've become dull in hearing. You have, somewhere along the way, stopped growing and become stagnant." Now, what's the law of the universe? If something is not growing it's what? It's dying. That is the law of the universe. If something has ceased to grow, it has started to die. And he says here that there is a progression in the Christian faith that all of us who are believers in Christ should eventually be teachers. That does not mean that everybody who follows Jesus eventually stands on a stage like this or stands in front of a small group, but that all of us who follow Jesus, as we mature will be able to sit down across the table from someone and explain who Jesus is, explain the gospel of Jesus Christ, explain who He is, what He's like, what it means to follow Him, that all of us should grow to a maturity where this happens. What he's saying here is that he can't tell them anymore about Jesus, because somewhere along the way, they stopped growing and, in essence, became retarded in their faith. So, he's going to use this language: He's going to say, "By now you should be eating the fillet, by now you should be eating a pork chop and some mashed potatoes, but instead you're still on the bottle."

Now, if I had my four month old son up here and had a bottle in his mouth, no one's going, "Oh, that's strange. That's weird." But if while I'm up here preaching, Patterson is on the floor sucking on the bottle, then we're going, "Something's off." In fact, I love him, but I'm calling the cops, alright. Something's off because grown men don't need bottles. That's not how we're fed. That's not how we grow. That's not how our systems function. In fact, there are going to be all kinds of physical issues that come when all you can do is take in liquids. People who can only digest liquid are not healthy. They're not healthy. Don't be throwing out the Garth Brooks Juice Diet either, alright. They're not healthy. And what he's saying has happened here is, "Man, somewhere along the way, you guys started off so well, something stopped. Something stopped."

And what is it? He gives us a little bit of insight in that last verse of chapter 5. Look at it, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." So, he's going to then draw a parallel, really an opposite of what he just said in that what the mature do is they apply the truth that they've known. So, here's what we know about who he's talking to: there is this group of believers, there are these men and women who have professed Christ, who have become dull of hearing, and what he means by that is they have stopped applying the truth that they know. They have stopped practicing their faith. They still give it verbal kudos, they're still going, "Oh, that's right, that's good, that's the way it should be," but they've ceased applying it to their lives. Now, he begins to plead with them in chapter 6. So, look at Hebrews 6:1 with me, "Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment." Now, here's what's pretty interesting about this list: he is listing what he thinks are the elementary teachings of Christ. And here's what he's saying to them, "Let us stop, let us leave the elementary teachings and press on to maturity. Let's practice the elementary teachings and get them down so we can move on. And then, he lists the things they're hung up on.

Here's the first one, and see if this doesn't resonate so much with who we are. "Let us stop laying the foundation of repentance for worthless deeds." Here's what he's saying, "Hey, can we quit coming to church every weekend and going, 'this weekend, I'm not going to do that anymore. This week, I'm not doing that anymore?' And for 20 years, 15 years, 18 years, 30 years can we break this cycle of coming here every week and going, 'No more,' only to around 8:37 be right back into our junk?" He's going, "Can we take seriously our junk? Confess it. Get help. Move on it. Quit being so sluggish about it. Can we walk away from this? Can we get down this repentance from lifeless works? Can we get this down?"

And then, look at what he says next, "and of faith toward God..." He's going to go, "Listen, trust Him or don't trust Him. He can't be everything today and as soon as one little thing happens tomorrow, you bail." You gotta go, "Okay, I don't get it, I don't know how to fix it, but God's in control."

Then, I like these next two, because they speak to us. "...of instruction about washings and laying on of hands..." He's just talking about ritualistic stuff. He's talking about aesthetics there, alright. He's going, "Hey, maybe we shouldn't argue about the carpet. Maybe the carpet don't matter. Maybe it doesn't. Maybe music, at the end of the day, is just personal preference. Maybe we should probably move past those things. Maybe we shouldn't start a war over that. Maybe we should move on." And then, I cannot tell you how much I love that this last one's here. "...of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment." What's he talking about? Eschatology, end times. He says this, "How about instead of trying to figure out when I am coming back, how about you just act like I am? How about instead of writing 13 books on Me coming back, how about instead you living like you really believe that at any day, I'll rip through the sky?" How about instead of us trying to work formulations and going, "Is the Apache helicopter the locusts in Revelation 7?," should we instead...it's just a peeve of mine, man. Here's what we know: He's coming back. Maybe instead of trying to solve the Rubik's cube, maybe instead we just believe that maybe it's tonight, maybe it's tonight. He's not saying these things aren't important. Don't hear me way they're not important. He's going, "This is elementary stuff, man. And you haven't even got it down yet. In fact, every Sunday, we're doing the same things. You're hearing the same sermons every week, saying "amen" to them. How about we apply, how about we go?" So, he's pleading with them. Pleading, "Let's move. Let's leave these things. Let's press on. Let's start applying these things so we can move forward." And then, it starts to get scary. Verse 3, "And this we will do, if God permits," which makes it sound like maybe He won't permit it.

Then, he's going to give us an illustration of a person that's in here tonight. I don't know who you are. I don't think anyone else knows who you are. Maybe you don't even know who you are. But he is now going to give us a picture of a type of person who has sat in churches from day one. Here we go. This is where it gets terrifying, "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned." So, what he just said here is, "Listen, you guys have got to pay attention. You've got to stop being so sluggish about your faith. You have become dull in hearing. You have become lazy in putting your faith into practice. And so, I'm pleading with you today, I'm pleading with you to leave the elementary teachings of Christ and press on to maturity. I am pleading with you to apply what you know, because you are in a dangerous, dangerous spot." And he goes on to give this story that has caused more troubles in Christian churches than any other text except for maybe Romans 9.

So, is the writer of Hebrews saying that you can lose your salvation? He's not. There are four reasons why he's not. He is instead saying that you can experience spiritual things and not be saved. Let me show you the four reasons why I passionately believe this. Number one is found in verse 6. He does not say, "if they fall away." He says, "when they fall away," which leads me to believe that the person he is discussing is not going to make it, has no shot of making it, because they were never truly converted to begin with. The second reason I believe this is people who experience spiritual things but are not saved is found in verse 9. Look at verse 9, "But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation." So, he is separating out the story we just heard of someone who does fall away from the living God and what really happens to those who are genuinely saved. Reason number three is the parable of the fields here. He did not say in verses 7-8 that there was this land that got rain, and it produced fruit.

And then, it had a bad Tuesday, and all the fruit dried up and thorns and thistles came and took its place. That's not the illustration. The illustration is, "There are two separate pieces of land, both get rained on, one produces fruit, one does not, ever. It produces thorns and thistles. You might think it's fruit when it first starts springing up, that first little bit of green chute sticks out of the ground, and you're going, "Oh what do you think that is? Grapes? Cantaloupes? What do you think?" And then in the end, when it's full blown, it's thorns, it's thistles. The fourth reason I believe is because the entire book of Hebrews says that once you're saved, you're saved.

Let me show you two of those, I could show you more, but let me show you two. Go to Hebrews 3:14, "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." I doesn't say, "We will become partakers in Christ, if we hold fast." That's not what it said. It does not say that you and I will become partakers in Christ if we hold fast; it says "We have become..." now, present. "We have become partakers in Christ. And because we have, we will make it firm until the end. One more spot, Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." So, God does not change His mind about you. He does not save you, rescue you and ten weeks later, go, "You know, I never saw this behavior coming. Damnation!" Alright? He who began the good work will finish it. God cannot fail.

In fact, there are unbelievably interesting Scriptures intervenes and will not let a man sin. My favorite being when Abraham, who had to have a tough marriage, saw that one of the rulers thought that his wife was hot, and so Abraham was like "She's just my sister." "I'm what?!?" "You're my sister, baby." The ruler takes her, God comes to him in a dream and says, "I will not let you sin against Me. Give him back his wife or I'll destroy you're little nation." He's like, "I didn't know. He said she was just his sister." "He's dumb, I'm working with him. Give her back" What do you do theologically with a God who shows up and goes, "Hmm, yeah I'm not going to let you sin against Me today, not today. Do good." He who began the good work will be faithful to complete it.

This text, Hebrews 6, is not about people who are saved who then lose their salvation; it is about who experience spiritual things and are not saved. And that, to me, is a more terrifying idea than being able to lose salvation. Yeah, a terrifying idea to me. Now, if you're going, "Wait a minute, 'partakers in the Holy Spirit,' 'enlightened?'" Enlightened simply means that they understand the Scriptures and can teach the Scriptures. Being partakers in the Holy Spirit, there have been tons of guys in the New Testament who took the Holy Spirit's power and used it. You've got Judas casting out demons in the New Testament. Jesus even says, when He tells the parable of the sheep and the goats, that many are going to say to Him on that day, "Lord, Lord, did I not prophecy in Your name? Did I not cast out demons in Your name? Didn't I do all kinds of miracles in Your name?" And what does He say? "Yeah, but I don't know you, man. Depart from Me. I don't know you."

So, this is a scary idea, huh? I mean, it is thick. Now remember, I'm talking about the good fear, so what we don't want to happen tonight is everybody laying in bed, going, "Oh my God! Am I in? Am I out? Am I not in? Does He love me? Does He not? What do I do here?" I'm talking about the good fear.

Let me show you a couple of things in this text that are going to make us move some. Go back to Hebrews 6, look in verse 11, "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence..." And diligence is such a phenomenal word here. And what he's saying is that the diligence to apply what you know to be true. He's referencing this idea of maturity, of the application of our faith into life, that you would be diligent about applying your faith, practicing your faith, that it wouldn't be an idea that you ascribe to as being true but don't practice. He's saying here that you would be diligent, and look at what that diligence to apply and practice your faith brings about, "...realize the full assurance of hope until the end." So, it is not God's desire, it is not God's plan, it is not God's will, out of this text to have all of us tonight laying in

bed going, "Oh, am I in or am I out?" Because those who have been diligent about the application and practice of their faith walk in assurance.

If you're in here tonight afraid, you should be afraid, bottom line. If you're in here tonight going, "Oh man, I don't know," that is the good kind of fear. This text is for you, and I pray it leads you away from death and into life. The only people that should be afraid in here are the people who are afraid in here. And the only reason I'm not, is because I've been in this text for a month.

Now, there's one more piece here. What if you're in here tonight and you're going, "Oh my God, I mean I don't know where to start, what to do. I don't know if I'm saved or not. What do I do? What do I go about doing? I mean, whee do I even begin?" Okay, look, he's going to give us one more verse there. Look at 12, "So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." That you would not be sluggish, that you would not be slow, that you would not be lazy about this fear, but that you would grab hold of a godly man, of a godly woman, of a godly coworker, of a godly, of a godly neighbor, of a godly friend and you would say, "Help me. I don't know what to do. Help me." And that you would begin to imitate their practice of the faith. So Paul here, he's saying, "You realize what kind of danger you're in, because I don't know who's who, and I don't know which one of you have just experienced spiritual things and aren't really converted. And the only way for even you to know about yourself is to begin to practice your faith, and those of you who have become dull of hearing..." Like, you want to know why this is so weighty for me? Because the text itself says that the people who need to hear this are going to have a hard time hearing it. I mean, it's a real cycle here, where there are these people who are real dull of hearing, unable to hear it, and the very people who need to hear this tonight are going to sit here completely unmoved by it. It's a terrifying idea.

So, I told you a couple of weeks ago that my daughter is scared to death of the street. And we've put that in here. We've talked death, we've talked mangled, we've talked crippled. She's three, she may know. And we've got her afraid of the street. And I'm glad she's afraid of the street, because there is a very good chance that tonight, I'm going to get home, and she's going to be wearing a princess dress, dancing around the room to "Hard-Knock Life" from "Annie." I'm glad she's afraid of the street, because sometime this week, she's going to crawl in bed with me, and we're going to watch cartoons.

I'm glad she's afraid of the street, because we have these great conversations. I'm glad she's afraid of the street, because one day, Lord willing, some godly man will begin to romance her. Now, he can't be some neat Christian kid with a WWJD T-shirt. He'd get whooped in my house, alright. And I'm going to get to walk her down the aisle, because she's scared of the street. And you might go, "Aw, come on Chandler..." No, we live on a corner. There are blind sides both ways. If she's not afraid of the street, she's going to get hurt. This is the good fear. She doesn't lay in bed at night going, "Oh my God, the street's right outside. I could be..." No, it's the good fear. She's only afraid when she needs to be afraid.

I mean, come on man. This ain't some social club here. This is heaven, this is hell, this is eternity, this is what you were created for. Where are you on this? Sluggish? Dull of hearing? Knowing truth that you refuse to apply? I mean, this text is saying that you are in a dangerous, dangerous, dangerous spot. Nobody's exempt from who this could be. It could be me. Like, years from now, if you hear I've renounced the faith and that I think this whole thing was a mistake and I was just deceived and foolish, I didn't lose my salvation, I never had it. And this whole thing was about me and my ego. So, the last month, I've been wrestling through this. I've talked to Patterson, I've talked with Paul, I've talked with just about everybody on staff. "What about that? What about this?" And I can tell you, there has been some genuine fear in my life. "Have I become dull in my hearing? Am I doing the things I know are right? Am I being obedient unto Christ?" I mean, I had like two or three days of just panic. Any random thought that popped in my mind, I thought it might be God, so I just

stopped and did it, alright. It's like, "Get a Coke." "Alright, I'll get a Coke here...I heard You. I'm not dull of hearing." I'm doing everything I think might be God because of the good fear.

So, there are those in this room who are dull of hearing, who eventually will say, "Forget all of this," and they'll walk away. And God gets such a bad rap in this text all the time. They're like, "What do you mean He won't grant them repentance?" The truth is they don't want repentance. They think they've already tried it. And then you're going, "Oh man, God ceases to rain on them." Yeah, but how long had it been raining on them? How long had He been pursuing them? Maybe 15, 20 years, God rains and rains and rains, and it's just thorns and thistles, thorns and thistles, and then finally after 12, 15, 30 50 years, however the grace of God has worked in your life, He goes, "That's it. I'm not raining anymore." Then you would shake your fist at God? It's not God that gets the bad rap here, it's your hard heart, it's your laziness. "Don't be sluggish.... Let us leave the elementary teachings....Let us onto maturity....Let's be diligent..." And are you following how aggressive this text is? He's going, "Let's go. Let's go, let's go, let's go, because you're standing on the corner of a street that you could get killed in. Let's move. Let's move."

And so, my prayer is that maybe you'd be afraid tonight. I don't know. It isn't the goal of church. It's never been the goal of me preaching at church. I never like you walking out of here going, "He said I'm going to hell." I mean, it's never been my goal or my desire, but the text said some of you are. I mean, you can't get mad at me, I'm just reading the sacred literature. And maybe this word of warning tonight from Him will create the good kind of fear that will get you out of the street. Let me tell you the worst possible thing we could do right now. I'm going to pray here in a minute and I'm going to give us some time just to think and pray here and kind of unpack some of this and wrestle through where we are in all of this. I don't know what your plans are tonight. Let me tell you the worst possible thing you could do. Whenever there's fear or there's weight, the natural feel is to make it light real quickly, to introduce some levity to take our minds off the fear and some of the weight off our souls, so "Hey, let's be funny," or "Hey, let's go get something to eat with a bunch of friends and screw around," or "Let's go see a movie," or "Let's go do something, so we don't have to let this thing sit on us." And I just think it's the worst possible thing you could do tonight. And I don't know what your plans are or where you're headed after this, but I think the worst possible thing you could do here tonight is to run out of here and shut your mind off, to shut your heart off. Because, I think that if you're afraid tonight, you're supposed to be afraid. That if tonight, you're going, "I'm not sure. I don't know to do. I can't read my own soul right now," then you're supposed to be there, this warning is for you. This is meant not to threaten but to get you away from the street. The good fear. This definitely isn't the fun fear, and this isn't meant to be the bad fear. This isn't meant to paralyze you. I know it's not meant to paralyze you because of how many of the verbs, how many of the words in this text require movement.

So, I'm standing in front of a crowd, right? But the truth is I'm standing in front of a crowd of individuals, and nobody can answer the question but you, not your wife, not your husband, not your best friend, only you. So, where are you? Hmm? Sluggish? Retarded faith? Can't hear anymore? Sit around and talk about people should live and what is right and how you do follow Jesus but do none of it yourself. Where are you? I told you in the beginning that we're not interested in building a big church. I probably just proved it to you by preaching this even. I know this is wildly unpopular, but it might just save your life. It just might save your soul. Where are you? Are you practicing? Are you moving? Are you maturing? And if not, why not? What's going on?

I'm going to pray for us, but first I'm going to summarize this whole deal, this whole Hebrews 1-6. If I had to put it into one paragraph, here's how that paragraph would read: "You guys better start putting your faith into practice, because you're getting dull of hearing. Right and wrong are getting hazy, and if you don't stop drifting, if you don't stop neglecting your salvation and forsaking the gathering of believers, you're going to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and fall away from the living God." That's the warning in Hebrews 1-6. "Are you drifting? Are you neglecting?" These are legit, huge questions. "Are you sluggish? Have you been diligent? Are you practicing, or are you just going to church?"

“Father, I know that some have fallen away, but You’re not done raining yet. And so, I pray that rain would produce fruit. That’s what I pray. I pray tonight that if there be any stirring of any of the souls in this room who have walked away from You at one point or another, they would see and know that Your rain, that’s your call to repentance, that’s Your inviting. I pray for my brothers and sisters who have taken lightly Your grace and mercy and have become sluggish in the practice of our faith and give it tons of lip service, but there’s no evidence of it in their life outside of four walls of this building. I pray, Father, that the good fear would settle in their soul and drive them back to You. And I think tonight, I just want to pray against pride, because pride would have us saying that we’re okay. Pride would say that we’ve got it. Pride would say, “Nah, there’s plenty of time.” Pride would say, “Ah, I’ve got many days of rain left.” I believe that Your cross has more power than pride, so I pray that You would break that pride, wherever it be. And I thank you for those in this room tonight that can smile, knowing that they are Yours, knowing that You have saved, that You began this work and are going to be faithful to complete it. I pray that You would add to the number of those tonight, those who know You. So, I thank You for good fear, Father. As hard as it is, as thick as it is, as weighty as it is, I thank You for good fear that would keep us from danger and push us towards life, towards hope, towards restoration. I pray that You would give the dull of hearing the ability to hear and be warned. Help. It’s for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen.”

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