

- 2:1
- Did you know that listening can save your life?
 - A couple of years ago when we were on holiday as a family,
 - one of my daughters started running towards me from the other side of a quiet country road
 - but what she couldn't see (because there was a brick wall blocking her view)
 - was that a truck was racing down that road towards her.
 - I could see what was happening and I shouted **"STOP!"** twice at the top of my voice.
 - Wonderfully she listened. And she stopped. And she didn't step into that road.
 - There was lots of relief all round afterwards.
- Did you know that listening can save your life?
 - **And listening to Jesus will save your life eternally.**
- We don't know exactly who this letter known as "Hebrews" was written to...
 - but it seems that they were Jews who lived shortly after the time of Jesus
 - who had become Christians
 - but were now in danger of slipping back into Judaism.
 - Maybe it was because their new faith had been unpopular, and they had been thrown out of the synagogue,
 - Maybe they had grown lazy or been tempted by sin,
 - or Maybe it was just that in the marathon race of the Christian life they were just tired out and were tempted to go back to their old ways.
 - Possibly for them getting fixated on angels, through whom God brought truth in the OT.
 - It's not that overnight they decided to stop being a Christian.
 - It's far more subtle than that.... They just quietly drifted away, like a boat on the tide.
- And so for the first 14 verses of the book (& we've walked through them together in last 2 weeks)
 - the writer has been reminding them of some incredible things about Jesus.
 - He is the one who created all things,
 - He's the one who keeps all things going
 - He's the one who's going to inherit all things.
 - He's the exact representation of God's being,
 - the Son of God,
 - the one whom Angels worship
 - And that first Easter he finished the job of providing purification for all our sins.
- And so the big message is, "Listen to Him".
 - just like the moment when Jesus was on a mountain and God said in an audible voice "This is my Son listen to him" (we started the service with it).
 - Don't get carried away by the rip tides of religion.
 - Stick with the solid rock of Jesus.
- And today in the final passage of our series, the writer calls them, and us to a choice
- Will we drift in the currents of alternatives, or will we anchor ourselves to the rock of Christ, to **LISTEN TO HIM.** (actually same lesson as week 1)
 - But what exactly does that look like?
 - It sounds quite obvious, listen to Jesus. But how exactly do we do that in practice?
 - Well three things from this passage,
 - and then we'll finish with a prayer asking Jesus for help to do exactly that.

LISTEN TO JESUS...

1) TO THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE FROM HIM

2:1

- Maybe you've drifted from Jesus in lockdown. The lack of fellowship, the difficulties you've faced, the daily grind, you've taken your eye off him.
 - Or Maybe you haven't drifted, but you know you don't want to go forward.
 - Well this verse tells us all what we need to do.
- 2:1
- It's like James Bond given a tour of his new gadgets. "Pay Attention 007".
 - But how do we do that?
 - Well did you notice something important in v1.
 - Look carefully at the verb in v1. heard. Past tense.
- Now I wasn't around when Jesus spoke.
 - I'm old, but I'm not that old!
 - I could have heard him if I was in Jerusalem around 2000 years ago.
 - Like the time that Zacchaeus was up a sycamore tree, and Jesus came along and called him to follow him.
 - But wonderfully eyewitnesses and earwitnesses were there and they passed on the message about what Jesus said to the next generations, including these Hebrews, and including us.
 - So we've got a record of Jesus' voice in the 4 **gospels**.
 - And actually, his apostles were authorised to write **the rest of the NT** for us so that we would have all that we need about Jesus.
- And this writer says if you don't want to drift from Jesus
 - make sure you listen to that past word.
 - There's an example of this in Heb 3:7.
 - God's Holy Spirit today says (present tense) through a past word.
- It's so easy to drift.
 - Through temptation, through boredom, through sin, through doubt.
 - That's why we have to keep coming back to Jesus and his word.
 - It's why we have sermons every **week**.
 - In fact we need to listen to Jesus each **day** so that we keep going.
 - The writer of this book says we need encouragement each day!
 - "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called '**Today**', so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness".
 - Today I need you to encourage me.
 - Tomorrow I need you to encourage me
 - As long as it's called today! We don't want to drift.
- Would you like to walk away from your Christian faith?
 - It's very easy. Just take your eyes off Jesus.
 - Once we stop listening to the Bible,
 - if we stay away from Christian friends and support,
 - we can so easily drift in the current.
- Listen to Jesus, to the Original message from him.

- By the way, have you heard of the phrase “conservative evangelical”?
 - None of us likes labels, because they label people.
 - We’d all just prefer the label Christian.
 - But actually, if you are going to give me a label, give me that one.
 - Because I’m an **evangelical**.
 - Evangel means good news, so I love the good news of the Bible.
 - And I’m a **conservative** evangelical, not because I’m into a certain kind of politics.
 - But because I want to stick with the original message of the Bible.
 - I want to conserve the original message there as my guiding direction.
 - And by the way, if you want to call me an **Anglican**, you can add that on, making the nice label **ACE** (ace!) Anglican conservative evangelical.
 - though the Anglican bit is less important to me.
- Forget all that if it’s not helpful. The point is that we listen to the Original message from Jesus. We keep going back in time to him.
 - People must look at churches like us and think we are so old fashioned.
 - We stick with what Jesus and the apostles said 2000 years ago.
 - But that past message is living today, sharper than any double edged sword.
 - relevant and radical and world changing.
 - There’s nothing old fashioned about it, unless you find Jesus old fashioned!

LISTEN TO JESUS...

1) TO THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE FROM HIM (v1)

2) TO THE RESCUING MESSAGE FROM HIM (v2-3)

- Now at this point we have a “how much more” argument.
- I might say to you:
 - If Hot Cross buns are great, how much more are marmite hot cross buns.
 - You might disagree there, but you get the idea.
- Look at the how much more argument in v2-3.
 - *For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*
- The writer is making a contrast between
 - the message God spoke through the angels at Mount Sinai
 - and the message spoken by Jesus.
 - How much more should you listen to Jesus.
- Now back in Moses day, God gave 10 commandments.
 - They were great commands.
 - Life giving commands.
 - And the people agreed to obey them.
 - But they didn’t.
 - And as a result, the curses mentioned in the law came on the people.
 - Sometimes locusts, sometimes exile, and always death. “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law”. Gal 3:10.
- We too have broken God’s laws, and now face the just punishment.
 - But v3 If we should listen to the 10 commandments, how much more should we listen to the rescue in Jesus.

- ▲ Imagine if you got a new job working in a factory making sweets.
- And there's a massive sign saying *"don't climb on the conveyor belt, you might get trapped in the machinery"*.
 - But you decide not to listen to the sign.
 - You neglect the message, because you think you might be able to get a free sweetie.
 - And a bit of climbing frame action could be fun.
 - So you clamber up on the conveyor belt, and you find yourself hurtling towards a massive crushing machine.
 - Your boss appears from no-where, and she says "take my hand".
 - But you ignore her message as well.
 - And you go hurtling towards the sweet crushing machine.
- It would be stupid to ignore message 1. The law: Don't climb on the machinery.
- But having done that, it would be even more stupid to ignore message 2, the salvation: "Take my hand and I'll rescue you".
- Now God has spoken first in his law.
 - And we have disobeyed, and we are hurtling for death.
 - That is the Bible's analysis of the human race.
- But Wonderfully he's given a second message in his Son. Take my hand and I will rescue you.
 - Will you listen?
 - I love you, I have died for you. I will rescue you.
 - Take my hand.
- Did you know that? Christianity is not take my advice! It's take my hand!
 - It lies at the heart of our church vision statement. "to see the **wonderful good news of Jesus' rescue** which transforms, unites and equips a community, prayerfully shared with all in the Huntingdon area.
- If we ignore the message spoken through angels we will not escape, but how much more if we ignore the only rescue in Jesus.
- These Hebrews were in a dangerous position. They were imperceptibly drifting away from the salvation in Jesus. They may have believed it once, but it was getting them into trouble now. So they were drifting back to Judaism.
- Listen to the original past message. Listen to the the Salvation message. All is paid for. It's essential we stick with that.
- But how do we know it's true? How do we know it's not going to disappoint?

LISTEN TO JESUS...

- 1) TO THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE FROM HIM (v1)
- 2) TO THE RESCUING MESSAGE FROM HIM (v2-3)
- 3) TO THE **PROVEN** MESSAGE FROM HIM (v3-4)

v3b.

- Can you see there's quite a groups involved in this message of Jesus.
 - **First it was announced by Jesus.**
 - Luke 19:9 "Salvation has come to this house".

- Jesus announced salvation to all who would turn from their sins and follow him like Zacchaeus.
- **Next it was confirmed by those who heard him.**
 - The apostles were the eyewitnesses and earwitnesses who passed on what they saw in their preaching (Acts) and in writings (Romans to Revelation).
 - So there were people at the time who can back up what Jesus said. It's a proven message.
- **But v4 is the interesting thing.** v4 God also testified to it by signs wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- Like a witness in court, God himself was in the witness box agreeing with the testimony of Jesus and the apostles and backing it up. How?
 - by four things v4 which have some overlap...
 - **signs**- that's the miracles that Jesus and the apostles did, which have a significance pointing to who he is. (often used by Jn)
 - **wonders**- that's the fact that they were extraordinary, only explained by the intervention of God.
 - **miracles**- that's the word used by Mt, Mk, Lk for superhuman powers
 - **gifts of the Spirit**- God breathed new life and gifts into Jesus' followers giving them the power
 - to follow Jesus,
 - to serve his people with Spirit empowered gifts,
 - and actually to start keeping the law that we failed the first time!
- We're coming up to Easter, and the resurrection is the biggest of the signs and wonders.
 - God proved to the world that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - And so we should listen to him.
 - God has proven that Jesus is to be listened to.
- Seen by up to 500 people at one time, Jesus is alive.
- That's really helpful if you are new to Christianity. It's true!
- That's really helpful if you have been a Christian all your life. It's true!
 - Just look at the miracles.
 - Sometimes I read the miracles in the Bible and I feel "that's a bit far fetched". But that's the point. God stopped gravity when Jesus walked on the water to prove that he is real!
- I don't want to drift, and you don't want to drift. Recap x3. "Don't drift.. Draw near".
- So what must we do. You choose! Rip tides or Rock?
 - Well those who've never done so must come to Jesus for the first time.
 - "Take my hand"- for rescue, for a new life.
 - And those who have come to Jesus must stick with Jesus and his message.
 - Talk to Jesus every day, draw near to him in prayer.
 - And get his word into your heart.
 - In songs, in bible reading, in one to one encouragement where we actually talk about Jesus. In family bible times and in encouraging text messages.
 - But remember ultimately it's God will hold us fast.
 - So let's pray and ask him to do that.
- 2:1
- A friend of mine in Australia it turns out has been preaching through Hebrews. His series is called That's the way we don't drift. We come near to God through Jesus. Let's do that now.