1. When a driver has been in an accident in which a person is killed, the police launch an extensive investigation. They evaluate the conditions on the road, the sobriety of the drivers, the mechanical status of the vehicles, as well as other influences. One of the things that the investigators are trying to determine is whether this was truly an accident or if there was neglect on the part of one of the drivers.
   a. By neglect, we mean intentional or unintentional conduct that may have contributed to the crash; whether it be poor maintenance, distracted driving (ie. Texting), impaired driving (alcohol or drugs), failure to maintain an assured clear distance, etc. A person would be considered neglectful in any of those circumstances I just described. And they would be charged with negligent homicide in the case and it would go to a judge or jury.

2. You might be wondering how something like a car crash investigation can apply to a sermon, but today’s passage found in the Letter to the Hebrews is both sharp and pointy. It contains a warning to every “believer” concerning how you and I live our lives.
   a. Hebrews 2:1-4 “We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just (reward, recompense, penalty) punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore (neglect) such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (NIV)
   b. For this reason (therefore) we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty (reward), how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” (NAS)
   c. The Lord led me to this passage during my quiet time this week and stirred my heart as I read it over and over and over again. It is easy to gloss over something we are familiar with and not really read it. And I believe that the author of Hebrews wrote this as a warning to believers with the danger of neglect at its core.
      i. Negligence is a core concept of today’s message.
      ii. Negligence is the failure to exercise care to the end that harm is caused to self or others.
         1. If you neglect your housework, you might not notice the dirt building up in the corners right away.
         2. The hardest thing about milking cows," observed a farmer, "is that they never stay milked." This is true for many things. Many things in life have to be done over and over, again and again. The job is never really done.
            a. Most things in life require continual maintenance, upkeep or work. My car must be maintained.
               i. Mike, I imagine you see a lot of poorly maintained cars…and what is the result? The scrap heap or expensive repairs. Maintenance is required. Negligence is costly.
            b. Relationships fall apart because we don’t work at them.
i. A beautiful garden is destroyed by neglect; a house crumbles around you if you don’t maintain it.

ii. If you are in business you don’t need to take a machine gun to your customers to kill it, simple neglect is enough.

iii. If you are desperately ill you don’t need to commit suicide by taking poison or shooting yourself, you can often do it just as surely by ignoring early symptoms or not taking medicines.

3. Verse 1 starts off in the NAS with a “For this reason” which is also translated “Therefore.”
   a. Whenever you come across a therefore in the scriptures, you should always ask the question, ‘what is the therefore there for?’
      i. Chapter 2 is a conclusion to chapter 1 which has dealt with the supremacy of Jesus Christ, that he is unlike and yet greater than any angel, and through whom God has spoken through in these last days.
      ii. Chapter One’s crowing verse is “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”
      iii. Chapter two is our RESPONSE to whom chapter one says Christ is.
      iv. The author of Hebrews is addressing Jewish Christians, who are carrying the baggage of the law around and helping them to see and understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law, and that Jesus is superior to Moses and all of the angelic beings.
   b. Verse one explains the all-important response we must make to Christ and His message of forgiveness and reconciliation, and the next 3 verses tell us why.

4. Look at verse one carefully:
   a. Therefore, let us pay exceedingly careful attention… to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.
   b. The Greek words used in this explanation are nautical in nature. And there is no accident in their use.
      i. To pay attention is a nautical term that describes what a captain must do when he is approaching the dock with his boat. Back in those days, ships were either sail or oar powered. You didn’t have motors you could throw into reverse, or rudders you could control from the front of your boat. You had to have complete and total control over everything that was going on in order to dock safely. Even a momentary inattention would result in a catastrophic collision between a boat and a pier, resulting in loss of cargo or damage to the dock where goods are to be transferred.
      ii. We have a harbor we are steering our lives toward. That harbor is the Kingdom of God, both here upon earth and in heaven’s fulfillment of it. The author is warning us not to be careless or negligent about it!
      iii. Pay attention to what we have heard (concerning the gospel). It was received by hearing – through the words of Christ.
   c. “So that we do not drift away from it.”
      i. The wording used here is again nautical; it is speaking of the picture of a ship drifting along by the current, but drifting with the dock in sight, yet floating away, drifting further and further away and not paying attention to it.
         1. The currents we deal with in our lives are not conducive to living the Christian faith. – currents are the busyness of life, the lure of sin, the time consumers of games and television, currents that keep us preoccupied with the things of this
world that have no lasting value or purpose. (Remember, only two things remain forever…the word of God and the souls of men)

2. The currents of this world try to cause us to drift away from God.
   a. They try to keep us from the safe harbor from staying within our reach. They tug, they pull, they attract and entice us in different directions.

3. And it is through our own neglect that we bear the responsibility. You cannot say on judgement day that “God, I didn’t see myself drifting.” Because you have a choice. You have been warned.

5. **DRIFTING:**
   a. Drifting for most…. happens very slowly. So slow….that often you do not even notice it …..until it is too late.
      i. Have you ever fallen asleep ….in the bathtub,…..only to wake up… swallowing water and coughing.
      ii. Even worse,… have you ever drifted away ….while driving? Maybe you looked down at your phone or looked at something on the side of the road and suddenly found yourself drifting off the side of the road over those loud rumble strips?
   b. For every one who actually decides to turn his back on Christ, there are hundreds who drift away from Him a little bit by little bit.
      i. **It is the drift that ruins people.** The drift of the religious world. The drift of old habits and associations; which, in the case of these Hebrew Christians, was setting so strongly toward Judaism, bearing them back to the religious system from which they had come out. The drift of one’s own evil nature, The drift of the pressure of temptation, distraction and busyness.
      ii. We can get so taken up with the things of this world and making our life comfortable, that our love for the Lord cools.
         1. Soon we aren’t spending time with our Lord in prayer, studying or meditating upon the scriptures. This rarely happens all of a sudden, but we can drift into it bit by bit.
         2. In the course of their conversation at a dinner party, Albert Einstein’s young neighbor asked the white-haired scientist, "What are you actually by profession?" "I devote myself to the study of physics," Einstein replied. The girl looked at him in astonishment. "You mean to say you study physics at your age?" she exclaimed. "I finished mine a year ago."
      iii. What is causing you to drift? How far have you drifted? Do you even know you have drifted off to sea? Every summer along the Capes of the east coast people inflate their floaters (air mattresses) and lie on them as they soak up the sun in the water, never realizing that they are drifting with the current to the south, many ending up many miles from their starting point and a long walk home.
      iv. **Negligence can cause us to drift from God.**
   c. There is something else about drifting that we ought to pay attention to. That is how being adrift affects our calling and the way we live our lives. Drifting doesn’t just affect you, but your family, and even your church family.
i. Our Church family has a vision statement that reads, “we exist to be a safe harbor of God’s love where people grow into fully devoted followers of Christ who change their world with the power, love and grace of God.”

ii. When we are adrift from God’s purposes for our lives, we aren’t engaged in being devoted followers of Christ.
   1. You and I cannot and will not change our world with his power, love and grace unless you are walking with Him.
   2. We will be disengaged from His love, His power and His grace.
      a.
   3. Our lives when they are loveless, powerless and graceless don’t make us very attractive to a lost and dying world.
   4. When you meet a judgmental Christian, it might be because they have drifted from the Father and are substituting works and religion for relationship.

iii. **But let’s look at the positive side:** What would it look like for you to be changing your world with His power, love and grace?
   1. How would your workplace look? Your home? Your school? The places you shop, volunteer, or serve? You possess the power to make a difference in your world if you are diligent about your journey with God…praying, walking with God, talking with God, listening to God, spending time with other brothers and sisters in Christ, serving others.
   2. This week I visited an elderly woman who was taking care of her cancer stricken son who is not walking with God. I prayed with her before I left, and prayed for her son, that God would become real for him. That is what it looks like to change your world with His Love.
   3. We cannot and will not do that when we are adrift. Are you adrift? Have you been negligent in the maintenance of your walk with God? If you aren’t seeing God at work in your life…it is likely you are adrift…farther from Him than you realized. Isn’t it time to draw near to Him again?
   4. Powerless or powerful? Grace filled or grace less? Loving or unloving? They are your choice…and they are the fruit of a diligent walk with God.

6. Verse 2 harkens back to the Old Testament when under the Law a single infraction could mean death. “For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just (reward, recompense, penalty) punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore (neglect) such a great salvation?”
   a. If the law, which was INFERIOR to the Gospel which has set us free from the Law required strict outcomes for every single violation and disobedience, what makes us think that we can avoid consequences, severe consequences if we NEGLECT such a great salvation?
   b. If the law, which cost God nothing cost us everything, then what about His Son on the cross, which cost God everything and cost us nothing…what will be its outcome?

   i. During World War II a young army captain was hit by enemy fire while dragging a seriously wounded sergeant to safety. Both were taken to an army hospital. The officer died, but the rescued soldier recovered. The captain’s parents, having been informed about the heroism of their son, invited the sergeant to their home for dinner. He accepted the invitation, but when he arrived he was not only late, but in a half-intoxicated condition. All the while he was there he acted boorishly, said nothing about the one who
had saved his life, wolfed down his food, and left without even saying thanks for their gracious hospitality. As soon as he had gone, the mother burst into tears, exclaiming, ’To think that our son had to die for an ungrateful person like that!’

ii. Are you taking God’s Amazing Grace for granted? Think about what He did for you…Jesus went to the cross to bear the penalty for your sin and mine…and for most of us that evoked a response of gratitude and acceptance and faith that led to a changed life! But over the years we began to drift. Maybe you haven’t ever received personally His amazing grace. His forgiveness is offered to you…a clean slate, a new start, a fresh beginning. That is what happens at the Cross. And Jesus wants to meet you there.

7. **V3: This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.** The very salvation from sin and its consequences is announced by Jesus Himself and confirmed by signs and wonders.
   a. It is called the gospel of the Kingdom of God. And get this…is was **God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**” – these things that make some church people nervous are the very thing that God tells us are His own testimony concerning the salvation He has promised.
   b. See any “signs wonders and miracles lately? Some say God doesn’t use signs and wonders anymore…they were only for the first century. That contradicts the bible…because everywhere in every time there is a need to confirm the message as being from God with the Power of God. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is accompanied by signs and wonders and miracles that testify to its authorship. Signs and wonders aren’t playthings for us to show off…they are meant to draw people who are far from God!

8. Here is the appeal: Have you been drifting? Is it time to return to your first love…Jesus? Maybe you haven’t begun a journey with Him but you know He is calling your name. You came here today and you felt that peace and warmth that only His Presence brings. He is inviting you to begin a relationship with Himself. He went to the cross to pay for your sin…to restore you to a relationship with Father God. Your response only needs to be one of faith: will you turn from your self led life and come to Him today? He wants you to become His child.