

We return to our series this morning on, "The Call to Faithfulness in our Day!" I would like to speak this morning on "**KEEPING OUR GARMENTS CLEAN,**" and or "**COMING A DAY SHORT OF SALVATION (Pt 2).**" This is our 12<sup>th</sup> sermon on the call to faithfulness in our day. We have established 5 things from our text-Rev.3:1-6:

- I. **THE REPROOF** (vss 1 & 2)
- II. **THE REPENTANCE** (vs 3)
- III. **THE REMNANT** (vs 4)
- IV. **THE RECOMPENSE** (vs 5)
- V. **THE RESPONSE** (vs 6)

Under our third point on the Remnant we are considering A Firm Purity which has let us to Hebrews 12:14, "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*" What precedes and follows the text in Hebrews 12:14 we have been considering. As a reminder, in Hebrews 12:13 it says, "*And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*" The importance of walking in a straight or narrow path, lest or unless, that which is lame will be put out of way. Jesus Christ warns us in Matthew 7:14 and 15, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" Thus, this let us to speak last week on Coming a Day Short of Salvation. We mentioned that this is a critical point in the text of chapter 12 of Hebrews, because the phrase, "*...lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*" gives a severe and sobering warning. The word "**lest**" speaks of something or someone turning you out of the way, wherein some were turned away and apostatized. The word "**lame**" is also very interesting, it can speak of weak or injured sheep, but there is a sense that the word **lame 'could be applied' to mere professors of Christianity**, that is, it could be of speaking of religious lost people, perhaps, tares that are mixed with the wheat in church. They had the appearance and the lingo of Christianity, but they had not really come to Christ in true faith, thus, they could be candidates for apostasy, (not that they would be apostates) if they never came to Christ, (and those in our day who will not come to Christ before they die) because they turned out of the way, that is, from the only way of salvation. We saw in Matthew 13 the parable of wheat and tares.

Now, there is no question that there were many tares in the Church of Sardis who stained and defiled their professed garments, they were the fence-straddling, mediocre professors. We said that there are many in our day that fit that description. We also saw how the word lame is the same Greek word in the Septuagint, which is translated

halt in 1 Kings 18:21, “*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, **How long halt ye between two opinions?** if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*” Elijah confronted those lame and wavering, double minded people, by challenging them to take a side. John MacArthur says, “*The writer of Hebrews was warning believers a bout the danger of misleading lame, uncommitted unbelievers and of causing them to apostatize back into Judaism...A poor testimony can cause irreparable harm, many times without our knowing it. It can cause an already limping unbeliever to be put out of joint, completely dislocated spiritually.*”

This brought us to our seventh point from Hebrews 12 in verse 15, **A Coming Short.** “*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*” In verse 15 we see a warning to those who were but mere professors who had come short of salvation. The writer to the Hebrews says again, “*...**lest any man fail of the grace of God...***” Not that a person can lose their salvation but it means “**coming short**,” that is, coming a day short, coming a day too late, therefore, being left out. Sad to say, that many will die being a day late, a day short of salvation, because they keep putting salvation off, some willfully, some who hate the gospel, some by self-deception, some by mere neglect, some because they are more concerned about what others may say about them, some because of friends or family, some because of their employment or lifestyles, some because of their religion and some for other reasons. They know that they should believe the gospel of Christ, they know that they should repent, but they keep putting off salvation. What they don't understand is that God might one day shut the door of salvation, God will close the door of salvation and it will be too late. This is such a fearful thought. We saw last week in the following passages how God shut the door to some: Genesis 7:13-24; Luke 13:22-27; Matt.25:1-13.

This idea of the writer of Hebrews regarding coming short one day of salvation is also used in Hebrews 4. Hebrews 4:1 & 2, “*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*” He begins by saying, “*Let us...*” which speaks to all of us who profess to be Christians. Let us what, “*Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into HIS rest, ANY OF YOU should seem to come short of it.*” Many believe that there is a God, but they don't mix it with faith, in laying hold of God alone for salvation. They do not embrace or lay hold of God by faith, i.e., TRUST in Him! Notice 2 Timothy 1:12, “*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*” Notice that Paul says clearly, “*...for I know whom I have **believed**...*” but he doesn't stop there, he also says, “*...and am **persuaded** that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*” Not only did Paul believe in God, but was persuaded, that God was able to both save him and keep him saved. In other words, not only did Paul believe in God but he also TRUSTED in HIM! He was persuaded. The word persuaded basically means to be convince, to have confidence in, to bind, that is, to TRUST! Paul mixed believing with faith. Persuaded is the same Greek word for 'trusted' used in Matthew 27:43, “*He **trusted** in God; let him deliver him now,*

if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” It's the same Greek word used in Phil. 1:6 for, 'being confident.' “**Being confident** of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Remember Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the substance [or the **confidence**] of things hoped for, the evidence [or the conviction] of things not seen.” Thus, we can say:

- Faith is Confidence
- Confidence is Believing
- Believing is Trusting
- Trusting is Hope
- Hope is Expectation
- Expectation anticipates MERCY!

Paul again says in Hebrew 4:1 & 2, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem **to come short of it**. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” What a sobering warning to carefully examine ourselves whether we are in the faith or not. Paul tells us the same thing in 2 Cor. 13:5, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” So much for some simple sinner’s prayer to which most preachers call upon people to pray to get them to heaven. Many are deceived by some form of decisional regeneration. It’s not in some recited prayer or religious rite, but, a looking alone to Jesus Christ in faith and in repentance towards God. I am not saying that we do not pray to God in salvation, or that we can’t help and pray with someone struggling with salvation, but what I’m talking about is when preacher’s say “repeat these words after me” and so forth, in other words, putting words in a person mouth, which apparently do not come out of the individuals own heart.

- Use illustration of a person drowning and the four steps of swimming.
- Illustration regarding the woman at the well in John 4:10-30. When she asked, “...Sir, give me this water that I thirst not...” Why didn’t Christ say to her these words, “Just repeat these words dear lady, Lord, I’m a sinner, come into my heart...” Apparently Jesus must have missed the class on Evangelism 101. Now, you know here, in this last phrase, I’m just being facetious. We believe and preach on evangelism and that we MUST: “...preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15.

Now, there is no question, when a sinner who sees their sins under the conviction of the Holy Spirit they will pray unto God. They will cry out to God to save them, but what I am saying is that there is no need to put words in their mouth, no more, than, when a person is drowning. No one has to say to that drowning person, repeat these words,

“dear sir, dear sir, please help me, please help me, I’m downing, I’m drowning.” **NO!** Out of his or her own volition they will cry, “HELP, SOMEONE HELP ME, I’M DROWNING!” When a sinner sees himself downing in the muck and mire of sin he will cry out, “Lord save me, Lord have mercy on me!”

Look at one example, turn to Mark 10 and look at blind Bartimaeus, verses 46 - 52. *“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”* Can you imagine one of the disciples of Christ coming to blind Bartimaeus and saying all you have to do is repeat these words, “dear Lord, ‘dear Lord,’ I’m blind, I’m blind, I accept the sight you give, I accept the sight you give. There you are Bartimaeus, you have accepted the gift of sight just believe it and don’t let anyone tell you don’t have sight. But sir, I still can’t see, sure you can, Bartimaeus”...and so forth. How foolish yea how deceiving, but this is what many do in our day. No one had to tell Bartimaeus he was blind, he knew he was blind. Blind Bartimaeus, cries out, HAVE MERCY ON ME! When a sinner sees his sins, he will cry out; without the help of someone else. He will by himself cry out, DEAR LORD HAVE MERCY ON ME! Reminds me of Psalm 40:1-4, *“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust...”* Yes, when a sinner sees himself drowning in the muck and mire of sin, he will call out to God for mercy and God will bestow mercy and salvation to the saving of that soul. Turn to Psalm 130 and let us read the whole chapter.

Back to Hebrews 4:1 & 2, where the writer warns of coming a day short. This is preface by what is warned in chapter 3. Let’s start at about verse 7 of chapter 3 and following.

The sad situation is that there will be many like these, who will die a day short and have the door of salvation, shut to them and will die in their sinful defiled state before God. Now, the writer of Hebrews continues in chapter 12 and verse 15, *“...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”* This part of this text is a quote from Deuteronomy 29:18 & 19. The idea of bitterness is like a poisonous fruit with its awful affects. John MacArthur says again, *“The root of bitterness refers to a person who is superficially identified with God’s people and who falls back into paganism. But he is no ordinary apostate. He is arrogant and defiant concerning the things of God. He thumbs his nose at God. God’s response to such boastful unbelief is hard and final.”*

- In verses 16 & 17 we see how Egypt was filled with idolatry in all of its abominations. All of their idols were empty and helpless. The Egyptians were addicted to their idols. Reminds me of the text in Jer.50:38, “...they are mad upon their idols.”
- The Israelites saw their many idols, perhaps fascinated by them, verse 17, “And ye **have seen their abominations**, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them.” These abominations were fascinating to them, remember they did erect a golden calf, which was a type of the ox or bull the Egyptians worshiped. Apparently, these idols were more attractive to them, than the invisible God. We must be careful of both metal and mental idols! Idols of wood and stone and idols of the heart.
- These abominations led to the apostasy of some and the results were bitter. One writer says, “A root that beareth gall and wormwood---a root deeply planted, firmly strengthened and mischievously productive; quick is growth and stupefying in nature. Sin like poison destroys the life of a nation. The bread of idolatry is sweet in the mouth becomes bitter in experience; that which is pleasant in the taste convulses the system with pain. Its riches will sicken, turn to moral poison and he shall vomit them up again.” Sin is a bitter root that will vomit deadly consequences.
- Verse 18, “Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.” Some of their hearts turned away to serve the false idols and gods of Egypt and other nations. We must understand that the more a person drinks of this poison, the more he is intoxicated and drunk with it. Many, who were professed followers of God, have been become intoxicated and drunk with the world in its awful bitterness. Idols and idolatry are described as poisonous plants, which if it takes root, it begets a harvest of poison that is deadly to itself and others around them.
- Verse 19 speaks of the carnal security and delusions of many of these who would turn away, “And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.” Like those in Jer.6:14-16, “They **have healed** also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, **saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace**. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” Paul spoke of some who were deceiving others and were themselves deceived! 2 Tim.3:13, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, **deceiving, and being deceived**.”

Look at verse 20 and following of Deuteronomy 29. Reminds me of those from Jeremiah’s time, Jer. 2:13. Back to Hebrews 12:15. The problem is, these false

professors and tares had caused much trouble in the church and because of this many others were deceived, because they thought that these false professors and tares were genuine bona-fide Christians. This caused some of them to look at Christianity indifferently and with contempt. The tares create many problems in the church, because the trouble is; you can't tell the difference between the tares and the wheat. How many have you known who have made a profession in Christ, join the church and follow for a while and then return right back to the world in awful bitterness. Again verse 15, "*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and **thereby many be defiled.***" They come a day short. What a fearful and sobering warning concerning those that procrastinate regarding salvation.

Until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back there will be tares in the church. This is why it is so important not to base salvation on the actions of someone else, but only upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith! Cast your eyes, your heart, your lives upon Christ and Christ alone. I warn you that looking at others instead of looking solely upon Christ can cause you to turn away. Therefore, come to Christ this morning, come in repentance and faith and lay hold of Christ for salvation! As the hymn writer wrote: "*My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name, on Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.*"

Will you not come by faith to Christ time morning! Will you not repent from your sins this morning? Come to Christ like blind Bartimaeus and cry out, thou son of David have mercy on me, yea, thou son of God have mercy on me! Cry out like the Psalmist in Ps. 130:4, "*But there is forgiveness with thee...*" Believing that, "*...thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.*" "*For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell...But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*" Ps. 86:5, 6, 15 & 15.

God is a God ready to forgive, ready to pardon and ready to save! The problem is not with God; because God will save, but you must call upon Him, you must come to Him, call upon Him even now. Let's pray.

Next week: **A Careful Seeking** (8) In verses 16-17 we see the example of one who came a day short, even though he sought it carefully, or if you wish a careful seeker.