

Today I want to talk about a serious problem facing many believers. It's something I continue to face in my life. It's something you will face in yours. And for some of you, this is the single greatest threat to your faith right now.

I am referring to **spiritual drift**.

If you don't row hard against the current on the Niagara river, if you have a nap in your canoe, before long **you will drift** toward the Falls and be caught in a current that you won't be able to overcome, resulting in your destruction.

Let me **define Spiritual Drift** for a moment. It's not so much what you do but what you fail to do that causes drift. Though it has many forms, there are certain commonalities that characterize spiritual drift.

The first characteristic is that spiritual drift is very hard to detect in our lives. It happens so slowly we don't notice it.

A big spiritual fall, like adultery, or porn addiction, or outbursts of anger, or slandering other believers—these are easy to notice because they are undeniable evils.

But spiritual drift is much more subtle because its gradual—like the proverbial frog in the kettle.

It usually begins with carelessness in Bible reading and prayer. Daily times in the word and prayer become twice a week...then twice a month. After a while its only Sundays you crack open your Bible.

It's not long before God starts to seem unreal to you. Prayer is stiff and feels unnatural. Doubts start to creep in that don't leave.

The thought life starts to run amok. God-substitutes start to fill your affections. Legitimate things that have slowly become ultimate things—like family, fitness, retirement savings, nice homes and cars, job promotions, status, the appearance of success, comfort and following the path of least resistance, being liked by others.

Our life gradually becomes consumed with the temporary and we lose the taste for the eternal. We watch TV (which is fine) but without discrimination (which isn't fine).. and slowly adopt its values.

Sin becomes normalized because we make peace with it. Sin no longer shocks us. That's always a sign of hardening. **Instead what shocks us is Biblical preaching.**

Before you know it, you don't believe what you used believe anymore. You gradually let go of what you have treasured all your life. **You are drifting away from God.**

This is why the book of Hebrews was written—to arrest the drift of believers away from God.

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest **we drift away** from it. Heb 2:1

Now what do you suppose the writer of Hebrews provides as the solution to this big problem? Something truly magnificent.

He reveals to us the glory of Jesus Christ. And by doing that, he awakens our sleeping hearts to a course correction.

“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

This is what we want to think about carefully this morning:

## **A Fresh Understanding of Christ’s Glory Holds Us Back From Spiritual Drift**

### **- PRAYER -**

I believe it was Augustine who coined the saying:

**The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed.**

**The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.**

In other words, the Bible functions like a dimmer light in a living room. As you move along through the Old Testament, the light gets brighter until everything in the room becomes visible in the New Testament.

We start our journey today in **Psalm 45**. The dimmer light is on low here. We just see shadows in the room. But they are remarkable shadows none-the-less.

### **1. The Old Testament Shadow**

This is a great wedding Psalm about a great King and his bride. It uses superlative language that seems to go right over the top in praising the king.

**Verse 1** tells us this is a song directed to a King.

Who is this King? In the Jewish Targum —An Aramaic translation of the OT (used by the Jews in the OT when they were in Captivity in Babylon), **verse 2** was clearly seen as referring to the Messiah:

**“Your beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than that of the children of men” Jewish Targum**

Today, in the interest of time I want to just focus on two remarkable verses—**verse 6-7**.

But then we come to **verse 6**.

Remember that the Bible’s strongly affirms that there is only one God & its condemns any multiplication of gods which is idolatry.

But here a king is being addressed as God. A man is being addressed as God. Though this was common in the ancient world (Caesar was worshipped as a God & the Japanese emperor was always worshipped as God)—this was never part of Israel’s approach to kings. It would have been blasphemy!

Yet there it is. And then to make things even more complicated, in **verse 7** the king is referred to as distinct from God—in the very next breath. Most amazing of all, it is said with little fanfare and zero explanation.

Alex Motyer, an OT scholar puts it brilliantly:

*“An unequivocal assertion of the deity of the Messiah, but this, coupled with ‘your God’ (vs 7), poses an Old Testament enigma. How can the Messiah be both God and a devotee of God? The answer has to await the New Testament”* **Alex Motyer**, *Psalms by the Day*, p. 119

We see the shadow of something mysterious and great in these verses—but we don’t know what they mean.

Now I’d like you to turn to the book of Hebrews in the New Testament.

## **2. The New Testament Reality**

Now as the dimmer light turns, the contents in the room start to be seen with greater clarity:

*These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.* Col. 2:17

Hebrews is a book written to followers of Christ that were considering going back to Judaism. It was safer. Persecution was intense and some wanted life to be easy again (or at least easier).

The writer of Hebrews knows the solution to this problem is a deeper revelation and recognition of WHO Christ is.

I wonder...who do you think Christ is? Have you thought about this deeply? The way we live our lives is a reflection of how seriously we treat Christ.

I want you to notice two significant truths revealed in Hebrews 1 in reference to Psalm 45 which is quoted in **verse 8-9** (read).

The text is no longer about an earthly king but “**about the Son**”. We see the true target of this Psalm—the Son of God. If we map Christ onto Psalm 45 it suddenly makes a lot of sense.

But **notice who is speaking these words**. This is truly astounding. Look back to **verse 5**. It’s God the Father speaking here—about the Son.

Look again at verse 8. God the Father calls God the Son - **God**. My friends... If God says —**the Son is God** —then consider the mic dropped.

But we still have the problem. **Verse 9** describes this one who is God as someone who relates to God as his God. Confusing! How can someone who is spoken of **as God** (by God) still be devoted to His God? How is this not creating multiple gods and violating the essential confession of one God in the Bible?

What we are about to talk about a great mystery. I feel fear in my heart because I know I will not do it justice. Not even close.

**Triangle Diagram** - This is a diagram often to explain the Trinity. It seeks to show the unity of God and distinctions of God. All three persons are the ONE God, but all three persons are distinct from each other.

**How are the persons distinguished from each other?** They are all GOD. They all share all the characteristics of Gods character.

They all are infinite, all powerful, and glorious. So how do we differentiate them? If we had three identical clones of God, we would not have the Trinity—we would have three equal gods.

But God is ONE.

1700 years ago at the church council of Nicea, the church Fathers wrestled about how to define this revelation about God. They agreed on a way to describe this differentiation between the persons of the Trinity.

**Slide # 2 -**

The Son has been eternally begotten by the person of the Father

When we say this we cannot read human procreation concepts into this. God begets in a way we do not. He is in a completely different category.

**This does not mean:**

- The Son is created by the Father
- The Son's Divine nature is derived from the Father
- The Son is inferior to the Father

**This does mean:**

The Son is eternally dependent on the Father for his person-of-the-Son. His personhood is eternally generated by the Father.

*For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. Jn 5:26*

This explains the distinction between the Father & Son in the unity of one God.

But it still doesn't explain in what way God the Son could ever refer to God as **His God** (vs 9)?

### **Side-View Cone Diagram**

This diagram looks at the Trinity from two viewpoints. As he is in himself. And as he is in his work of saving us. The second person of the Trinity became human at Bethlehem (not the Father or the Spirit). Christ possesses two natures (divine & human) which are fused together into one person. This person's name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we see verses talking about **Christ**—we are talking about the Son in his humanity. As a man, it could truly be said that God was Christ's God - **He prayed to God**. He could say:

“The Father is greater than I” (Jn 14:28)

But relating to his eternal essence as God the Son, he could say:

“I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30)

I know this is a lot to take in. Nobody could make this stuff up. We know about this because God revealed it to us in his word. This is the mysterious greatness of WHO God is!

**Now what difference does all this make for us today? A LOT**

How do we avoid drifting away from God? Look at **Hebrews 2:1**.



Pay close attention to what we have heard. The opposite of that is found in verse 3— we **ignore** or **neglect** this great salvation.

The word translated as “neglect” means “**to be unconcerned**”. Casual. Apathetic. Dismissive. Excuse making.

It’s the same word that’s used in Jesus’ own parable about people who don’t take God’s word seriously:

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ But *they paid no attention* and went off, one to his farm, another to his business. **Matt. 22:2-5**

We live in an incredibly distracted world. So much is vying for our attention. What should we be paying attention among all the noisy voices?

What's most entertaining? What’s most likely to make us lots of money? What is most likely to get people to like us? The message that promises to make life easy for us? American politics? Sports? Improving our skill set?

My friends—you can pay some attention to all those things. But all these things are temporary. None will last. **None will help with your standing before God**. On the Judgement Day they will prove to be broken sticks. They will no more support you than a spiders web will.

But there is something that deserves our fullest attention. **God is speaking.** He is revealed in these Scriptures to be Jesus Christ.

How do we stop the deadly, gradual drift away from God? Pay attention to **WHO** is speaking. If Christ is who the Bible says he is, then we must take him seriously. If he is not—then eat drink & be merry! You can safely ignore Him. But if he is who he says he is, to ignore him is the worst decision you will ever make.

How do we take Christ seriously practically? We take the Scriptures seriously.

A Scripture that is opened once a week on Sundays is not a word that is taken seriously. Compare that to how much time you give to listening to the news, or watching TV. **We give time to what we value.**

A shut Bible is the equivalent of asking Christ to not speak to you. A shut Bible is closing the door to God. When we don't take Him seriously, we close our eyes, shut our ears, and remain in the same place year after year.

It is the mark of those who truly belong to Christ to take his words with utmost seriousness and follow him:

*Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. John 8:47*

*When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. John 10:4*

