



September Sermon Series: White Noise: Hearing God Through the Clutter Today's Sermon #3: Drifting From Our Believing

Getting the Nod

One day a little girl approached her mother and told her she had a stomach ache. Her mother replied, **“That’s because it’s empty and you have to put something in it.”** Later that night the pastor had been invited for dinner and he mentioned that he had a headache. That’s when the little girl walked over to the pastor and told him, **“It’s because it’s empty. You have to put something in it!”** **Hopefully you won’t find this message to come from a head empty and this sermon in need of something more to fill it.**

Have any of you ever asked this question, “Where has my passion for the Lord gone? Why do my decisions reflect that which I shouldn’t do?” Or, “Why are my doubts and fears louder to me than my faith and my confidence?”

Maybe those questions can be answered in this video clip...

Video: You’re Drifting

Biblical Characters Who Drifted...

- David drifted from king to killer; from master to manipulator
- Elijah drifted from a bold pulpit to fearful wimp
- Peter went from a sword wielding disciple to a liar at the campfire
- Judas went from being a hand selected follower to hardcore thief who sold Jesus out

Drifting is a real problem for all of us if we’re not careful to guard our hearts!!! Any white noise that draws our attention away from our Lord and our faith and causes us to focus on lesser things... will find themselves drifting.

Respected Bible scholar D. A. Carson said this: **People do not drift toward holiness... people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord.**

Transition: There’s another biblical character who drifted from where God wanted him... to where Satan took him. His name was Aaron. Exodus 32 and 33 is where we see this drifting take place...

God’s Take

NKJV | Ex 32:1-10 **Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” 2 And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” 3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!” 5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.” 6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people**

sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 7 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” 9 And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! 10 Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”

Background:

- This is around 1450 BC and in the eyes of the Israelites they’ve have gone from one bad situation to the next. They’ve gone from being slaves in Egypt to wandering in the desert.
- Moses is their leader and they have watched as God brought plagues on Egypt. Plagues of frogs... flies... disease and death to the livestock... boils... hail... locusts... darkness... and finally the death of all firstborn, except for the Jewish families who covered their doorframes with blood of lambs so the death angel would Passover.
- They watched as God guided them with a cloud by day and fire by night.
- They had crossed the Red Sea with a divided water and then witnessed the Egyptian chasing army swallowed up and killed by that same water.
- They watched as God provided Manna and quail for food... and water from a rock.
- It was at Mt. Sinai that they camped... and God started a conversation with Moses.
- The people couldn’t join Moses... so they would wait at the bottom of the mountain for Moses to return with the newest words of instruction from God.
- Out of it would eventually come the 10 Commandments and other laws that would eventually govern the Jews. This was the law... God’s pattern for obedience... and God’s promise and covenant.
- The Tabernacle was described where God would meet His priests... and then the priests would direct the people.
- But Moses, having placed the responsibility of the people on Aaron’s shoulders, remained on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights... and the natives got restless.
- And before you know it... Aaron goes from Moses assistant to constructor of golden idols.
What caused this drift in Aaron? How could he go from #2 in the Jewish nation to the #1 in pagan practices? It was the white noise!

The White Noise that Causes Drifting:

1. The white noise of insecurity and impatience. (Vs. 32:1)

- In the absence of a shepherd... sheep stray. **Including Aaron. The noise of the impatient and insecure people wore him down.**
- He lacked the leadership to control the nation... they needed their leader.
- **Application:** In the absence of leadership... chaos is the only outcome. Churches; nations; companies; families...
- NLT | Proverbs 29:18 **When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.**

2. The white noise of delayed gratification. (32:2-4)

- **For Aaron, it was the white noise of “Right Now!”** The people couldn’t wait for Moses... they couldn’t wait for God and His timing...They wouldn’t wait. Willpower is a forgotten value and quality today.
- **Application:** Nobody waits for God anymore. They want super faith now! They want God’s blessings now. No one sees that compounding interest works with our faith journey.
- NLT | Mt 6:19-20 “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.

3. The white noise of memory loss. (32:4b)

- **Aaron was listening to a people who had forgotten** the great things that God had done already!!! They were living in a spiritual environment of “God, what have you done for me lately?”
- **Application:** One of the most destructive tools of Satan to cause drifting in our lives is memory loss. Forgetting what God has already done!!
- **Paul tells the Corinthians...**NLT | 1 Co 10:1 I don’t want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground.

4. The white noise of pleasure over consequence. (32:6b)

- As soon as Aaron was done, the golden calf was immediately worshipped... and the entire nation went from waiting and anticipating what God had for them... to barbecues, bar-rooms and immoral parties.
- The Hebrew word for “PLAY” here means to laugh... make fun of... to make sport of... to toy with.
- **Application:** In the absence of fearing God... people will worship malignant gluttony. Pleasure is the hunger for a shallow heart. To make fun of things... to laugh at... to make sport of... it turned to a campfire comedy club of righteousness and God.
- NKJV | 1 Tim. 5:6 **But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.**

Transition: When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, God had instructed him to check out what the people had become... **and Aaron had not only allowed it... but provided the object of evil. And because of it, Moses rises up and says, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!”** The Levites responded... and Moses cleaned house, and 3,000 of the Jews died that day.

Our Response

But God and Moses set forth a plan to lead the people back from drifting...

NKJV | Ex 33:7-11 **Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and**

worshiped, each man in his tent door. 11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

How can we get back from drifting... or how can those of us who know of someone who is drifting lead them out?

Overcoming and Leading a Drifting Spirit:

1. Regularly take care of your soul. (33:7)

- “Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp...” Get alone with God every day.

2. Seek popularity with God first. (33:7)

- “And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting...” Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you!!

3. Come to terms with being watched. (33:8)

- “...each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses...” Don’t be ashamed...

4. Learn the art of recognizing God’s voice. (33:9)

- “... and the LORD talked with Moses.” My sheep listen to my voice and follow me!!!

5. Partner with God and others to get faith back. (33:10-11)

- “All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.” How? Church; small group; getting involved... **Transition:** I close with this...

Taking It Home

Illustration of Felling the Bubbles: A man once asked a former navy diver about diving deep... really deep. He told the man that he had been in situations so deep and dark that it was almost impossible to keep from becoming disoriented and confused. What a terrifying feeling—being under water, unable to see your hands in front of your face, not knowing which way is up, panic engulfing you. He immediately interrupted his Navy friend, "So what did you do?" **He said immediately...**

"I felt the bubbles," he said. "I trusted the bubbles?" I asked. He went on..."That's right. When it's pitch-black and you have no idea which way to go, you reach up with your hand and feel the bubbles. The bubbles always drift to the surface. When you can't trust your feelings or judgment, you can always trust the bubbles to get you back to the top."

[As Christians] we need a way to determine what is real and true. Sometimes in life we get disoriented and desperate. At other times, we find ourselves drifting aimlessly. God knew that we would need advice and instructions about how to live. In the 66 books of the Bible we have a reality library—stories, letters, guidelines, and examples from God that tell us what is true and real. (Terry Carter, Scott Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word* (Zondervan, 2005), p. 41-42)