

ALMOST PERSUADED, BUT NOT QUITE

Acts 26:24-32

Introduction: Agrippa was a mighty man of wealth, power and respectability. He was king over Judea. Unlike his predecessors or peers, Agrippa was a thoughtful religious man. He had recognized the Jewish religion, spoke of his faith in the Old Testament Scriptures and enjoyed a rare privilege and opportunity for he was privileged to hear God's man, Paul preach directly to him. He was convinced of the truthfulness of what Paul said about Jesus and how the door of mercy was open to him and he had opportunity to enter. However Agrippa willfully said "not right now" or "no" to the invitation of the Gospel. When God convicted him, he stopped listening. In his own words, Agrippa was "almost persuaded" to become a Christian, but chose to remain lost." In these verses God holds King Agrippa up before us as a warning to those who would hesitate or put off or trifle with God's Gospel.

Perhaps there is someone here today who is acting like King Agrippa. You have heard the gospel, you have been convicted that you need to believe in Jesus yet you want to wait for a while and you walk away as did the rich young ruler after talking with Jesus. To be "almost persuaded" is to be still totally lost and to continue to put Jesus off, it could become permanent. ***"Receive not the grace of God in vain...Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.."*** (1 Corinthians 6:1-2)

I. JUST WHAT/WHO IS A CHRISTIAN ANYHOW?

1. A Christian is one who is filled with God's Spirit, a follower of Jesus Christ, trying to be like Him.
 - There is nothing outside the Church and the people of God that can be called "christian."
 - A Christian is a person who is taught of God, whose eyes have been opened to know God's truth.
 - Christians have the mind of Jesus Christ and understand spiritual things.
 - They have acknowledged and confessed their sins, trusted God's Son, Jesus, and gratefully recognized that except for God's mercy, they would still be without hope.
 - Christians are sinners who have been transformed by the grace and power of God.
 - They have received the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. All sins, past, present, and future are forgiven.
 - A Christian is a person whose eternal home and wealth is in heaven. He/she has a home already waiting and will share God's wealth as an heir with all other Christians/God's Family.
2. A Christian is a person who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been born into the family of God and already has eternal life.
3. Those who have not experienced and do not possess these graces are not Christians.

II. WHAT BROUGHT KING AGRIPPA SO CLOSE TO BECOMING A CHRISTIAN?

1. Paul used the Word of God, ***"...thus saith the Lord..."*** as he quoted Jesus and the prophets.
 - The Word of God is the only means. Science, history or logic won't work to reinforce faith.
 - All must bow to the Word of God and only through believing and obeying God's Word can one become a Christian.

2. Paul gave his personal testimony.
 - He told King Agrippa what had happened to him personally - first hand experience/knowledge.
 - First hand, personal knowledge with God's Word is the best way to help an indecisive person.
3. Paul gave King Agrippa the historical facts about the Gospel.
 - God became flesh.
 - God in the flesh was Jesus and He took everyone's sins on a cross, becoming their substitute and therefore satisfied God's divine justice for sin.
 - After dying on a cross for mankind's sin, Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven and is sitting there today making intercession for those who believe and are Christians.
 - Paul then demanded that Agrippa openly declare belief in God's Son, Jesus, and all His acts for mankind.

III. WHAT KEPT KING AGRIPPA FROM BEING COMPLETELY PERSUADED?

1. There was someone sitting beside him that he was unwilling to give up.
 - He was having an incestuous relationship with his sister, Bernice.
 - To become a Christian he would have to give her up and let her go. He didn't want to do that.
2. There was someone else sitting beside him whose disapproval he didn't want.
 - Festus, a friend, lower in rank, could cause him much trouble if he became a Christian as Christians were not in favor with anyone.
3. He saw the condition of Paul, who was a Christian.
 - Paul was in chains, sorrow, shame, prison and disliked.
 - Agrippa thought over the cost of becoming a Christian. He didn't want to give it all up.

CONCLUSION:

1. King Agrippa loved what he had and he could not, would not give it up to follow Jesus Christ.
2. King Agrippa was "almost persuaded" to become a Christian, but he remained lost, doomed, damned and separated from God with no hope.
3. Are you like King Agrippa? You have heard the Gospel, you have given thought to what you have heard, but you have delayed, hesitated, held back, perhaps are waiting for the "right time" or maybe waiting until you get "good enough?"
 - You are still lost, damned and have no hope for "almost" is still "NOT."
4. Countless numbers are like King Agrippa, they have heard but are still uncommitted for some reason. Remember, until one deliberately commits him/herself in total belief/surrender to Jesus, that person is still unsaved. Don't be counted among them any longer.