

ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME

ACTS 26:1-29

Text: Acts 26:28

(Acts 26:28) "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Introduction

The chapter out of which our text is taken contains an account of Paul's conversion to Christianity, which he gave before governor Festus and King Agrippa. Paul's speech before Agrippa is his sixth and final defense of Christianity recorded in Acts.

As Paul finished his defense, I notice his sudden thrust in verse 27. Then I see the sidestepping tactics from Agrippa; "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Then I observe the single theme of the Apostle in verse 29. Paul's one theme was that men might turn to Christ.

It is from these words of Agrippa that the hymn ALMOST PERSUADED was based.

Almost persuaded, now to believe,
Almost persuaded, Christ to receive.
Seems now some soul to say,
Go, Spirit, go thy way;
Some more convenient day
On Thee I'll call.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

From these words of Agrippa, I want to use three words for our thoughts this morning:

1. CHRISTIAN - THE DESPISED WORD

- A. Notice a name for the believer that was given by the world (Acts 11:26).
- B. From all indications it was a name given to the believers in mockery.
- C. The name has stuck and has become a badge of honor.
- D. It is a name by which the Lord's people are known to this day.
 - 1. It is a name that identifies the believer with Christ and Christ with the believer.

2. Christian is word that identifies a people who attest to a change, accept a call, and are assured a cross.

3. Christians are a people who stand out from the crowd, speak out for the Lord, and sing out in their afflictions.

E. What manner of people Christians ought to be because of the name we bear.

F. Our character, conduct, and our conversation ought to advertise to the world that we are His.

2. PERSUADE -THE DECISIVE WORD

Persuade means "to convince by argument and reason, to draw on incline the will to determination by presenting motives to the mind."

(Acts 18:4) "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."

(Acts 19:26) "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:"

(2 Cor 5:11) "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

- A. Persuade men by our life (4). Note continuance in verse 22.
- B. Persuade men by using the Word (verse 22).
- C. Persuade men by lifting up Christ (23).
- D. Persuade men by our persistency (29).

(2 Tim 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."

Are you fully persuaded that Jesus is the only way!

Are you fully persuaded that Jesus is the sufficient way!

3. ALMOST - THE DANGEROUS WORD

Think of the emotion that is packed into the word almost. It is five seconds to the buzzer; the home team is down by one point, and the crowd's favorite player has the basketball. Quickly he moves into position. He

jumps. He shoots. The ball arches up to the hoop, bounces twice on the rim.... and falls away.

As the buzzer sounds, the fans let out a collective moan - their team almost won the game.

Almost won -- the two words together are gut wrenching. There is not second chance; there is no trophy for the most "almost wins"; there are no cheers, no banners, no victory celebrations. it doesn't matter how close the team came to winning; the game is over, and they lost.

Spiritually speaking the words almost saved are as final but have far more sobering consequences.

Almost persuaded to be a Christian is like the man who was almost pardoned, but he was hanged; like the man's who was almost rescued, but was burned in the house.

A man that is almost saved is damned.

A. Note Agrippa's fear

1. To become a Christian invited ridicule

B. Note Agrippa's folly

1. He rejected the message of Jesus

C. Note Agrippa's fate

1. As far as can be determined, he never heard Paul again.
2. It was probably his last chance to hear the gospel and be saved.

What you might be if you are an almost Christian

- Born in a Christian country
- Brought up in a Christian family
- Member of a Christian church
- Abound in Christian character and morals

What is it to be an almost Christian?

- It is to see your need and yet not confess it
- It is to wish to be saved and yet remain undecided
- It is to be at the door, but yet still outside

Almost is dangerous because of the peril of sudden death (Proverbs 29:1).

(Prov 29:1) "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Almost is dangerous because of the peril of lost conviction "My spirit shall not always strive with man."

Almost is dangerous because of the peril of lost faculties (I Samuel 25:37,38).

Almost is dangerous because of the peril of imminent return of Christ.

Conclusion:

Are you an almost or an altogether Christian. If you are not a Christian, would you come today?

Almost persuaded, come, come today;

Almost persuaded, turn not away.

Almost cannot avail; Almost is but to fail!

Sad, sad, that bitter wail, Almost, but lost.