

# ALMOST

## ACTS 26:24-30

Text:

Introduction:

The various attitudes people hold concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. For instance, in this passage, three different men are mentioned: Festus, Paul, and King Agrippa II. Each of these men represents a different attitude toward Jesus.

Festus represents those who HATE the Lord.

Paul represents those who HONOR the Lord.

King Agrippa represents those who Hold Off trusting the Lord.

People like Agrippa are right on the verge of coming to Christ, but for some reason, they are holding out.

An almost Christian is still lost!

According to verse 26 – “almost is where we find King Agrippa.

He is almost a Christian, but he is still lost.

He is almost a believer, but he is still an unbeliever.

He is close, but he is not there yet!

There are many people today in that same place or in that same condition.

## **1. ALMOST AND THE TRUTH**

Notice the things that brought Agrippa the to place of Almost

### **A. The Testimony of the Scriptures (26-27)**

#### **Acts 26:26-27**

<sup>26</sup>For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. <sup>27</sup>King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Paul reminds Agrippa of the Word of God. He tells the king that he both knows these things and believes these things.

What things?

The things contained in the Law and the Prophets, vs. 22.

Paul is using the Bible as tool to bring Agrippa to faith in Christ.

This is exactly what the Bible is designed to do.

## **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

## **John 20:31**

<sup>31</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

### **B. The Testimony of the Saints**

Not only did Agrippa have the testimony of the Scriptures, he also had the testimony of a saint of God. This whole chapter is devoted to Paul telling Agrippa how he was saved. Paul told it all. He told what a sinner he had been and how the Lord gloriously saved his soul. There stands Paul, bound in chains, with the scars of his love for Jesus all over his body. He tells Agrippa that he is happy and that his whole life has been changed. It was a powerful witness and it brought Agrippa to the place of Almost believing!

### **C. The Testimony of the Savior (vs. 23, 26b)**

## **Acts 26:23**

<sup>23</sup> That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

### **Acts 26:26**

<sup>26</sup> For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

Paul tells Agrippa that the things he is talking about “were not done in a corner”.

In other words, Paul is telling Agrippa, “You know who Jesus is and what He did!

Paul takes Agrippa to Calvary and reminds him of the price Jesus paid for sin.

This reminder Almost brings Agrippa to Jesus.

## **2. ALMOST AND THE TRAPS**

Agrippa heard some pretty persuasive arguments. His heart was stirred. He saw Paul; felt his sincerity and believed his words. What caused Agrippa to stop at “Almost”? I would suggest two obstacles that stood in Agrippa’s way.

### **A. The Power of Sin (vs. 30, Acts 25:23)**

#### **Acts 26:30**

<sup>30</sup> And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

#### **Acts 25:23**

<sup>23</sup> And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice,

with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

Agrippa is living with this woman named Bernice as if she was his wife.

She is actually his sister! They are living in an immoral relationship and Agrippa understands that if he comes to Jesus, he will have to let go of his relationship with Bernice. His addiction to his sin caused him to stop at "Almost".

There is no such thing as a cheap salvation! One of the keys to salvation is repentance. You must come to the place where you hate your sins and become willing to let them go. Yes, you can come to Jesus just as you are. But, you cannot come to Jesus until you are willing to repent of your sins, Luke 13:3.

**Luke 13:3**

<sup>3</sup> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

He loves you so much that He will accept you just like you are; but He loves you too much to allow you to stay as you are!

This is what makes a lot of people stop at "Almost".

They want to come to the Lord and they want to continue to drink their beer and liquor, sleep around, and do all the things they want to do.

It does not work like that!

You cannot have Jesus and your sins too!

He will take you when you come His way and His way is for you to come in humility and repentance!

## B. The Power of Self

It wasn't just sin that stopped Agrippa at "Almost". There was also the problem of self. Notice how self kept this man from coming to Jesus.

### 1. He was concerned about his position

Agrippa was a King! If he had professed faith in Jesus Christ, his Jewish subjects and his Roman superiors would have turned on him like a pack of wolves.

### 2. He was concerned about his pride

The Roman Governor Festus was in that room that day.

If Agrippa had accepted Jesus as his Savior, he would have lost face before this man.

Agrippa could not allow Festus to see him confess his sins and bow to an invisible Christ at the word of a prisoner in chains.

His pride would not allow Agrippa to bow.

### 3. He was concerned about the price

As he sat there that day, Agrippa could see Paul.

Paul was chained and his body was scarred by all the persecution he had suffered because of his relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Agrippa knew that if he came to faith in Christ; he would lose everything he valued in life.

He was not willing to pay the price to come to Christ.

## **3. ALMOST AND THE TRAGEDIES**

Agrippa refuses Paul's invitation to receive Jesus. In fact, verse 30 tells us that he just got up and walked out on Paul.

What does it mean to be "Almost"? For a football team that "almost" wins the Super Bowl it means they lose. For an archer who "almost" hits the bull's eye it means he missed. For a runner who "almost" hit the tape first it means he comes in second place. For a

person who “almost” comes to Jesus there is a high price to pay.

### A. Almost Leads to Destruction

If Agrippa had come to faith in Christ, it would have changed his life. Jesus Christ changes everything he touches. There is Paul, locked down in chains, yet his heart is filled with joy and peace.

#### **Acts 26:2**

<sup>2</sup>I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

His salvation would have altered the course of the nation of Israel. If he had been saved, it might have brought his sister Bernice to Jesus. Festus also might have been saved. But, because he refused to bow to Jesus, he continued on in his sins and left many wrecked and ruined lives in his wake.

### B. Almost Always Leads to Damnation

Agrippa lived his life the way he wanted to live it. He “Almost” came to the Lord, but one day death came for King Agrippa and he died without Christ and went to Hell.

One day, he will stand before Jesus at the Great White Throne and he may say, “Lord, I believe everything the

Law and the prophets say about You. I believed what Paul said about You. Lord, I came to the place where I almost accepted you.” The Lord will look at Agrippa and say, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Agrippa won't be alone. There will be a vast multitude of people who ALMOST got saved but never did.

- **Judas Iscariot** – Three years with the Lord. He kissed the Door of Heaven and went to Hell. (Luke 22:47-48)

#### **Luke 22:47-48**

<sup>47</sup> And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. <sup>48</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

- **The Rich Young Ruler** – He was almost there, but he would not believe. (Matthew 19:16-30)

#### **Matthew 19:16-30**

<sup>16</sup> And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? <sup>17</sup> And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. <sup>18</sup> He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, <sup>19</sup> Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>20</sup> The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? <sup>21</sup> Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and

thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. <sup>23</sup> Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>25</sup> When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? <sup>26</sup> But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. <sup>27</sup> Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? <sup>28</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. <sup>30</sup> But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

- **Malchus** – The man who the Lord healed the ear that Peter cut off.

### **John 18:10**

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

### **Luke 22:50-51**

<sup>50</sup> And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

- ***The Thief on the Cross*** – He saw Jesus dying and He watched the Lord save his companion, but he still dies lost. (Luke 23:39-43)

### **Luke 23:39-43**

<sup>39</sup> And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. <sup>40</sup> But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. <sup>42</sup> And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

- ***Felix*** – He heard the Gospel and wanted to wait for a more convenient season. (Acts 24:25)

### **Acts 24:25**

<sup>25</sup> And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

- ***Festus*** – He heard the Gospel and called Paul a mad man. (Acts 26:24)

### **Acts 26:24**

<sup>24</sup> And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

- **Bernice** – She heard the Gospel and walked away. (Acts 26:30)

**Acts 26:30**

<sup>30</sup> And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

Close:

I once read about a man by the name of William Hyatt. He was a 62-year old miner, and his dead body was found out in the Mojave Desert. When his body was found, his face and his hands were buried in the sand. He died while trying to dig for moisture. It turns out that his car had broken down; he had walked some 22 miles through the Mojave Desert until he succumbed from dehydration and died. He had crawled on his hands and feet the last two miles. Sadly, just over the hill less than a half-mile away was a spring, an oasis of water that could have saved him. He was almost there, but almost was not good enough for William Hyatt!

Are you saved? Almost is not good enough.

Do you know someone who is almost? I encourage you to come and pray for them.