

Title: Almost Persuaded

Scripture: Acts 26:22-32

Speaker: Vic Redding

Event: Sunday Morning Service

Date: November 23, 2014

Acts 26:22-32: *“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 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. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 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. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.”*

Unfortunately there are people we might see in hell. They are people that we all know.

1. That one who lived so close to the church that they could walk through the front door, but never did. They never made the step in to learn about Christ.
2. Someone who has been witnessed to by a church member who had a burden from them, but at that time they did not believe and now it's too late.
3. The one in church who is convicted to be saved but they do not come.

The sad thing about these groups of people is that no one has to go to hell. King Agrippa could be in one of these groups. In verse 28 he says *“Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”* He was one who had heard the message of Christ but waited too long to accept it. Although King Agrippa had all kinds of influence over the Jews, he had no influence with God.

Two things that we notice about King Agrippa in this passage of scripture:

1. **The reason for his near-conversion:** verses 25-28 says *“But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 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. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”* It was not simply enough to believe the prophets, but to accept the message that the prophets were giving.
 - a. Festus thought Paul was crazy [mad]. Festus thought that Paul's education and knowledge of the things of God and his zeal to share that knowledge was fanatical. Paul knew that Agrippa had a degree of knowledge concerning the Jews and what the word of God said about the Jews. One word that stands out in these few verses: **almost**. It means very near, but not exactly. You might be a church member but you might not be saved. You are *almost* saved.
 - b. When people are convicted, there's a reason why. They feel guilty about the way that they've been living. Agrippa was overwhelmed by what Paul said. In verse 25 the Apostle Paul uses two words: truth, and soberness. The word soberness means “good sense”. In other words, he was saying “I'm giving you the word of God and it makes good sense!” Agrippa knew Paul's life both before and after his conversion.
 - i. Question: What stirred Agrippa to state “almost though persuades me to be a Christian”?

Title: Almost Persuaded

Answer: The testimony that Paul gave. The Holy Spirit used the testimony of the change in Paul's life to convict Agrippa.

- c. Paul made it clear that a change took place in his life.
 - i. He was convicted by the Holy Spirit in his life. Verse 14 of Acts 26 says *"And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."* God did a work in Paul to make him realize that he was religious but he was lost.
 - ii. He was converted by the work of the Holy Spirit. Acts 26:15 says *"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."*
 - iii. He was changed by the work of the Holy Spirit. If you say that you are a Christian and if you still behave like the world, others will doubt that you are a Christian. When a person comes to Christ, a change takes place. The work of the Holy Spirit continues to work in our lives as we grow and mature. II Corinthians 5:17 says *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

2. The Response of Agrippa:

- a. Nowhere in the scriptures do we ever find that King Agrippa accepted Christ. If Agrippa had gotten saved, God would have put it in the scriptures because it's important. King Agrippa faced a two-fold crisis in his life that we all face:
 - i. **You will face a crossroad in your life.** In I Timothy 1:15, Paul said *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."* Romans 3:23 gives the proof that we are sinners before we accept Christ. It says *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"* We have two ways we can choose to live our lives. They are found in Matthew and in John. We have the choice of eternal life in Heaven or in Hell. Matthew 7:13-14 *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* John 3:36 *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*
 - ii. **You will face a turning point in your life.** In Acts 26:14 it says *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."* Paul had to make a decision quickly and on the spot. God was dealing with him and gave him a question that needed an urgent answer. King Agrippa was convicted, but not convicted enough to do anything about it. Genesis 6:3 says *"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."* We don't know that God ever dealt with Agrippa the same way again. That could've been his last chance with God. When God offers us peace, we take the turmoil. When he offers us light, we choose darkness. God isn't obligated to talk to us more than once. Revelation 20:15 says *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Are you almost persuaded with the Lord this morning? Are you saved or lost? Do you need to make a decision today regarding your salvation?