ALMOST PERSUADED

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

**DATE:**

**TEXT: Acts 25:13 - Acts 26:32**

**INTRODUCTION**

**The Context:** Paul is in prison because of his preaching

The Jews hated him for preaching the resurrection of Jesus and tried to kill him

He was placed in protective custody by the Romans, **Acts 21**

He has remained in jail because the Jews accused him of inciting riots and uprisings

During his time in jail, Paul has several opportunities to present his case before the rulers of the day

Each time, God turned the tables on them, as they became the prisoners and Paul the captor

The Lord allowed him the privilege of preaching the Gospel to the most powerful men of his time

**Chapter 26** continues this theme

Festus has just assumed the office of Governor from Felix

He has gone down to Jerusalem to politic with the Jews

Now we find him calling on King Agrippa

Festus wants to impress the local king

So, he invites Agrippa to hear Paul’s testimony and to give his opinion as to what should be done with this Jewish preacher

It is an opportunity of God sized proportions!

I want you to follow along with me as we watch this chapter unfold

Listen in as Paul gives his testimony and then notice the reactions of those gathered that day

As you do, allow the Lord to speak to your own heart

As we consider this thought

**“ALMOST PERSUADED”**

**I.** **THE SERMON DELIVERED – vs. 1-27**

A. **Paul’s (Past) ‘Condition’** **– vs. 4-11**

Paul testifies to Agrippa what he used to be

**1.** **Religious – vs. 4, 5**

**2.** **Zealous** **– vs. 9, 10a**

**3.** **Sincere** **– v.10b**

**4.** **But Lost**

Lost because he had no relationship with Jesus

**I John 5:12 – *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”***

**Acts 16:31 – *“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”***

Salvation is never a product of what we do or don’t do

It is a matter of faith in the blood of the Lamb

Paul probably thought all was well! He meant well

But he was deceived!

**Galatians 6:7 – *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”***

Nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash our sins away and make us clean!

**B**. **Paul’s ‘Conviction’** **– vs. 12-15**

The ***“Pricks”*** are goads

When an ox kicks against the goad, he gets goaded more!

Paul’s goad – **v.10**

Was Stephen in **Acts 7**!

Conviction is unpleasant, but necessary –

**John 6:44 – *“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day”***

**John 6:65 – *“And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of my Father”***

Conviction is one of God’s love gifts to the lost

The mercy and grace of conviction –

Turn to **Ephesians 2:1-5**

Without it, the lost man would never see his need!

**C.** **Paul’s ‘Conversion’** – **vs. 16-23**

Paul delivers his Conversion Testimony

Paul was delivered from dead religion and

ushered into a living faith!

He left dead works behind and began to serve a

living Lord!

This great change was evident in Paul!

**II Corinthians 5:17 – *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”***

**D.** **The ‘Confusion’** **– vs.24-27**

In **v.24** Festus calls Paul crazy!

He didn’t really believe so, it was just an attempt to throw off conviction

Some people’s reaction to the preaching!

Paul refused to be sidetracked!

He continues to address Agrippa!

The devil will always try to side track us!

**THE SERMON DELIVERED**

**II.** **SALVATION DELAYED –v.28**

A. **Fear** – Agrippa had been hit!

God has touched his heart!

Agrippa was afraid of public opinion, of ridicule, of losing his office

People today are afraid of the same things!

All such fear is foolish!

**Matthew 16:26 – *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”***

People need to fear nothing, but God –

**Matthew 10:28 – *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”***

What is it that keeps you away from Jesus?

**B.** **Foolishness** – ***“Almost thou persuaded me”***

But still altogether lost

Agrippa stopped just short of salvation!

Millions do the same thing everyday

Are you one of them?

Hell will be filled with those who have heard and understood and believed the things they heard,

But never received Jesus as their own

Delay is dangerous!

**II Corinthians 6:2 – *“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”***

**Genesis 6:3 – *“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”***

**THE SERMON DELIEVERED**

**SALVATION DELAYED**

**III. A SECOND DECLARATION - v. 29**

**A.** T**he ‘Present’** – God has only obligated Himself to call you once

**John 1:9 – *“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”***

When He calls again you are simply benefiting from pure grace!

Don’t presume upon the grace of God

Come when He calls you –

**Isaiah 55:6 – *“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near:”***

**Proverbs 8:17 -  *“I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me”***

**B. The ‘Plea’** – Paul’s plea is for those who heard him to accept his Lord

Every witness is a Godsend!

It is a plea from the God of Heaven for you to turn your life over to Him and be saved and forgiven

Don’t take them for granted!

When you are in hell, you would give anything to have the opportunity back again!

Let’s turn to **Luke 16:19-31** and the story of the Rich man and Lazarus

**C.** **The ‘Promise’** – Paul tells them that they can be just like him

Think of all Paul had given up and lost by becoming a Christian (privilege, power, prestige)

Who in their right mind would trade places with him?

However, there was something that Paul alone possessed that was more valuable than anything anyone else possessed –

Eternal life and A Personal Relationship with Almighty God!

Do you possess that today?

If not, then everything else you have is of no eternal value

**THE SERMON DELIEVERED**

**SALVATION DELAYED**

**A SECOND DECLARATION**

 **IV.** **A SUDDEN DEPARTURE –v.30**

A. **A Sad Decision** –

***“the king rose up”***

Without a word, they walked out on Paul, and the Holy Spirit

It seems a simple thing to say no to God,

But the consequences are eternal

Are you willing to pay that price?

If Jesus where here today,

I am sure that you would not refuse Him,

Don’t turn the Holy Spirit away!

He loves you and longs to save you!

**B.** **A Soul’s Damnation** –

For all we know from history, Agrippa died without

Jesus and went to Hell

If you could listen in on the people in hell today,

You might here Agrippa saying over and over,

*“Almost persuaded, almost persuaded. Oh God, why didn’t I go all the way and receive Jesus into my heart?”*

Don’t do what Agrippa did!

**CONCLUSION**

God has been dealing with your heart!

He has been drawing you to Himself

What keeps you away?

Is it something I have done?

Something some other Christian has done?

Something you have done that you feel God cannot forgive?

Is it pride that keeps you away?

Is it fear?

What is that thing that causes you to stumble headlong toward an eternity in Hell?

Whatever it is, it is not worth going to Hell over

Nothing is worth that!

I beg you, please come to God and receive Jesus and be saved by His grace

Will you do it? Will you come?

What shall I do with Jesus