

Introduction:

1. “Almost” - That word at times can be one of the most tragic words in the English language. Almost – describing something that is right there, but, not quite.
2. In the book of Acts, we read about conversions: The 3,000 in Acts 2, Paul in Acts 9, Cornelius in Acts 10, and the Philippian Jailer in Acts 16. But is every story that we find in this book a success?
 - a. What about King Agrippa, do you remember him? We learn about him in Acts 26; it is the story of two men who did not respond to the call of Jesus. This is a chapter that is often overlooked.
 - b. In this chapter Paul has been awaiting trial after two years of being imprisoned. Paul, is surrounded by prominent men of the city in Caesarea. Festus is the governor, but our main focus tonight is King Agrippa. Opening this scene, Paul makes his defense with a piercing monologue Acts 26:6. Paul is on trial, because of the promises made in the Old Testament. He is going to try and persuade everyone in this court room, but specifically King Agrippa, about the facts of Jesus and the prophets of God.
 - c. Tonight, I want to share a few points from this king, who was almost persuaded.
3. Open your Bibles to Acts 26:19, and let’s read more about King Agrippa. Paul has just explained to these men about his heavenly vision, letting them know about his mission and his purpose. Paul laid it all out on the line for everyone present, including Agrippa.

The Lesson:**I. The King Knew about Christ**

- A. King Agrippa knew about Christ. How did he know?
 1. Acts 26:2-3, Paul is glad that he can speak to someone who understands the customs, the controversies, and the questions that surround the Jews. And no one has ever created more controversy or questions than Jesus.
 2. With a religious movement of this magnitude, division amongst the Jews and hate towards people who follow Christ, Agrippa would know what is taking place. As a king, he would have been well informed of any disputes or disruptions in his kingdom.
- B. Acts 26:26. Not done in a corner? This means the ministry of Jesus was not a secret thing!
 1. Thirty years earlier, hundreds of Jews stood at the court of Pilate shouting, “Crucify!”, “Crucify!” Jesus. A man that was mocked, killed, buried, and rose on the third day by the power of God 1 Corinthians 15:3-6. This was not done in a corner!
 2. Going back to the book of Acts 2:22 – Peter makes this charge in his sermon, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.” These wonders, signs, miracles, the works of Jesus, you’ve seen them, you were there, “you yourselves know!”
 3. With the 12 apostles set in place after the ascension of Jesus, these men would go on to save three thousand souls on the Day of Pentecost baptizing them into the Lord, preaching that this man you crucified, was the Son of God, He is Lord and King. This was not done in a corner.
 4. What I want you to see, is that King Agrippa, KNEW about Jesus.
- C. While most people around the world have heard about Jesus, who is truly following Him?
 1. Do you know Jesus? Or just know about Him? And we are not merely about facts, figures or dates, but we want to know Jesus. To follow Him and obey Him is to know Him.
 2. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord...’ Matthew 7:21.”
 3. We know about Jesus, Agrippa knew about Jesus, but are we going to obey Him?

II. The King Believed the Prophets

- A. “King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets?” Acts 26:27. “I know that you believe.”
 1. How did Paul know? Look back at Acts 26:3. This is a man who claims to understand Judaism. If so, then he would be familiar with the prophets.
 2. But still, how did Paul know, did Agrippa give some type of expression of acknowledgement when Paul gave his testimony?
 3. Whatever the case, Paul knew that Agrippa believed the prophets.

- B. If you and I believe the prophets, then we have to believe in Jesus the Messiah.
1. This quarter I am teaching high school students about the value of Old Testament prophecy, and how it plays a crucial element in proving Jesus as the Messiah. A few examples of what we looked at together in class:
 - a. Isaiah 9:6-7. Our kids need to see that these things were spoken about Jesus 700 years before he was born. King Agrippa would have known about prophecies like this.
 - b. Micah 5:2, 4. I want our kids to know that the birthplace of Jesus was foretold by the prophets centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Again, Agrippa would have been familiar with prophecies like this from Micah.
 2. The prophets of God were given unique information, produced sacred writings, and foretold events about a special man, Jesus the Christ.
 3. “No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God,” 2 Peter 1:19-21. Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel – these men spoke from God!
 4. Do you believe the prophets?
 - a. Micah 5:2 – Born in Bethlehem; Isaiah 7:14 - Born of a virgin; Isaiah 11:1 – be called a Nazarene; Isaiah 53 – a picture of His torture and crucifixion by His enemies.
 - b. And what is amazing is that these prophets wrote this 700 years before these events took place. But the detail and facts of Jesus were correct. Do you believe?
- C. And this belief in the prophets all comes back to why Paul is on trial, Acts 26:6; Acts 26:22. Paul, standing boldly before everyone, telling the story of Jesus: a life that was openly talked about, a life openly lived, a life that was attested by the prophets. Agrippa believed. “*I know you believe King Agrippa.*”

III. The King Understood the Cost

- A. “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian?’” Acts 26:28. But the king understood, the king understood what it means to be a Christian. The king understood the response and cost to Paul’s message.
- B. What might have stood in Agrippa’s way? He knew about Jesus, he believed the prophets.
1. *Could it have been his family?* King Agrippa’s great-grandfather was “Herod the Great,” the man in Matthew 2 who wanted to kill the infant Jesus. Herod was afraid he would lose his dominion to Jesus. Was King Agrippa going to obey a man that his family tried to kill?
 2. *What about tradition?* Agrippa claimed to be a Jew. Was Agrippa going to hold on to the same “religion/faith” that he was brought up in? Or follow the truth that was in Jesus?
 3. *What about pride?* Think about the pressure that Agrippa is under in his conversation with Paul. With prominent men all around, was Agrippa going to give in to the teaching of Paul? Or would he be too proud to admit that he believed in Jesus.
 4. *Was it his sin?* With family, tradition, pride on the line, maybe, maybe he could have given these up. But the pleasure of sin might be his biggest roadblock. The woman he is sharing the throne with, Bernice, is his full-blooded sister. He is living with his sister as his wife. He would have to repent, ending this sinful relationship. Was his sin worth losing his soul?
- C. To become a Christian, the king understood that there are costs in knowing about Jesus; the king understands that there are costs in believing the prophets. It required him to change; not just believe, but, to ‘become’ something; to ‘be’ something.
- D. We have done a “case-study” on King Agrippa. Now the question is yours: What is stopping you from being a Christian?

Conclusion:

1. Paul’s testimony about Jesus and the prophets stand true. And Paul wraps up his defense by saying “I would to God that not only you [Agrippa], but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am – except for these chains” (Acts 26:29).
2. His wish was that everyone in that room would become Christians. Paul’s wish is God’s wish, that everyone here tonight become Christians.
3. The king knew, the king believed, the king understood. Do you know? Do you believe? Do you understand? Don’t be almost persuaded, but have the full-assurance of God. Be a Christian.