

## "Almost Thou Persuaded Me" Acts 26:1-32

Please turn to Acts Chapter 26 in your King James Bible.

The Apostle Paul was passionate about preaching the Gospel. He had a great zeal for Jesus Christ. He said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He pressed toward the mark. Realize what Paul went through. They tried to stop Paul.

Of the Jews, five times he received stripes. He was beaten with rods. He was stoned. He was shipwrecked three times. He was in the deep a night and a day. He journeyed often. He was in many perils of waters, of robbers, of his own countrymen, of heathen. Perils in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren.

He was weary and in pain. He worked early. He worked late. He was hungry. He was thirsty. He fasted often. He was cold and naked at times. All these things increased the passion that Paul had for Jesus Christ. He wasn't stopping. Nothing was going to stop him.

Paul said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Hey, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The light affliction that we go through here is nothing compared to the glory we will see.

Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me."

### Paul's Introduction to King Agrippa

Now, with that said, look at verse 1 in Acts Chapter 26 there.

#### ""Acts 26:1-3

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: 2 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: 3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.""

Paul uses every opportunity to preach the Gospel. He's defending himself to Agrippa, but more importantly, he's going to preach Jesus Christ. And look, maybe you can't see the passion of the Apostle Paul in only the words, but you have to know it was there. And that passion that you have matters. And I'm going to tell you how to get that same passion for Christ.

Paul says to king Agrippa, "I beseech thee to hear me patiently." When we go out to preach the Gospel, we are kind, patient, and loving. Show people you care for them. Listen to them. Ask

them to please listen. Look them in the eye. Let them see the passion for Jesus Christ. "I ask you to hear me patiently." You can see how Paul does this.

## Paul Tells Him About His Life

### ""Acts 26:4-5

My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.""

You're going to see why Paul has this passion for Jesus Christ. From Paul's youth, he lived after the most straitest sect of the Jews religion. Hey, think about your life. Where did you come from? I came from a so-called "Christian" church from my youth up that taught me works to be saved. Use this when preaching the Gospel. Paul was a Pharisee. They believed in works.

I tell people during the Gospel preaching, "I grew up in a church that taught me I had to be good, follow the commandments, get baptized in water, pray every night, repent of my sin, ask forgiveness, or I was going to hell."

And you know what? They see it in my eyes. That church almost sent me to hell. I thought I was doing good. I wasn't. Doing good doesn't get you to heaven. Hey, I don't want you going to hell. God doesn't want you in hell. That's why I'm here right now. God sent me to you today to present His free gift to you that was bought and paid for by Jesus Christ.

Everything that needed to be done for you to get to heaven has already been done. Jesus did it. And I want to show you right now how to receive that free gift.

I'm following the outline of the way that Paul preached right there in Acts Chapter 26.

## Paul Is Being Judged For Serving God

### ""Acts 26:6-7

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.""

Paul is being judged for the hope of the promise God made unto our fathers. King Agrippa is listening. He's one of them. God promised them a Savior. He gave them hope of a Savior. That Savior would come and save them from their sins.

### ""Acts 26:8-9

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.""

And Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree, Him hath God raised up. Paul is telling king Agrippa that God did raise Jesus from the dead. King Agrippa is thought to be the grandson of king Herod who tried to kill Jesus as a young child.

Paul tells him that he himself thought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. If you've ever believed in a works based salvation, that's you too. I thought I was working my way to heaven. THAT IS CONTRARY TO JESUS CHRIST.

Now Paul is going to tell him more about what he did.

## Paul Persecuted the Saints and Put Them to Death

### ""Acts 26:10-11

Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.""

Paul is telling king Agrippa that he was fully against Jesus Christ. He shut up the saints, people saved by Jesus Christ, in prison. The chief priests gave him that authority. He had the saints put to death over Jesus Christ. Paul approved of killing them.

He punished them often in every synagogue. He went after the saints with everything that he had. He thought he was doing right. He thought he was doing good. He compelled them to blaspheme God. Paul was exceedingly mad against them. He was so mad he persecuted them even unto strange cities. He went after them in far away cities.

But then things changed. Watch what Paul says next.

### ""Acts 26:12-13

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.""

## Paul Meets Jesus Christ

Paul goes on his way to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. In the middle of the day, Paul sees a light from heaven. That light is above the brightness of the sun. There is no brighter light than the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Paul sees the light. That shines round about him and those that journeyed with him.

You might remember when you finally saw the light and heard the words of the Gospel, the words of Jesus Christ. Share your story. Paul is sharing his story right here. When you preach the Gospel, if you need to persuade someone, use your story. You've got one. We've all got one. Paul has one.

### ""Acts 26:14-15

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. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.""

Notice that they fell to the earth. When Jesus shows up, we'll all fall to the earth. He's that great. We'll fall on our knees just as Abraham did. Just as Moses trembled. Just as Joshua did when the Lord stood there with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua fell on his face. "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." Daniel fell on his face. Ezekiel fell on his face. Paul fell to the earth. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. When Jesus shows up, you'll know. And Paul is telling king Agrippa he knew Jesus was there.

Jesus says to Paul, "I am Jesus who thou persecutest." Hey Paul, you are persecuting me when you persecute my people.

## **The More Dangerous Man**

Hey, we've been going out preaching the Gospel in West Louisville almost every day, 38 out of 39 days since opening 10/13. One man not too long ago warned me that I was in a dangerous area. Let's say you have two men. One man has Satan with him. The other man has God with him. Who is more dangerous? I am not afraid. The Lord is with me. He said he will never leave me. I know he's with me.

One man lightly threatened me by asking, "What if you died right now?" I told him that I would die when the Lord is ready for me to die. And I won't die until he's ready to take me. Jesus warns Paul that he is persecuting his people. You don't want to persecute God's people because you are persecuting Jesus. He shows up. You fall on your face trembling. I don't care who you are. The devil and his devils fear Jesus.

Paul is afraid on his face to the earth. Watch what Jesus says next. And keep in mind that Paul is telling this to king Agrippa.

### **""Acts 26:16**

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;""

Jesus tells Paul to get up and stand on his feet. He is choosing Paul to be a minister and witness both of these things which he has seen and of those things in which he will appear to Paul. And Paul is doing that right now to king Agrippa. That's what Paul is telling him.

### **""Acts 26:17-18**

Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.""

Paul is telling him that Jesus saved him and sent Paul to king Agrippa. We tell people when preaching the Gospel that God sent us to you. Did God send us? Yes He did. He said, "Go ye therefore and preach the Gospel." God sent me to you. That's what I say. And those who believe there's a God will hear and listen. They know it to be true. And they listen.

## Paul Preaches With Passion

Paul's preaching all of this truth to king Agrippa with a passion because he knows what's on the line: heaven or hell. It's Paul's story from his own life.

Why has Paul come to king Agrippa? "To open his eyes, to turn him from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that he may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ." It's not your works. Hey, in West Louisville, we run into people who have killed others or have done horrible things often.

A woman not too long ago told me many years ago that her husband had beat her for much of her life. They were both drinking one night. He started beating her and choking her. And she stabbed him in the heart with a butcher knife. She told me she loved that man. She received the forgiveness of sins because she put her faith in Jesus Christ.

An older man sitting in a chair at a bottom apartment with sunglasses on the other day believed in Jesus Christ and I saw a single tear running down his face. Jesus opened his eyes and turned that man from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, and he received the remission of sins in a moment.

The moment that man put his faith in Jesus he was forgiven of every sin he's ever committed and ever will commit. Only Jesus can do that.

And king Agrippa can do the same thing. It's up to him. Paul is giving it all he's got. He's laying it all out there on the line for king Agrippa to make the choice. Paul continues.

## Paul Was Obedient To Christ

### ""Acts 26:19-20

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.""

Paul tells king Agrippa that he was obedient to Jesus Christ. And remember, Paul was just prior to that a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injured the saints. And immediately Paul went from the darkness to the light just as you and I did when we got saved. We saw the light of Jesus Christ. We believed. He saved us forever without a chance of hell ever again.

Paul says he showed them in Damascus, Jerusalem, through the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles. Paul preached for them to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Paul changed his mind, turned to God for salvation, was saved, and then did the works meet for repentance. And Paul preached the same thing.

Just as you and I have heard the Gospel and believed the Gospel. We should do the work God has asked us to do. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We aren't saved by our works. Get saved and then do the works. Why? So others can be saved.

And Paul is preaching the Gospel and doing those good works at every opportunity. You have those same opportunities throughout every day. You have so many opportunities that this church right here gives you. Take them. Be like Paul. Show that passion to the people. Paul continues.

## **They Tried to Kill Paul**

### **"" Acts 26:21**

For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.""

Hey, the Jews didn't like Paul preaching Jesus. In West Louisville, a woman threatened to burn the church down and all of us with it. But that's the minority in West Louisville. She thinks she's in the majority, but she isn't. She posted our information on social media, and I and Nathan didn't receive one call. The people in West Louisville are sick of the evil. They want it gone too.

Her neighbors received the Gospel. The people down the street from her received the Gospel. The next street over received the Gospel. The other street received it. Hundreds are receiving the Gospel. And we will get it in the thousands and tens of thousands and I hope hundreds of thousands but that's a long way off. We will win.

And God will take over West Louisville Lord willing. I know that. And that place will change. I was told I wasn't welcome in West Louisville, but that woman doesn't know God owns it and he welcomes me there. God owns it. Hundreds have already welcomed us.

People will want you dead when you preach Jesus. But God doesn't. God wins. God protected Paul. They wanted Paul dead. Not too long ago Nathan and I heard a young teenage boy rack a gun as he walked away from us. God protects us. I want that young man to get saved. King Agrippa is listening.

## **Paul is Preaching What The Prophets Preached**

### **"" Acts 26:22-23**

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: 23 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.""

Paul says, "God helped me. I obtained help from God." He says, "And I continue unto this day." I'm witnessing to you right now king Agrippa. And I'm not saying anything different than what the prophets and Moses preached. The prophets knew a Savior was coming. Moses knew God would send a Savior. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

And that Savior, king Agrippa, is Jesus Christ. He suffered. He died. He was buried. He was the first to rise from the dead. He fulfills the feast of firstfruits. He is risen from the dead. And because of that, you can be saved by Jesus right now. Jesus is the light unto all nations.

Hey, look, that's tough to turn down right there. Paul is preaching it with passion. When you come with the truth, God is there with you convincing people. Let them see it in your eyes. Let them see that passion for Jesus Christ.

Now, what will some people say when you bring the Gospel? Watch what happens next.

## **Festus Interrupts Paul**

### **""Acts 26:24**

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

As Paul is preaching, Festus can't help himself and interrupts Paul. You'll get that while preaching the Gospel.

I want to bring up a young woman named Lynda who has been coming to church with us now since the start. She has three children named Aniyah, Nina, and Amora. I knocked on her door in October. She didn't answer until we were at the next door. She decided to come out. I went back over to her. I was preaching the Gospel to her and right in the middle of it another young lady comes over and accuses her of taking her package from Amazon. Lynda wasn't too happy.

I had to let her get her composure back. And preached the rest of the Gospel to her. She got saved. And her oldest daughter, Aniyah, 7 years old, just got saved at church this past Sunday. Thank God. Please pray for them because the attacks have already started against her.

I know those attacks and that interruption are coming from Satan, but it didn't work. We're going to fight for Lynda. She fought past that interruption. And now we see Festus doing the same thing by interrupting Paul.

He says that Paul is mad or crazy with a loud voice. Interrupts the Gospel preaching. Paul responds with respect. Keep that in mind always when preaching the Gospel. Be patient. Don't let an interruption stop you.

## **Paul Accused of Being Crazy But Responds Respectfully**

### **""Acts 26:25**

But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.""

Paul says, "I'm not crazy. I'm not mad. I speak the words of truth and soberness." Hey, I'm telling you the truth. I told a man the other day while preaching the Gospel, "Deep down you know what I'm telling you is the truth. This is the word of God. He gave you the life you have

right now and He wants to give you everlasting life right now. You know this is true." And that man believed in His Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And watch what Paul says next because he said the same thing.

**""Acts 26:26-27**

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. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.""

Paul says, "King Agrippa, you know these things are true. None of these things are hidden. For this thing was not done in a corner." King Agrippa has heard of Jesus. Jesus did miracles out in the open. He died in front of many. He arose from the dead and appeared to many including Paul, an eye witness. Paul is telling him these things are true.

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Paul is urging him to believe. We do the same when we preach the Gospel. Do you believe this? This is the word of God. God doesn't lie to you. Do you believe God? We urge them to believe. I know you believe this.

## **"Do You Believe This?"**

At the end of Paul's Gospel preaching, he asks, "Do you believe this?" We do the same. Do you believe that Jesus can save you from your sins right now and forever? And we wait for their answer as Paul waited for king Agrippa to answer.

**""Acts 26:28-29**

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. 29 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.""

Paul wanted that man to be saved. But that man said, "Almost. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Almost." Nearly saved but not saved yet. Paul almost persuaded that man. He gave it his best shot. God knows you and I. He knows who will get the job done.

If you'll get out there and consistently preach the Gospel with that same passion and desire that the Apostle Paul had, God will send you the people. They will come walking right down the street at you. He will convince them to come out of that door as Lynda did.

Did king Agrippa get saved later in his life? I hope so. If I had to take a guess, he did. Our job is to do what Paul did. Do our absolute best persuading people to believe the Gospel. There's nothing to lose and everything to gain.

I was out preaching the Gospel in Sacramento, California many months ago. It was 109 degrees. I was in a black suit. It was hot. I knocked on the door once. Very nice home. Million dollar home. I will always remember this house. I heard kids and a dog inside. I waited extra. I



knocked again. I thought I heard footsteps coming to the door. No answer. I waited extra again. I started walking away and down the driveway.

A man comes out of the house saying, "Hey, do you want some water?" Yeah I wanted some water. He gives me some water. I was very hot and thirsty. He listens to the Gospel. He gets saved. Praise God.

He asks me, "You know why I listened to you today?" I said, "No, but please tell me." He said, "A man like you, you remind me of him, came to this same door 10 years ago. He was Baptist like you. I told him I didn't believe what he was saying back then. And that man told me that if I didn't believe before I died that I would end up in hell. And I remembered that. I was listening to the Bible on my phone in the garage when you showed up."

He says, "That's why I listened to you today. I don't want to end up in hell. Thank God I won't." And I said, "Yes, thank God."

### **Did King Agrippa Get Saved Later On?**

So, did king Agrippa get saved later on? I hope so. It took 10 years for that man but he got it.

#### **""Isaiah 55:11**

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.""

God sent Paul to king Agrippa. He was almost persuaded. Paul says he hopes that all that hear him that day were both almost and altogether such as I am. Paul's story led people to believe. Use your story. I use mine. Preach the Gospel. Go straight through the interruptions. Preach it with a passion.

A man, about 5 years ago, I still remember the house, in Shelbyville, Kentucky, was an Atheist. My wife was doing her best to persuade him. My wife has a passion for the Gospel. I tell people if I wanted someone to be saved and I couldn't go, I would send my wife. Why? Because of the passion she has for preaching the Gospel.

She wants people to be saved. She tried to persuade that Atheist man. He said, "I can see how passionate you are about this. I can see how you believe this. I can see it. But I don't believe it. I appreciate your kindness and your wanting me to be saved."

And my wife told him that if he didn't believe that he would end up in hell just as that Baptist man 10 years ago told that man that listened to me. These things aren't coincidences. God does this.

Hey, that Atheist man was changed some that day. He just didn't know it yet. Maybe he'll be saved soon. I pray that he will be saved. God's word does not return void. It shall accomplish that which God pleases.

Almost persuaded. Give it your best out there. Show people how much you care. Preach it with a passion. Tell them you want them to get to heaven. It's so easy. Please listen. Say please. Paul said please. Almost persuaded is much better than not hearing at all. Give people the chance. Persuade them to believe.

And no matter what happens, you're doing what God asked you to do. He is pleased.

Let's pray.