

Out at Home

by Russell DeLong

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being completely persuaded and committed to God, rather than just being almost.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:22, Matthew 19:21, John 18:38, Acts 26:28, Hebrews 3:12

Topics: "Spiritual Failure", "Commitment To God"

Description

Russell DeLong delivers a powerful sermon on the fine line between success and failure, victory and defeat, using vivid sports analogies to illustrate the concept of being 'out at home' - so near yet so far. He emphasizes the tragic consequences of being almost persuaded but ultimately lost, drawing parallels to biblical figures like Saul, Pilate, and the rich young ruler who were close to making the right choice but fell short. DeLong urges listeners not to be called out by the Great Umpire one inch from home plate, but to fully commit their will, mind, and heart to God to avoid being 'almost but lost.'

Transcript

Scripture: Acts 26

Imagine this situation. It is the seventh and final game of the World Series, each team

having won three games. It is the ninth inning; the score is three to nothing in favor of the Yankees; there are three Giants on the bases; the batter has three balls and two strikes on him. The next ball is hit squarely. The player rounds first base, goes to second, streaks to third, heads for home, slides for the plate. The umpire cries, "You're out." Had he been safe, the game and the series would have been won. Had he arrived at home a split second sooner, or had he gone eighteen inches farther, he would have been safe, the game would have been won, the series won, and the player a hero. But -- he was a fraction of a second late and inches short.

Out at home!

So near and yet so far!

Had the player struck out, or flied out, or merely hit a single, there would have been no

psychological buildup. But to hit a home-run ball, to slam a winning blow, and then to be called out by inches and seconds causes a tremendous letdown. Almost a home run -- almost a winning hit -- almost a

hero -- but out at home!

The margin between success and failure, victory and defeat is very small sometimes.

We are familiar with the expression, "A miss is as good as a mile." If you don't hit the target, you've failed -- you've missed. But how tragic to lose by a hair -- to just miss!

In a race to be beaten by a hand's breadth -- to just miss breaking the tape -- is pathetic.

Almost a winner!

A horse wins a race by a nose. The runner-up loses by that small margin. Just a nose from victory and the fabulous purse! Almost a victor!

To lose a basketball game by a basket, or a hockey game by one goal, or a football game by a single point, is maddening. To be so near and yet lose! To be so good and yet to be defeated! Forever the record book carries the loss. Almost but not quite!

Out at home!

To miss a train by a minute, to flunk an examination by a percentage point, to lose an election by a handful of votes is distressing. Almost but not quite -- a miss, a failure, and a loss! It's in the record.

Out at home!

Aaron Burr missed being President by one electoral college vote. Henry Wallace missed

Re-nomination for the Vice-Presidency (and would have been President) by a half dozen votes. Had not Charles Evans Hughes lost California, he would have been President. William Jennings Bryan lost the Presidency in three elections, and Thomas E. Dewey twice. They almost made it. So near -- and yet so far!

Out at home!

Saul lost after he had the spiritual game partly won. Pilate almost set Jesus free, but instead washed his hands. Judas almost made it, but died a traitor and a suicide.

The rich young ruler came running to Jesus. He wanted eternal life. He kept the

commandments. He was moral and law-abiding. He met Jesus and was in the very presence of the Saviour. He was willing to pay the complete cost except one thing. A thousand items he would yield -- one thing only he would keep. Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest." Think of it! In the presence of eternal life and to lose! Almost -- just one thing! But he refused, turned his back on Jesus, and went away sorrowful. So near and yet so far!

Out at home!

Almost -- but lost!

St. Paul stood before King Agrippa and gave his stirring testimony. When he concluded, the king was convinced intellectually and was deeply moved emotionally. He cried out, Paul, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Paul said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether" persuaded (Acts 26: 28, 29).

Imagine what would have happened to the Early Church if King Agrippa had accepted

Christ. His mind and heart were agreed. But he failed to put his will on Christ's side. Almost-but not altogether!

Out at home!

It is pathetic to lose a game by a run, an examination by a point, a race by a nose; but the most tragic, most heart-rending of all life's experiences is to lose one's soul by a hair's breadth.

To be the son of godly parents, to be the object of many prayers, to be moved on by the

Holy Spirit, to know what is right, to feel deeply the sense of guilt and condemnation, to hunger for spiritual peace, and with tears flowing to say the final "No" is the most horrible thing in all the universe.

To spurn a father's pleadings, to crush a mother's loving heart, to refuse all overtures of

mercy, to wade willfully through the shed blood of Jesus, to resist the Holy Spirit and say the conclusive, decisive "No" is terrible.

So near-and yet so far!

Out at home!

Almost -- not quite -- only an inch -- only a second!

Friend, whomever God has this sermon of warning for, take the margin -- go one inch

farther -- take up the slack -- don't be lost just in sight of home. Almost is not enough; add just a bit-- be altogether.

Don't be called out by the Great Umpire one inch from home plate.

Put your will behind what you know is right. Put your will on the side of your hungry heart. Give God your mind and your heart -- and then your will. Be completely, entirely, wholly persuaded.

Don't turn back after having come so far.

Don't be called out at home.

A hymn has been written illustrating the awful truth of this sermon. While the choir sings, why don't you kneel by your radio and turn "almost" into "altogether"? Come to Christ wholeheartedly and completely.

Listen to the first stanza:

"Almost persuaded now to believe;
Almost persuaded Christ to receive;
Seems now some soul to say,
"Go, Spirit, go Thy way;
Some more convenient day
On Thee I'll call."

Here is the final, tragic stanza. Listen.

"Almost persuaded," harvest is past!

"Almost persuaded," doom comes at last!

"Almost" cannot avail; "Almost" is but to fail!

Sad, sad, that bitter wail"

Almost -- but lost!"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/out-at-home/>

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