

Week of Meetings 1986-01

by Stan Ford

The sermon emphasizes the true meaning of being a Christian, highlighting commitment, conviction, and the dangers of being 'almost' a believer through the stories of King Agrippa and the Apostle Paul.

Duration: 42:16

Scripture: Deuteronomy 17:18, Deuteronomy 23:23, Acts 26:27-28

Topics: "Full Commitment", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of fully committing to Christianity rather than being 'almost' persuaded. He uses the example of a man who recognized the truth but resisted it, ultimately leading to his downfall. The preacher warns against the dangers of being complacent and highlights the societal issues that arise when people reject the teachings of Jesus. He urges the audience to fully embrace Christianity and not just give it partial attention, drawing parallels to the need for complete satisfaction in hunger, thirst, and rest.

Transcript

I heard an old, old story How a Savior came from glory How He gave His life on Calvary To save a wretch like me I heard about His precious blood's atoning Then I repented of my sins And He plunged me, He loved me Someone here for the first time Who's never been to a service at the Northgate Chapel If you are, we have a little packet of material We'd like for you to have No hands Good to see a number out this morning To enjoy the Word of God And I meant to mention also Today is Bulletin Day If you didn't get yours They are on the table in the back Our brother Gene is absent today Well, I don't think anyone was back there giving them out But in that little folder You'll find a little folder Sharing the Word Tells you about the Gideons And there's something else there That looks pretty good too There's something about eating I don't know what it is, but I like it It's a pizza party 6.30 So on You look at it And you might want to get in on that Well, it's a real joy to have our brother with us today Stand forward And turn the service over to him I wonder if we could turn together Into the Acts of the Apostles, please And I'd like to read just a verse or two From Chapter 26 And as soon as I say that You know what's on my heart Chapter 26 of the Acts of the Apostles By the way, I see you haven't changed at all Since last I was here Last time I threatened to preach one night from that end To make sure you'd all be in the front seats I'll have to do it before the day's over, you know I'll have to do it Well, it's nice to see you Acts, Chapter 26, if we may please Verse 27, for the sake of time King Agrippa May I please remind you That this is the last of the Jewish kings The Jews haven't had a king since this day They won't have one until he whose right it is to reign Will reign But

this is the last of the Jewish kings 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 both May the Lord just add His blessing to us once again As we consider His word Just a word of prayer Dear Lord, our hearts have been moved As we have been hearing How thou hast worked through the Gideons And thou hast bled We ask this morning that as that same word is preached That each one of us We pray thee, O Lord Amen Amen I wonder if I may ask a question And I do trust that not one of you will be offended by it But I must ask it It's simply this Are you a Christian?

Are you a Christian? Oh, I've another question It's almost as important It is not only Are you a Christian? What sort of Christian are you? It is not necessary for me to remind you In a Bible-loving church like this That although we speak about being Christians And we talk about it in such a light fashion The word itself only occurs three times in the Bible You were taught that in Sunday school I'm not telling you something new You know that the name, the word, Christian Only occurs three times in the book That has all to do about Christians And so I think you will grant me That surely Those three occasions must instruct us As to what a Christian really is You remember that it occurs first of all In the Acts of the Apostles In the 11th chapter and in verse 26 They were first called Christians At Antioch Now it's possible to be called a Christian Without being one You know that's true May I remind you of a very ridiculous story That I expect I've told you before But if I haven't, I should have And if I have, I'm still going to tell it But years ago, you know When the father of the present Greek Oh, by the way You must forgive me For all my stories being English But I don't know any American ones But years ago When the father of our present queen Was just a boy He and his brother Were playing in Windsor Great Park Near to Windsor Castle where they lived Now while Windsor Great Park Is owned by the monarch It's open for anyone But of course these two boys The princes of the realm As they played Nearby was an English bobby Complete with helmets Bleachments And as they kicked their hole One of them up with his foot And kicked the hole And it went towards A little fella who was walking through Windsor Great Park There was a bit of difference Between him and the two princes Because his seat was nearly out of his pants And he had journals all over his face And his hair was as ruffled as a boy's can be But what boy could resist a ball?

And as the ball came to him He up with his foot and Right through the air it went And over went the policeman's helmet Now you might do that to an American policeman But you can't do that to a British policeman And straight away He grabbed the three boys Took his notebook out What's your name? Police sir I'm Prince George Where do you live? Windsor Castle What's your name? I'm Prince Edward Where do you live? Windsor Castle And all the while the little boy With the dirty pants and the seat out of his pants Was listening Night over Suddenly the policeman looked at him And said, what's your name?

Call Governor he said Call Call I'm the Duke of Wellington I said He might call himself the Duke of Wellington But the only way you can be the son of a king Is by being born the son of a king We might call ourselves a Christian But the only way we can be a Christian Is by being born again And here the first mention of that They were called Christians But what was it that made them Christians? Surely it was this That here were a people Who were committed to the Lord May I read just what that great chapter says of them?

It says that here were a people Who believed and turned To the Lord Here were a people, verse 23 That they were exalted with purpose of heart To cleave to the Lord Here were a people, verse 24 They were

added to the Lord Have you noticed? Not added to the church Sir, if you will permit me Not added to the Gideons Here were a people Who were added to the Lord They were committed to Him May I ask? Have you believed? Have you turned? May I ask please? Are you cleaving to the Lord?

What does the Lord mean in your life? That's the first mention of a Christian They were a people who were committed to the Lord The second mention is the verse that we are going to consider Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian So a person not only has to be committed But a person has to be convinced about the Lord Committed to the Lord And convinced about the Lord Almost thou persuadest me You see It's not enough to say that my mother loves the Lord It's not enough to say my father loves the Lord It's not enough to say I was born in a Christian home Born in a Christian There has to be a time when we ourselves Are a people Not only committed to the Lord But convinced about the Lord It affects not only our feet It affects our head Our mind Our convictions The last mention of course as you know of a Christian Was written by Peter When Peter took his pen and wrote that sixteenth verse Of the fourth chapter of his first letter He spoke about those Who because they were Christians They suffered If any man suffer as a Christian Oh he goes on and says Not suffering as a murderer Or an evil doer Not suffering as a thief Or a busy body in other people's matters But if ye suffer as a Christian Happy are ye And if words tell me anything These words tell me that a person who is a Christian Is not only a person committed to the Lord Convinced about the Lord But he's controlled by the Lord Here's a man whose life is such that you can say of it He's not a murderer He's not a thief He's not an evil doer He's not a busy body He's a follower of the Saviour Ask again as I ask myself Are we Christians?

Are we those who have committed ourselves to Him? Are we those who are convinced about Him? Are we those who are controlled by Him? Now, in the story that we have read a few verses of When Paul stands for his life Before the last of the Jewish kings We have two classes of people We have a person who's a Christian We have a person who's not a Christian And I want us to look at them as men I trust before we've finished Each one of us will be able to examine our hearts That we will know where we're found today And make our decision If we've not trusted Christ To trust Him First of all Let's think for a moment Of this king King Agrippa Now there are one or two very strange things about him One or two things that really When we casually read the story We're apt to forget May I remind you first of all That here was a king Who recognized the truth Oh no He was no hot and tot He was no Disbeliever in God Here was a man Who recognized the truth Do you remember the first words That the apostles said to him When King Agrippa said to him Thou art permitted to speak for thyself He looked into the face of the king And he said I find myself happy this day King Agrippa Because I can answer to thee Concerning these things Because I know thee To be an expert In all questions Concerning the Jews An expert In all questions Concerning the Jews My friends I haven't time to go into its depth But may I remind you of it If you turn with me in thought Back into the book of Deuteronomy You will remember That God laid down certain laws Concerning who should be a king in Israel God said to the king that came to Israel That he had to be a man That 17th chapter And I believe it's about the 18th verse of Deuteronomy God said about that king That he had to be a man Who would write Who would read Who would learn Who would keep And do all the law of the priests and the Levites And here was a man That looked into the face of King Agrippa The apostle Paul And said I know you're an expert Oh you've read the law You've read the prophets You not only have read them But you have learned them by heart Oh come on now you Christians here today If I was to start off into the books of the All we can read He wasn't a Christian All we've been reading today He was a man who knew all the Old Testament I say he was a man who not only recognized the truth But you know the apostle Paul looked at him and said King Agrippa Believest thou the prophets?

I know thou believest What? Is it possible to believe the prophets and not be a Christian? Well that's what these words say Here was a king I say King Agrippa If he were here today I would ask him a question I would look at him and say King Agrippa tell me sir tell me Do you believe the prophets? Do you believe what was written 700 years Before Jesus was ever born When Miter took his pen and wrote That Jesus should be born in Bethlehem Do you believe that? Believest thou the prophets?

I know thou believest He believed Miter 5 and 12 Do you believe that when Jesus should be born That would not be the beginning of him That before he stepped into this world And came here as a babe In Bethlehem's barn That as our brother read to us in the 8th chapter of Proverbs this morning He lived Believest thou the prophets? Oh yes I believe that 5th chapter of Miter I believe that he existed For he was from everlasting I say believest thou the prophets? Do you believe? Do you believe indeed what Zachariah dared to say That there would come a time when the Messiah Would be sold for 30 pieces of silver That was written 500 years before Jesus came Believest thou the prophets?

I know thou believest Oh King Agrippa do you believe Do you believe in the words of Zachariah 12 and 10 That they would pierce his soul 500 years before I believe Oh I say let's come nearer our time Let's remember the words indeed of Isaiah What was it Isaiah said? He dared say that he was one Who would suffer for our sins Wounded for our transgressions Bruised for our iniquities But not only would he die but he would be buried Not only would he die and be buried But he would be raised from amongst the dead Not only this But when he died he would die in the midst of criminals And he would make his grave for the wicked and the rich and his debt Believest thou the prophets?

I know thou believest Listen friend It is possible to believe intellectually all those things I meet hundreds of people All over the world Speak to them of the good words of the great Jesus Christ Long ago called Jesus They believed he went about doing good They believed We had a dear old brother Who in rather a remarkable somewhat true Believest thou this in? It wasn't someone else said he wasn't a Christian He said it Although he recognized the truth For the tragedy of this man Is that the man who recognized the truth Was the man who resisted the truth Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian Almost My friend If you're hungry Almost eating doesn't fill you does it?

If you're thirsty Almost drinking doesn't quench your thirst does it? If you're tired Almost sleeping doesn't restore you to strength again does it? If you're traveling on a train Almost catching the train doesn't take you to your destination I think almost is one of the bitterest words in the English vocabulary Almost Almost He said almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian This is the story of near achievement And yet total loss This is the story of a Moses surely Who blazed a good trail Who climbed Mount Nebo Who saw the promised land But never entered it Oh my friend Almost is not enough Almost Is there someone here?

Oh please some of you I remember As long as you don't ask me afterwards what's my name I remember your faces Some of you I can remember where I saw last And how you stood with me and the children As we had the children's services here those years ago But some of you I've never met before Am I talking to someone who says this morning I'm almost a Christian I've been going along there so often I've heard the gospel preached so frequently I've been stirred in my being I would say amen to the historical truths That they preach there in the gospel chapel And yet you've never trusted the Lord The man who recognized the truth The man who resisted the truth But please the man who renounced the truth For there came a time When he committed Paul to prison When he committed Paul to prison And in committing him to prison Told the whole world No Christ I shudder that the day will ever dawn In anyone's experience When we will renounce the truth But against him Alongside him if you will There stands another man Not a king But as

you gaze at him With the chains on his hands and feet Chains that made him say I wish you were just like me Except these bonds Oh what a man you see Paul the preacher Was given to us Ledge of the Holy Word And as we look at him All we're bound to ask the question Is he a Christian?

This prisoner What is he to say to us? He leaves us in no doubt you know He tells us that first of all He was a man who thought For in the words of verse 9 He says Verily I thought with myself That I ought to do many things Contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth He looks back over his life And he remembers the time When he gave some consideration To the claims of Christ He thought indeed of the truth Of the Word of God For he was a Pharisee of Pharisees And yet in his thinking He was led to say no to Jesus Christ But he was not only a man who thought I say Could I say he was a man who thought?

Who thought?

There are many a man or a woman Who thinks about the claims of Christ And says not for me There are some men and women Who not only think of the claims of Christ And say not for me But openly will stand And will fight against the things of Christ We are living in a day of a sick society Oh please I find no joy whatsoever In opening my newspaper And turning the knob of my wireless Looking at my television And hearing the news I find no joy In going through a list of things That is breaking up our nations In my country the same as yours The breakup of marriage The increase of drugs The drinking among young people All around us we are finding Folk indeed who can't be trusted Whose word is useless Prisons full In lands where the gospel has been preached I can understand that happening in

China I can understand that happening in Russia I can understand that happening in lands Where the name of Jesus has never been heard But in our lands I look and I say Oh there are those Who not only think about Christ But there are those who fight against Christ Those who go forth and like Paul say And many of the saints I shut up in prison To stifle down the voice of that Which is righteous and good But something happened The man who fought And the man who fought Was the man who fell The man who fell For he saw a light above the brightness Of the noonday sun And he says And when we were all Fallen to the ground All fallen to the ground My friend If there is one thing That I am more persuaded It's the need of our day It's a need I was speaking at a school I spoke to this crowd of

youngsters First of all of course I spoke to the little ones And then I just took two or three minutes And spoke to the seniors there And I just used a little illustration That I sometimes use And I may have used in schools around here But I whipped out a piece of chalk And on the board I said Oh when I went to school We used to have arithmetic Of course they are very posh today They call it mathematics But you know The master he took his piece of chalk And he drew a little horizontal line And he said Boys don't forget that means And they got it right And then he took his chalk And he took two horizontal lines And that means And they got it right And then he put a piece of chalk And he put a perpendicular line And a horizontal line And that means Then we spoke of the little verse in James

What is your life Is it minus Is it equal Or is it plus And I reminded them That there's lots of folk I need to say I told them of an occasion When I was in South Wales And we were inviting folk to the service And I knocked the door And spoke to a good gentleman And asked him to the service And he poked me in the chest And he said I'm as good as anyone that goes there And I poked him back And I hope I poked him back a bit harder And Paul suddenly My friend A man Who was thinking A man who was fighting A man who was fallen But oh hallelujah A man who followed For he looks up into the face of King Agrippa In verse 19 and he says And I was not disobedient to that heavenly vision May I ask you today King Agrippa

The apostle Paul Who would represent you The man who recognizes the truth But

resisted it And renounced it Or the man who renounced it Resisted it And hallelujah Then received it Are you a Christian If you are If there's been a time When you took Jesus Christ as your saviour What sort of Christian are you What sort of Christian I was not disobedient How easy it is To disobey the Lord When we've even trusted Him And asked Him to be our saviour All that we hear may be found as a people Who are not only those who receive the Lord But those who follow Him Oh my friend Our time has come to a close May I ask you Are you a Christian What sort of Christian are you All that we may be found as those Who have taken Christ as our saviour And are seeking day by day To crown Him as our sovereign That we may be followers And if by chance there's someone here And you've never

trusted the Lord You say I'm not sure that I am a Christian Can I help you I took from the shelves And the little study I'm using A few of these little tracts I didn't ask permission to take them sir But I took them Not by way of that But as a sign from you Of your willingness to talk about these things I'd love to open my Bible And point you to my saint I'd rather speak to a lady My wife's here There's plenty of sisters here Trained counselors Plenty of brethren You know much better than I No virtue in coming to me If we can help you find Christ Oh God and Father We bless Thee together for Thy Word We thank Thee that You leave us in no doubt whatsoever That it's possible for us to know Thee The only true God And Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent And we don't want to be like that Last King

of the Jews We don't want to be folk who give some outward assent to things Who recognize truth We don't want to be those who resist it But oh we long tonight to say That we might be the receivers of that truth And as the receivers of the truth The recipients of the salvation That Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross To secure for us Bless us then we pray And as we part one from another And not from Thee Make Thy face to shine upon us And grant us Thy peace For Jesus Christ

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