

Acts 29 – Week 11 – Almost a Christian – Bible Study Helps

Title: Almost a Christian: Learning from Paul's Defense Before King Agrippa

Sermon Summary: This sermon examines Acts 26, where the Apostle Paul presents his testimony before King Agrippa, demonstrating the essential structure and approach for sharing the Gospel. The message emphasizes that every believer has a powerful story to tell—who they were before Christ, how they met Jesus, and how He changed their life. Paul's approach shows the importance of making the Gospel personal, asking direct questions, and reasoning with people about their eternal destiny. The sermon challenges believers to be ready to share their testimony at any opportunity, recognizing that some people may come close to salvation but never cross the line, like King Agrippa who said he was "almost persuaded" to become a Christian. The urgency of the Gospel is highlighted—almost saved means lost, and later rarely comes.

Key Points:

- Paul consistently used his personal testimony as the framework for sharing the Gospel, starting with who he was before meeting Christ
- When given an open door to speak, believers should be ready and even happy to share their story
- A testimony should include three parts: life before Christ, how you met Christ, and the purpose/mission He gave you
- Paul made his message personal by speaking directly to King Agrippa, not just addressing the crowd generally
- Effective witnessing involves asking questions and engaging people in conversation rather than just downloading information
- Paul reasoned with people about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, pressing them to make a decision
- King Agrippa represents the tragedy of being "almost persuaded"—close to salvation but ultimately lost
- We should never assume people don't know about Jesus; most have heard but haven't responded
- Every believer can and should share their testimony, regardless of how dramatic or undramatic their conversion story may seem
- Creating a personal testimony tract or written story can be an effective evangelism tool
- When witnessing is interrupted by distractions or objections, address them directly but quickly return to the Gospel message

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 26:1-32 (primary focus)
- Acts 25:23-27 (context)
- Romans 1 (referenced regarding everyone knowing there is a God)
- The Ten Commandments (used as a witnessing tool)

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Stories:

- Paul's conversion testimony on the road to Damascus, including the blinding light and Jesus speaking to him directly
- A personal story of being invited to speak at a friend's wedding when the friend said "say anything you want," giving him an open door to share the Gospel with all his old friends
- A missionary's effective Gospel tract showing his before and after photos as a former Satanist turned preacher
- A personal testimony of attending a Baptist church as a lost person, leaving thinking they were crazy, but eventually returning and getting saved
- A witnessing story with teenagers where the "ringleader" was identified and focus was placed on that person while the group listens
- The illustration of asking people if they've ever lied or stolen, getting them to admit they're a "liar and thief" by their own admission, then reasoning about God's judgment

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Discipleship Questions

How does the testimony of Apostle Paul before King Agrippa in Acts 26 challenge our understanding of how personal testimonies can serve as powerful tools for evangelism?

In what ways can reflecting on our own spiritual journey and testimony enhance our ability to engage others in conversations about faith?

How did Apostle Paul's knowledge of Jewish customs and history aid in his approach to preaching the Gospel to King Agrippa, and how can we apply this strategy in our interactions with others?

Considering King Agrippa's near-conversion, how does this passage illustrate the role of free will in accepting or rejecting the message of Jesus Christ?

What are the lessons we can learn about perseverance in faith from Paul's multiple imprisonments and trials, especially in the face of false accusations?

How can we ensure that our testimonies glorify God without glorifying our past mistakes or sinful life before meeting Christ?

What significance does the phrase 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?' hold in the broader context of faith in God's power?

Reflecting on Festus' interruption, how can we prepare ourselves to handle distractions and challenges when sharing our faith with others?

In what practical ways can we develop the confidence and boldness displayed by Paul in openly sharing the Gospel, despite facing opposition?

How does Paul's conviction in fulfilling the mission given by Jesus Christ inspire us to pursue our own God-given purposes with passion and dedication?

Small Group Discussion Guide: "Paul's Testimony Before King Agrippa"

Acts 26

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by thanking God for the opportunity to gather and learn from His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds to apply what was taught.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever had an unexpected opportunity to share something important with someone influential or in a position of authority? How did that feel?

Review & Discussion (40-50 minutes)

Part 1: The Power of Personal Testimony

Scripture Focus: Acts 26:1-11

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul begins his defense by sharing his testimony. Why do you think he chose this approach rather than simply defending himself against accusations?

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2. The sermon emphasized that "your testimony is something you can do." What makes a personal testimony so powerful in witnessing?
3. Paul gave enough detail about his past to show he was completely opposed to Christ. How much detail should we share about our past when giving our testimony? What's the balance?

Key Takeaway: Your life story is your gospel tract. Everyone can share how they met Jesus Christ.

Part 2: The Structure of an Effective Testimony

Scripture Focus: Acts 26:12-18

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul's testimony followed a clear pattern:

- Who I was before Christ
- How I met Christ
- The purpose/mission Christ gave me

Can you identify these three elements in your own story?

2. Paul said Jesus gave him purpose: "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light" (v.18). How has Christ given you purpose and mission?
3. The sermon mentioned that Paul spent about 8 verses on his testimony. Practice sharing your testimony in 2-3 minutes with your group. Get feedback on clarity and impact.

Key Takeaway: A well-structured testimony includes your life before Christ, how you met Him, and the purpose He's given you.

Part 3: Personal and Direct Gospel Presentation

Scripture Focus: Acts 26:19-27

Discussion Questions:

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1. Paul repeatedly addressed "King Agrippa" personally throughout his message. Why is it important to make gospel conversations personal rather than just presenting information?
2. Paul asked King Agrippa directly: "Believest thou the prophets?" (v.27). Why is it important to ask questions when sharing the gospel rather than just talking at people?
3. The sermon emphasized "reasoning" with people about righteousness, temperance, and judgment. How can asking questions help people think through their spiritual condition?

Key Takeaway: Gospel conversations should be personal, engaging, and include questions that cause people to examine their beliefs.

Part 4: The "Almost Christian"

Scripture Focus: Acts 26:28-32

Discussion Questions:

1. King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (v.28). What does this tragic statement teach us about the urgency of the gospel?
2. The sermon stated: "An almost Christian is in hell the moment he dies or she dies." Why is this truth important to remember when witnessing?
3. Can you think of people in your life who are "almost Christians"—who know the gospel but haven't committed? How does this passage motivate you to continue praying and witnessing to them?
4. Despite King Agrippa not accepting Christ, did Paul waste his time? What does this teach us about faithfulness in witnessing regardless of results?

Key Takeaway: "Almost" doesn't save anyone. We must lovingly press people to make a decision for Christ while there's still time.

Practical Application (15-20 minutes)

Individual Reflection:

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1. **Write Your Testimony:** This week, write out your testimony following Paul's three-part structure:

- Who you were before Christ
- How you met Christ
- The purpose Christ has given you

Keep it to one page. Practice sharing it in 2-3 minutes.

2. **Create a "My Story" Tract:** Consider typing up your testimony and creating a simple handout or card you can give to others.
3. **Identify Your "King Agrippa":** Who in your life is in a position of influence or authority that needs to hear the gospel? Commit to praying for an opportunity to share with them.

Group Activity:

Role-Play Witnessing Scenarios:

Pair up and practice the following:

- Person A: Share your 2-3 minute testimony
- Person B: Listen and provide encouraging feedback
- Switch roles

Then practice asking engaging questions:

- "If you died tonight, are you 100% certain you'd go to heaven?"
- "Have you ever told a lie? What do you call someone who lies?"
- "When are you going to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior?"

Discuss: What felt natural? What was challenging? How can you improve?

Key Quotes from the Sermon

- "Your life is the gospel tract."
- "Your testimony is something you can do. You might say, 'I'm not very eloquent.' It might not be that long. The thing is, it's your testimony."

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- "I think we should always be ready to do it. And the question is, where do we start? What do I say? The Apostle Paul gives us a perfect template."
 - "We don't necessarily want to magnify our old life...but at the same time, we need to give enough of it so that people understand that Jesus Christ changed your life."
 - "When the atheist says, 'I don't believe in God,' you say, 'I don't believe you.' God doesn't believe in atheists, neither do I."
 - "This is our life until the rapture. This is a great testimony."
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Closing Challenge

This Week's Assignment:

1. Write out your complete testimony (one page maximum)
 2. Share your testimony with at least one person this week
 3. Ask someone the question: "If you died tonight, are you 100% certain you'd go to heaven?"
 4. Report back to the group next week about what happened
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Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

- Share specific people you want to witness to this week
 - Pray for boldness and open doors
 - Pray for the salvation of those who are "almost Christians"
 - Ask God to help each person be ready to share their testimony when opportunities arise
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Additional Resources

- Gospel tracts available at church
- Consider memorizing key verses: Romans 6:23, John 3:16, Acts 16:31
- Review the "Romans Road" or other gospel presentation methods
- Practice your testimony with family members this week

Remember: "We are here to lead people to make the greatest decision they'll ever make their whole life. It's worth challenging them and trying to have a personal conversation and asking them questions so that they understand what Jesus did and why He did it."

5-Day Devotional: Sharing Your Story

Day 1: The Power of Personal Testimony

Reading: Acts 26:1-11

Devotional: The Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa with a simple yet powerful weapon: his testimony. He didn't need elaborate arguments or theological degrees—he simply shared who he was before meeting Christ. Your story matters more than you realize. You are the world's leading expert on what God has done in your life. No one can argue with your personal experience of transformation. Today, reflect on your own journey. Who were you before Christ? What darkness did you walk in? Write down the key moments of your story. God hasn't given you this testimony to keep it hidden. Someone needs to hear how Jesus changed your life. Your story might be the bridge that brings another person to salvation.

Day 2: Meeting Jesus Changes Everything

Reading: Acts 26:12-18

Devotional: There was a specific day when Paul met Jesus Christ on the Damascus road. His entire life trajectory changed in that moment. Every genuine Christian has a moment—perhaps not as dramatic as Paul's blinding light, but equally real—when they encountered the living Christ. Maybe you grew up in church, or maybe you lived far from God. Regardless, there was a day when the Gospel became personal, when you realized your own sinfulness and Christ's sufficient sacrifice. Take time today to remember that moment. What were the circumstances? Who was involved? How did you feel? Remembering your salvation keeps your faith fresh and your witness authentic. The day you met Jesus is the hinge upon which your entire eternal destiny turned.

Day 3: Called with Purpose

Reading: Acts 26:16-20

Devotional: Jesus didn't just save Paul; He commissioned him. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose." Salvation always comes with assignment. God doesn't rescue us from darkness merely for our own benefit—He transforms us into ambassadors of His grace. Paul's mission was clear: open eyes, turn people from darkness to light, from Satan's power to God. This is your mission too. Every believer is called to witness, to share, to invite others into God's kingdom. You may feel unqualified or inadequate, but God specializes in using ordinary people for extraordinary purposes. Today, ask God to show you your sphere of influence. Who has He strategically placed in your life? Your workplace, neighborhood, and family are your mission field.

Day 4: Obedience to the Heavenly Vision

Reading: Acts 26:19-23

Devotional: Paul's declaration resonates across centuries: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." After encountering Christ, Paul didn't delay, make excuses, or wait for better circumstances. He immediately began proclaiming the Gospel everywhere—Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and to the Gentiles. Obedience is the evidence of genuine faith. Many Christians receive clear direction from God but hesitate, waiting for perfect conditions or complete understanding. Paul teaches us that obedience precedes clarity. When God opens a door, walk through it. When He gives you an opportunity to share your faith, take it. Disobedience to God's call doesn't just affect you—it potentially robs others of hearing the Gospel. Today, examine your life for areas of delayed obedience. What has God been asking you to do that you've been postponing?

Day 5: Almost Persuaded Is Not Enough

Reading: Acts 26:24-32

Devotional: King Agrippa's tragic words echo through eternity: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost is not enough. Almost saved is completely lost. Agrippa had everything—Paul's powerful testimony, clear Gospel presentation, personal appeal—yet he chose to walk away. How many people in your life are "almost persuaded"? They've heard the Gospel, attended services, know the truth intellectually, but haven't surrendered. Today might be someone's last opportunity. This reality should fill us with holy urgency. Don't assume people will have another chance. Preach like it's their final opportunity to hear. Challenge people personally: "When will you trust Christ?" Make it personal, make it urgent, make it clear. Paul wasn't content with King Agrippa's interest—he wanted his conversion. Pray for boldness to press beyond polite religious conversation into genuine soul-winning encounters.