

Almost There

Bulletin Article from July 8, 2018 – Rock Messenger.

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How many times do we see a team get so close to victory, and then something happens. Someone else takes over the lead, they lose their drive, outside forces come into play, and they end up losing. Sometimes, people are almost there and then never make it. In the Bible, we find several individuals who were so close to making it, but for one reason or the other they did not make it.

First, looking at a couple from the book of Acts, Ananias and Sapphira. In Acts 5:1-11, the story is told of this couple who sold land and brought some money to the apostles. These two did nothing wrong in wanting to give to those in need. They were greedy though. They kept back a portion and both acted as if they'd donated the entire amount. Greed kept them from finishing.

In Matthew 19:16-22, the young man wanted to know what he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus talked of the commandments, and the young man had kept all of them. He lacked only one thing, to sell his possessions and give to the poor. The young man went home sorrowful due to his great possessions. Here is a young man who is so close yet ends up not finishing due to his possessions ranking above God. He is an example of Christianity not being a buffet. Following the Bible and acting like the Christian God desires is essential to finishing this race.

Moses was a man of God. He was one who wanted to be excused from serving God, but eventually entered into service. Moses did many great things and was a strong leader for the people of Israel. Even he, though, had flaws as seen in Numbers 20. Moses did not ask the rock for water as God had instructed, rather he struck the rock. Also in verse 10, we talk of we will bring forth the water. He refers to the work as his and Aaron's own work. He did not signify God as provider. Moses was a man who worked much good, and yet he was now not allowed to enter the promise land. He was so close, almost there, yet did not enter.

The foolish virgins in the parable of Matthew 25 were invited to a feast. They responded to the invitation and went and waited. They did not prepare for the long wait. They went to get more oil, taking more time to try and prepare but were not found the gate was opened. When they returned, they were not allowed entrance. Not only to a place they were invited, let alone a place where they were, but almost was not good enough.

Felix & Agrippa both had similar reactions to Paul. Felix after talking to Paul trembled. He no longer wished to listen to Paul and told him he'd call for him in a more convenient season. Agrippa came close to the point of conversion. In a way like so many, these two resemble multiple people in today's world. Almost there to the idea of salvation, yet too far away.

So many "religious people" are so close to the hope an eternity with God, yet live in way and act in way that compares them to the foolish virgins. Many don't run the race with enough endurance. If you go full-speed at the beginning of a marathon and exhaust all your resources, you do more damage than gain. If you run the race in a way of pacing yourself to the end, but being determined and giving it your all each step along the way, you may complete the race successfully.

Many also fail at the sign of problems. They can keep the whole law until it requires a sacrifice they are not willing to make. Many can hold true to God until it requires more than they were willing to give.

Sadly, too many get close to the idea of salvation but they allow a road block to keep them away. The truth is no one knows if they'll ever make a convenient season to do right. No one knows if they have time to wait. Truth is there's no good reason to put off obeying the Gospel. Almost there only counts in horseshoes. —**CW**