Living Sermons

A BILLY GRAHAM CLASSIC SERMON

ALMOST PERSUADED

ACTS 26:28

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

BILLY GRAHAM

Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois

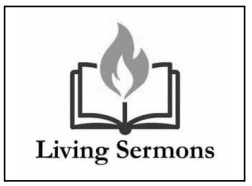
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Preacher: Billy Graham

Publisher: LivingSermons.com

Watch Live Video Here



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FOREWORD

How close can a person come to the kingdom of God and still be lost? In this closing message of his Chicago crusade, preached on a sweltering afternoon at Soldier Field, Billy Graham takes his text from King Agrippa's famous words to the apostle Paul: "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian."

Dr. Graham sets the scene against the decline of Rome and draws a sobering parallel with modern America. Then he asks why Agrippa came so close: he believed in God, he had heard the Gospel, and he had seen a changed life in Paul. And he asks why Agrippa still did not come: pride in his own way, fear of public opinion, sin he would not give up, and a decision put off for another day. Each reason is held up as a mirror to the reader.

The message is urgent and searching, filled with stories of changed lives from the Chicago meetings. The book closes with words Dr. Graham spoke to the television audience three hours later, in the empty stadium.

In preparing this edition, we have preserved the preacher's message and wording. We removed time stamps, trimmed a few repetitions that belong to the spoken word, arranged the transcript into chapters with subheadings, and corrected punctuation, capitalization and the many obvious transcription errors so that it reads as a book.

Do not close this book almost persuaded. With Paul, may you be altogether.

Wisdom Epsi
— The Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

Watch the live sermon from which this message was transcribed on YouTube

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Our standard is reverence for the Word of God. Our daily goal is to transform powerful live sermons into polished PDF and ebook editions for the edification of the Body of Christ. It is our prayer that as you read, the same grace, conviction, clarity, and impartation present in the live service will minister to you afresh.

— Livingsermons.com
A Spirit-led Publishing Stewardship

MAIN MESSAGE BEGINS HERE

CHAPTER 1

ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME

A HOT AFTERNOON

I'm going to ask this vast audience if you can sit patiently for just a few more minutes and be as quiet as you can. Thousands of people have driven here for many, many miles. In fact, people have come here from the West Coast, from the South, from the East Coast, from all over America to attend this service today. And I think that all of us should be quiet. No one moving; sit where you are.

There's a wonderful breeze, even though it's hot, and it's getting cooler all the time as we go into the late afternoon. What a lovely day this is! I told a lot of you to bring your umbrellas for rain, but I'm glad you brought them for the sun instead.

THE TEXT

Now today, for our last message, I want you to turn with me to the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of Acts, the twenty-eighth verse. If you have your Bibles—and I hope you brought your Bibles—here's a very important passage in the book of Acts:

> *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.*
>
> **ACTS 26:28**

"Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian."

PAUL ON TRIAL

I want you to get the picture in this passage of Scripture. The apostle Paul is a prisoner. He is a prisoner of Rome, and he is on trial for his very life. The apostle Paul had been brought before King Agrippa, and he had been accused of various things and of infringement of the law.

CHAPTER 2

THE DECLINE OF ROME

A STRIKING PARALLEL

At this time of history, Rome was beginning her decline as an empire. In 1787 Edward Gibbon wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. And Rome was a striking parallel to America today: a leader in world affairs, but her leadership was threatened; rich and prosperous, with an economy that defied collapse; her armies respected by the nations of the world. But Rome fell.

Bold, clever, sophisticated, shrewd Rome fell to the barbarian hordes that had far less of material things than Rome had. These pagans from the north were a dedicated, disciplined, hard, atheistic people. And the Romans used to laugh at their ignorance, their superstition and their lack of military equipment. And Mr. Gibbon proved that Rome did not fall because of the military superiority of the barbarians. It was internal decadence within the Roman culture.

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE HOME

First, he said, the rapid increase of divorce. A nation never falls until it starts to decay at the center, and the heart of any nation is the home, which is the core of society. And this infringed on the seventh commandment, which says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” We in America have gone on a sex binge that has no parallel in history. And we are guilty, as Rome was guilty. Our homes are breaking; our divorce rates are high.

TAXES, PLEASURE AND ARMAMENTS

Secondly, Mr. Gibbon said, it was the high rate of taxes: spending public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. The average American has no conception of the disaster that lies ahead with our continued deficit spending.

Thirdly, there's the mad craze for pleasure, said Mr. Gibbon. Four times as much is spent for pleasure in America as for religious and welfare benevolence. Our annual tobacco bill exceeds the amount of money spent on education. And Rome, on the decline, demanded more artificial stimulation and more exciting and brutal sports, just as we are doing in the United States today.

Fourthly, Mr. Gibbon said, the decline of Rome was caused by the building of gigantic armaments. Now, we have to have armies. We have to have a defense program in the world in which we live. But we shouldn't trust in it. And I tell you that our armaments alone, without faith in God, will not save us, no matter how powerful they become.

THE DECAY OF RELIGION

And fifthly, Mr. Gibbon said, the decay of religion. To the rank and file, religion had faded into mere form. It had lost its relevance to life. It held no central meaning to the people.

And today in America we have millions going to church, but no deep commitment to Christ, no deep commitment to God, no all-out for Jesus Christ on the part of millions of church members. We play at being religious. We serve God with our lips, but our hearts are far from Him.

CHAPTER 3

THE ONLY HOPE

JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

Here we find the apostle Paul in the midst of a great empire, preaching this new Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the midst of a declining empire, an empire that is soon to collapse, Paul is going from place to place preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul said, "I'm determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

The apostle Paul said there's only one hope for Rome. There's only one hope for the world, and that is Jesus Christ dying on a cross. But the people of that day laughed. They sneered. They mocked. They made fun. And when you preach the Gospel today, people still say that it's impossible, it cannot save the world. But I tell you, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is our only hope at this hour.

BEFORE THE KING

And on this occasion the apostle Paul is brought before King Agrippa, and Paul was pleading his case before the king. The king had come in with all the pomp and splendor. All the people had gathered around: the officers, the admirals of the navy, the generals of the army, the officials of state were there. And here is this little man Paul, this great intellect who had sold everything he had for Jesus Christ, standing in front of the king. And the king said, "Paul, you may speak."

ALMOST AND ALTOGETHER

And when Paul had finished his sermon that day, the king said, "Almost thou persuadest me" to commit my life to Jesus Christ. 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."

You and I may revolt against the Word of God. We may challenge the call to our conscience. But sooner or later the question of faith will be demanded of us.

Paul said to Agrippa, “Do you believe?” And Agrippa said, “I almost believe. I’ve almost entered the kingdom of God.”

And so we find two men. One, the apostle Paul, who says, “I know in whom I have believed.” And here’s King Agrippa saying, “I’ve almost believed. I’m almost in the kingdom, but not quite.”

CHAPTER 4

WHY AGRIPPA WAS ALMOST PERSUADED

ON THE THIN EDGE

What was it that almost persuaded Agrippa that day? Here was Agrippa on the thin edge of capitulation. It was only one step from one side to the other. The scales of decision were almost even. Why was Agrippa almost persuaded? What caused him to stop and think?

HE BELIEVED IN GOD

First, because Agrippa already believed in God. There are thousands of you here today who believe in God intellectually. You say there's a God. In your heart you know there's a God. Your conscience tells you there's a God. But you're not quite in the kingdom of God. You haven't really committed yourself to Christ. Intellectually you say yes, but you haven't committed everything you have to Jesus Christ, and you're not in the kingdom of God.

This is the tragedy of this crusade. There are thousands of people all over Illinois and all over the Midwest who believe in God. But that's not enough. You've never come to the point in your life when you've repented of your sins and received Christ. You're almost persuaded to believe, but not quite.

HE HAD HEARD THE GOSPEL

Secondly, Agrippa was almost persuaded because he had just heard the Gospel declared. And that's a sufficient reason for any man. The hearing of the Gospel immediately constitutes a moral obligation to the hearer.

When I go to a university campus, students are always asking the question, "Well, what about the heathen? Where did Cain get his wife?" That's none of my business. That's not your business. That's God's business. But let me tell you this: your problem is far more serious. You've heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed and preached, and you haven't done anything about it. And your responsibility is ten thousand times more than that of a man who lives in Russia and has never heard the Gospel explained. God will hold you responsible at the judgment for more than a man living in the heart of China who never heard.

"O KING AGRIPPA"

Paul stood that day and said to King Agrippa, "King Agrippa, Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins. O King, Your Majesty, with respect to you, sir, I say that you are a sinner. Whether you're a king or whether you're a pauper, whether you're educated or uneducated, you've sinned against God. You need to repent of your sins. And Jesus Christ died publicly and openly on a cross for you, and unless you come to have an encounter with Him, you will be lost. O King Agrippa, I wish you would come to Christ!"

Oh, the courage of Paul! The boldness that the Holy Spirit gave Paul that day, to point his finger at the king and say, "Come to God!"

I stand here today as a servant of the living God—not to preach my message, not to preach my thoughts. I'm praying, even while I speak to you, that God will give me the words to say to you that will cause you not only to be almost in the kingdom of God, but that will cause you this day to decide to cross over that thin line and say yes to Jesus Christ, and let Him change and transform your life and give you a new dimension of living.

Yes, Agrippa heard the Gospel proclaimed, and his responsibility was tremendous.

HE SAW A CHANGED LIFE

Thirdly, he was almost persuaded because he had the example of Paul's conversion. He had a living example of a changed life.

Paul used to fight Christ. He used to persecute the Christians. He put them in jail. He murdered them. He did all sorts of things. And one day he was going along the road to Damascus, and he was struck down by a blinding light. And he said, "Lord, who is it?" And He said, "I'm Jesus whom you persecute." And that day this brilliant intellectual man was converted on a dusty road to Damascus.

I tell you, conversion can take place in a minute. Conversion can take place right here and now in your heart. You don't have to wait till you get to church. You don't have to wait till you get home. It can take place right now, in the quietness of your heart, right where you sit. You can say, "Yes, Lord Jesus, I receive You. I trust You." Your life will be changed. Your name will be written in the Book of Life. Your sins will be forgiven. You can know that you're going to heaven.

Agrippa saw the change in Paul's life. Agrippa believed in God. He heard the Gospel preached. He saw the change in Paul's life. And he was almost persuaded to commit himself to Christ. But he didn't do it.

CHAPTER 5

WHY AGRIPPA DID NOT COME

HIS WAY SEEMED GOOD ENOUGH

Why did Agrippa not come to Christ? For the same reasons that many of you don't come to Christ.

First, he might have thought that his way was good enough, just like a lot of you. The Bible says, "There's a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

I had a man say to me, "Well, I'm sincere, and if I live a sincere life, that's enough." No, it's not enough. I told the folks the other night that I once saw a man pick up a football and run sixty-five yards. He was a sincere man, but he ran the wrong way and lost the game. You can be sincere and be wrong.

Many of you say, "Well, I follow my conscience." Or you say, "I live up to the Sermon on the Mount," or, "The Golden Rule is my religion." But you don't live up to the Golden Rule or the Sermon on the Mount. You've failed. You've sinned. And even if you lived up to it, it wouldn't be enough. Jesus turned to Nicodemus and said, "You must be born again."

Yes, he might have thought that his way was good enough. But in God's sight it's not good enough. The road to heaven is narrow, the Bible says. The road to hell is broad, and Jesus said many there be that go in there.

HE FEARED PUBLIC OPINION

Agrippa might also have feared public opinion. He began to ask himself, "What would Caesar say? What would my sister Bernice say? What would my friends say?" And he couldn't pay the price. He feared the cynical, criticizing tongue of man more than he desired the approval of God.

And that's your trouble. You're afraid of what the people sitting next to you will think if you get up out of your seat and come and receive Christ today. The fear of man is a snare to you. You're afraid to get up out of your seat and declare yourself openly for Christ. You're afraid of what people will say. You're afraid to go back to your office tomorrow morning and tell them that you've become a Christian. You're afraid to go back to your home and say to your wife, "Honey, I've been wrong. I'm sorry for the things I've done to you. I have received Christ, and I'm going to live a different life."

HE WOULD NOT GIVE UP HIS SIN

And thirdly, he might have had sin that he would not give up. And that keeps many people from Christ: the sin of pride.

Maybe you don't want to give up that woman that you've been going to see that's not your wife. Maybe you don't want to give up that lust in your heart. Maybe you don't want to give up the cheating and the lying that's gaining you some extra money. Maybe you don't want to give up some of those things that you've been doing that are wrong.

Agrippa was convicted of the fact that he had sinned against God, and he was holding on to his sins. He didn't want to give them up.

HE POSTPONED THE DECISION

Or he might have postponed the decision. He said, “I’m almost persuaded, Paul, but some other time.” Because that’s what Felix the governor had said. Felix the governor said, “In a more convenient time I’ll call on you, Paul.” But he never called.

The Bible says now is the day; today is the day of salvation. The Bible says come while you can. You may not have another moment like this. When will you ever see a crowd this great gathered to hear the Gospel? When will you ever have a moment like this to come to Christ, as you do at this hour? Give your life to Christ while you can.

The Bible says, “He that hardeneth his heart, being often reproved, shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy.” The Bible says, “My spirit will not always strive with man.”

You can’t come to Christ any time you want to. You can’t just get up out of your seat any time and come. You can only come when the Spirit of God draws you. You can only come to Christ at the moment when God has prepared your heart and the Gospel has been proclaimed, and you receive Him as your Savior. Yes, Agrippa decided to postpone.

CHAPTER 6

THIS IS YOUR MOMENT

A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN

But Shakespeare said, “There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” There is a tide in the affairs of men.

I don’t believe many of you came here today by accident. I believe every person that is here at this hour was sent here by God. It was designed in heaven that you should be here at this very hour, sitting on this hot day, listening to the Gospel and having an opportunity to receive Christ and enter the kingdom of heaven. And you may never have another hour like this as long as you live. This is your moment with God. I’m going to ask you to come and receive Him in a moment.

CHAPTER 7

HOW AGRIPPA COULD HAVE ENTERED

BY REPENTANCE

How could Agrippa have entered the kingdom of God? First, by repentance of sin.

Either choice you make, it'll cost you something. If you remain almost persuaded, it'll be very costly: it'll mean hell and judgment. But if you come totally to Christ, it'll cost you your sin. You're going to have to pay a price, whatever your decision today.

Every one of you that is here has a decision to make before you leave here. It'll be yes or no. If it's yes, it'll cost you your sins, because you have to change your way of living. If it's no, it'll cost you peace of heart, peace of mind, forgiveness of sin, heaven. Either way you have to pay a price. Which decision is yours, yes or no?

Oh, I know that many of you are church members—maybe most of you—but you've never really come to Christ. I was a member of a church for four years before I ever really came to Christ. I'm asking you today to commit and surrender your life and your heart to Him as you've never done before in your life.

BY TURNING TO GOD

Not only did he have to repent of sin, but Agrippa would have had to turn to God. It is not so much "How shall I find God?" but that God is to be found in a certain direction. And Agrippa was told to turn in that direction.

God is in the opposite direction from which mankind is moving. Conversion is an about-face: it's going in the opposite direction. The world today is eating and drinking and making merry. The Bible says you will have to come out of the world. The Bible says you'll have to turn and go the opposite direction.

And when you go home, and go back to your office, and go back to your work, it's going to be difficult. There'll be frictions and problems and difficulties of a thousand sorts.

POWER OVER SIN

But the Bible says Christ will be with you. The Holy Spirit will live within you, and He will give you power and produce in your life the fruit of the Spirit, which is love and joy and peace. You can have dominion over sin. You can have a new power that you've never known. You can look sin in the face and say, "Sin, you shall no longer conquer me," by giving your life to Christ. But you will have to repent of sin and turn to God. And that can happen right here today.

CHAPTER 8

ALMOST OR ALTOGETHER

DID IT PAY?

What did it cost Agrippa to remain almost persuaded? It cost him the pardon of his sins. It cost him peace of heart. It cost him the prospect of heaven. Did it pay Agrippa to remain almost? No.

Where is Almost Agrippa today? We hardly ever hear of him. Where is Altogether Paul, the man that said, "I'm altogether for Christ"? Paul's name is mentioned wherever Christians gather anywhere in the world, and someday we shall see him in heaven.

Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And there are thousands of you here this afternoon who are almost in the kingdom of God: almost persuaded, just about ready to step over the line, but not quite. I'm going to ask you to step over the line.

A MINISTER CROSSES THE LINE

This past week a minister of this city came to see me. He said, "Mr. Graham, I believe I'm a Christian. I'm a graduate of one of the finest theological schools in the world. I'm the pastor of a great church in Chicago." He said, "I've been sitting here night after night, and the Holy Spirit has made me so miserable, because I really am not sure that I've had an encounter with Christ. I've known for years that I was preaching beyond my experience. I want to know if you would bow and pray with me and let me call this the moment of my conversion. I want a date. I want a moment when I can say, 'This was the moment I crossed over the line.'"

We got on our knees, and he got up from his knees with a smile on his face and tears running down his cheeks. He said, “Next Sunday morning the congregation will have a new minister.”

Jesus said to Nicodemus, a professor of theology, “You must be born again.”

CHANGED LIVES IN CHICAGO

Today, in a church in this town, an invitation was given this morning, and down the aisle walked a gangster in this city. He fell at the front, and he said, “God have mercy upon me.” When he left there today to come out to the meeting, he had a smile on his face, and he said, “For the first time in years I have peace in my heart. I believe God has forgiven my sin.”

The other night down the aisle at McCormick Place there came a young fellow who’s the head of a gang in this city. He handed one of our men his pistol, his knife and his razor, and he said, “I’m changing my life. I give my life to Christ. From this hour on I want to trust Him.”

The other day one of the leading socialites of the North Shore in the Chicago area got up out of his seat at McCormick Place and came forward. That night he went home and said to his wife, “Honey, you’ve got a new husband. I wonder if you’ll pray with me.” She nearly fainted; she thought he was drunk. They got out the Bible. He read the Bible, and then he got on his knees. He didn’t know how to pray, but he prayed. And she said, “We have a new home.”

The other night at McCormick Place, down the aisle came a husband, and on the other side came a woman. They had been divorced two years ago. Neither of them knew that the other one was there. They met in the front—we’ve seen that happen in several campaigns. They met in the front, they received Christ together, and they’re getting remarried. That’s what Christ can do.

I've seen young people who are valedictorians of their high school classes. I've seen college students come here by the hundreds to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and have their lives transformed.

I'm asking you today to surrender your heart and your life to Jesus Christ and say, "Today I want my life changed. I want my sins forgiven."

CHAPTER 9

GOD DID NOT SPARE

CLOSER THAN YOU WILL EVER BE

But some of you will remain almost, like Agrippa, and you'll never come. In fact, you're closer to the kingdom of God today than you'll ever be in your whole life. You'll never have an hour like this again in your entire life. This is it. And if you don't come today, you may never come.

HE WILL NOT SPARE YOU

I'm asking you right now to come, because the Bible says that in the day of judgment God did not spare the angels that sinned. God loved the angels. He made the angels, but He didn't spare them. And God did not spare Israel when Israel sinned. And God did not even spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when they sinned. God did not spare the ancient world.

And when Christ was on the cross, God could have rescued Him, but He didn't do it. He was dying in your place, in my place, shedding His blood for us. And the Bible says God "spared not His own Son."

And at the day of judgment, if you reject Christ this day—I declare unto you, unless you come to a point of repentance and faith, He will not spare you. He loves you. He offers you forgiveness. He offers you grace. But if you reject it, if you spurn it, there is no other way.

THE PILOT OF YOUR LIFE

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He is a living Savior. I offer you a living Christ who wants to walk into your life and take control.

It's like an airliner flying up in the skies—we've seen several fly over this afternoon. The pilot is out of control, and a captain who knows the plane comes and takes over. He wants to be the pilot of your boat. He wants to take you through the shoals. He wants to take you through the storms of life and guide and direct you.

And you say, "Well, I'm almost ready, but not quite." Agrippa was almost. Paul said, "I'm altogether." I want to ask you today to be altogether: all out, one hundred percent for Christ.

CHAPTER 10

THE INVITATION

STAND ON THE TRACK

And here's what I'm going to ask you to do. I'm going to ask that not a person leave, please, not at this very important moment. And I'm going to ask hundreds of you to get up out of your seat right now. Just get up out of your seat, and I want you to go forward, down the steps, and stand on the track in front of where you are now seated. Don't come here, but just stand on the track in front of where you're seated. You won't be far from your friends or your relatives or whoever you're with.

I want you to get up. And these people that are down here in front, you get up and come right here in front of the platform. And say, "Today I want to declare myself for Christ. I want to openly acknowledge Him. I want Him to forgive my sins. I want a new life. I want to receive Him as my Savior."

I want you to get up all over the place, hundreds of men, women, young people. Now I'm going to ask you to get up right now and come and stand.

STRETCH IT FORTH

You say, "Why is this so important?" Jesus could have said to the man with the withered hand, "Be healed." But He didn't do it. He said, "Stretch it forth." He wanted the man to do something as evidence of his faith. I'm going to ask you to do something: stretch forth your life right now to Christ and receive Him.

I know it's hot, but I'm going to ask you to come right now. If you're not willing to confess Him publicly, He will not confess you before His Father which is in heaven.

DON'T LEAVE ALMOST

Now I'm going to ask the audience to bow their heads. Just get up out of your seat and come right down on the track right now. I know it'll take a couple of moments to do it, but don't you let anything keep you from Christ. Don't you leave here almost but not quite. You come right down on the track. People are already coming from everywhere. Now you come.

The choir will sing softly. Nobody leaving, please, because you'll fill the aisles if you start leaving, and people cannot come. And you should not be a hindrance to people who want to come to Christ.

I want you to pray. You can bring people with you. Bring somebody to Christ today—what a way to help win someone! Husband and wife can join hands and come together. Whole families can come right now. You come, as thousands bow their heads all over the place and pray, and the choir sings softly.

You may be a member of the church; you may not be a member of any church. But you need to make sure. You want Christ in your heart. You come right now.

Just come and stand right in front of where you are.

YOUR HOUR WITH GOD

Mr. Pyatt informs me that they had prepared to have all of you come here in front of the platform. If you would like to come and stand here in front of the platform with these many that are coming, you get up and come and join them here at the platform. There'll be plenty of time for you to go back and join your friends. But you come, either in front of where you are, in front of the steps there, or down here, one of the two. But come.

And counselors, you can go back if you like to all of these places around, so that we have counselors all the way around. But you come from the stands and everywhere. Hundreds of people are coming. This is your moment and your hour with God. Don't you miss it. This is a historic hour in Chicago. And you come.

CHAPTER 11

AFTER THE CROWD HAS GONE

AN EMPTY STADIUM

It's been about three hours since the benediction was pronounced, and I've come back here to Soldier Field to talk to you. When the appeal was given, about two thousand people came forward to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Now the stadium is empty. The breeze is blowing. I think this afternoon was the hottest that I have ever preached in, in the sense of temperature, because the temperature in the stadium was just about a hundred. And I don't think I ever came so near to passing out during a sermon. I remember I almost held on to the pulpit one time, and found myself quoting a verse of Scripture. I don't know whether you could sense that when you were watching on your screen. But that didn't do away with the burden upon our hearts for the people here in Chicago.

And now we come to the end of this great crusade. We've come to the end of these five telecasts across America. These telecasts have been carried on over a hundred and sixty stations, more than we have ever carried before. We took this as a gigantic step of faith. We are depending on your support and your prayers. I hope you'll write to us and let us know that you're standing with us.

TWO SETS OF EARS

But more important is your own personal relationship to Jesus Christ. This afternoon I talked on Agrippa being almost persuaded to follow Christ. Some of you during this week have almost been persuaded to give your life to Jesus Christ, but you haven't done it.

You're sitting in the quietness of your home. You may be in a bar. You may be in some unique place that I don't even know about, watching right now. And God has spoken to you. As you've seen the great crowd, and as you heard the sermon and heard the singing, the Spirit of God spoke to your heart.

The Bible teaches that we have two sets of ears. You have physical ears, but you also have ears in your soul. And while I was speaking here this afternoon, God was speaking to your soul. And as this stadium is empty now, your own heart is empty. And yet Christ is willing to come in and fill it, to bring you a peace, a joy and a satisfaction that you've never known before. But more than that, to adopt you into His family. You become a child of God.

The Bible teaches that history is going toward a definite objective, and that objective is the reign of Jesus Christ. His kingdom is ultimately going to triumph, as I talked about the other night. And you can be a part of it. And the decision—the stepping over the line—can be right now, as you give your heart and your life to Jesus Christ.

NO SIN TOO GREAT

But just as Agrippa neglected or refused to repent and turn to God, so many of you are in danger of doing the same. But I'm going to ask you right now to do it.

You don't have to be here in this big stadium. There's nothing about the mechanics of coming forward that saves anybody. Coming forward is an open acknowledgment and a testimony of an inward experience that you have with Christ. But this inward experience with Christ, this encounter, is the most important thing, and that could happen to you right now, wherever you are, whatever your condition, whatever your circumstances.

"Oh," but you say, "Billy, I'm really too great a sinner. I've just been too bad. I've done too many things. I'm too big a hypocrite." No, you're not too much of a sinner. There's no sin too bad but what Christ can forgive. When He died on

that cross, He was dying for you. He took your place. Your sins were put on Him—not just the sins of this big crowd that we had today at Soldier Field, but your sin. Your own sins were placed on Him. And now, if by faith you will receive Him into your heart, He will forgive those sins.

And then you can know something of the power of His own resurrection. The same power that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead is available to you right now to help you live a new life, if you will put your confidence and your faith in Him.

COME FORWARD IN YOUR HEART

And as you saw these people come forward this afternoon, so in your heart you can come forward right now. You don't have to be in a church or a stadium. Just now you can make your commitment to Christ.

I remember when I came forward to receive Christ. I remember that the newspaper the next day said that not very much had happened, perhaps an emotional experience. But did you know, from that one group of people that came forward that night, I know eleven men in the ministry right now? We never know what happens to one person coming to Jesus Christ.

Your life can be transformed and changed. Perhaps you won't sense this change so much until the next year or two years. But as you read your Bible and pray and witness for Christ and get into the church, you will be able to sense a tremendous transformation. And if you make your decision now, go and talk to your minister.

Goodbye, and may the Lord bless you.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Passages quoted or alluded to in this message, in order of appearance. An asterisk (*) marks a passage the preacher did not name by chapter and verse; the editors identified it.

Acts 26:28 — "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian"; the text of the message. (Named by chapter and verse.) *(Chapters 1, 8)*

Exodus 20:14* — "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the seventh commandment. *(Chapter 2)*

Matthew 15:8* — Serving God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him. *(Chapter 2)*

1 Corinthians 2:2* — "Determined to know nothing … save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." *(Chapter 3)*

Acts 26:29* — "Both almost, and altogether such as I am." *(Chapter 3)*

Acts 26:27* — "Do you believe?" *(Chapter 3)*

2 Timothy 1:12* — "I know in whom I have believed." *(Chapter 3)*

Acts 9:3-6; 26:13-15* — Paul's conversion on the Damascus road. *(Chapter 4)*

Revelation 20:12, 15* — Your name written in the Book of Life. *(Chapter 4)*

Proverbs 14:12* — "There's a way that seemeth right unto man." *(Chapter 5)*

Matthew 5–7* — The Sermon on the Mount; the Golden Rule (7:12). *(Chapter 5)*

John 3:3, 7* — "You must be born again," said to Nicodemus. *(Chapters 5, 8)*

Matthew 7:13-14* — The narrow road and the broad road. *(Chapter 5)*

Proverbs 29:25* — The fear of man is a snare. *(Chapter 5)*

Acts 24:25* — Felix: "In a more convenient time I'll call on you." *(Chapter 5)*

2 Corinthians 6:2* — Now is the day of salvation. *(Chapter 5)*

Proverbs 29:1* — He that hardeneth his heart shall suddenly be cut off. *(Chapter 5)*

Genesis 6:3* — "My spirit will not always strive with man." *(Chapter 5)*

John 6:44* — You can only come when the Spirit of God draws you. *(Chapter 5)*

Acts 26:20* — Repent and turn to God. *(Chapter 7)*

Luke 17:27* — Eating and drinking. *(Chapter 7)*

2 Corinthians 6:17* — Come out of the world. *(Chapter 7)*

Galatians 5:22-23* — The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy and peace. *(Chapter 7)*

Romans 6:14* — Dominion over sin. *(Chapter 7)*

2 Peter 2:4-6* — God did not spare the angels that sinned, the ancient world, or Sodom and Gomorrah. *(Chapter 9)*

Romans 11:21* — God did not spare Israel. *(Chapter 9)*

Romans 8:32* — God "spared not His own Son." *(Chapter 9)*

Mark 3:1-5* — "Stretch forth thine hand." *(Chapter 10)*

Matthew 10:32-33* — Confess Him publicly before men. *(Chapter 10)*

John 1:12; Romans 8:15* — Adopted into God's family as a child of God. *(Chapter 11)*

Revelation 11:15* — The kingdom of Christ will ultimately triumph. *(Chapter 11)*

Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 1:19-20* — The power of His resurrection. *(Chapter 11)*

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

William "Billy" F. Graham Jr. (1918–2018) was raised on a dairy farm in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1934, at age 15, he made a commitment to faith during a revival led by Mordecai Ham. He was ordained in 1939, graduated from Florida Bible Institute in 1940, and earned a B.A. from Wheaton College in 1943, where he married Ruth McCue Bell.

After pastoring in Illinois and serving as the first full-time evangelist for Youth for Christ International, Graham was vaulted into national prominence by the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade. This event launched decades of global outreach, including historic, extended crusades in London (1954), New York City (1957), Seoul (1973), and Rio de Janeiro (1974). Overall, he preached live to nearly 215 million people in over 185 countries and territories.

In 1950, he founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Through BGEA, Graham hosted the syndicated *Hour of Decision* radio program for over 60 years, published *Decision* magazine, and authored 33 books—including bestsellers such as *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (1975) and his 1997 autobiography, *Just As I Am*.

A counselor to U.S. presidents, Graham appeared on Gallup's "Ten Most Admired Men in the World" list a record 61 times. His honors include the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1983), Congressional Gold Medal (1996), and an Honorary Knighthood (2001). Following his passing in 2018 at age 99, he lay in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, and a bronze statue of him was added to the U.S. Capitol in 2024. Billy and Ruth raised five children, 19 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.

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