

The Almost Christian

[Acts 26: 27-29] *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 bonds."* Let's pray.....

I would that all who hear my voice would be as I am except without these bonds. Oh, what a declaration. Oh, what desire fills the soul of those who love God. Wednesday Evening, we read from pp. 273 where Brother Branham taught us that it is more than just water Baptism that you need to enter God's Only Provided Place of Worship. You must be baptized by the Spirit of God! In PP. 273 He said, "You want to see who the door is? Where did God put His Name? **In Jesus.** How do you get in His Name? How do you get in there? By being baptized **in there!** How? By water? **By Spirit!** "One Lord, one faith, **one baptism.**" **That's Holy Ghost baptism.** "The water baptism just put you in fellowship with the people, that you recognized that you have accepted Christ. "That's the Truth. But it's **Spirit baptism.**" I can call the Name of Jesus over you and baptize you, that doesn't make it so.] **But when once that Holy Spirit really... genuine Word comes into you (the Word, Jesus), then, brother, the Message is no secret to you then; you know It, brother, It's all lit up before you.**

So we see here that Brother Branham is telling us that the difference between being baptized in water verses being baptized by the Spirit of God is that when you are baptized by water that just opens up a fellowship among the believers, but when you are Baptized by the Spirit of God which is the Genuine Word of God, coming into you and taking over your life. The Spirit of God by His Word quickens you to the age which you live and the Message is no longer a secret, but it becomes all lit up before your very eyes. We know according to [**1 Peter 1: 23**] that we are born again by the Word of God which is an incorruptible Seed. The new birth then is not just some religious experience, but it is the Word of God coming into your life and quickening you to The Message for the day which you live. Not just to a message, but the Message of this hour happens to be God Himself has come down and is in the midst of His People and He's here, getting His People ready for a Rapture. And if you are not quickened to that, you are still living in your sins.

Now there are many who have heard the midnight cry to get ready. Both the Wise and foolish virgins heard the midnight Cry that went forth, "**Behold the bridegroom.**" But I want you to see that One was prepared and the other was not. So let's turn to [**Matthew 25**] and read.

[**Matthew 25: 1-13**] *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto **ten virgins**, which took their **lamps**, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* Now to this point we do not see yet a distinction between any of these virgins. They are all considered virgins which means they have not been with men, and have not been preganated by mans dogmas and creeds. Now we know according to [**Mark 4: 14** and **1 Peter 1:23**] that a seed is used as a type for Word which is also called a seed because it contains life . God has a Word which is His seed and the Devil has his word which is also a seed. And since these women are called virgins, they are a type of the church who have not been tainted by mans creeds and dogmas.

So then, these ten virgins which are virgins in deed, have not been corrupted by man's seed or man's doctrine. And also I want you to notice that all ten have lamps. Now in [**Psalm 119:105**] we read, "**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path,**" So we see that the ten virgins are Bible toting Virgins. Now remember, a woman in the Bible always types a church. So we see that these ten virgins represent the church of God in it's purity with no man made creeds among them. They believe this Bible alone. Now, let's read on... [**2**] *And five of them were wise, and five [were] foolish.* Now finally in verse [**2**] that we see that there is a distinction made between these ten virgins. Jesus tells us that some were considered wise while others were foolish.

Now this word "**wise**" that Jesus uses here is a Greek word **Phronimos** which means **to be prudent or sensible in a practical sense**. We see Him use the same word in [**Matthew 7:24-27**] *Therefore whosoever **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, (in other words, puts them into practice) I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded (it's foundation) was upon a rock.(and we know that this rock is Revelation, and Paul told us that no other foundation can be laid than what is already laid and that is Christ.)***

And so we read on, *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not,**(does not put them into practice) shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (**You'll notice here that he has no foundation**) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

In this parable we see that the **Wise are those who not only hear but put into action what they hear.** This is considered the prudent or sensible thing to do. And of course we see **the foolish** are those who **also hear**, but they do not do, and because **they do not put into action what**

they hear, they are not considered wise or prudent, but foolish, because they could have taken action and saved their home, but they did not, and therefore their homes were destroyed. Oh, how many believers today are watching their own children going down the wrong road and are headed for destruction only because they did not apply the Token. Brother Branham said *it won't do you any good unless you apply it, it must be applied!*, and that means **it has got to be put into use** or it won't do you any good. Now the only difference between the Wise and Foolish is that One had their foundation built on The Revelation of Jesus Christ, while the other didn't. The same winds of doctrine blew down upon them both, they were both subjected to the same rain and wind and flooding which [**Isaiah 59: 19**] warns us that *"when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him"*. But the thing I want you to notice is that the same trials will come upon both the wise and foolish alike, but the wise won't falter during this testing time because they have a foundation built upon Revelation. The Catholic church and the government can take your material possessions, they can take your home and your cars and your books and your belongings, but no one can ever take this Revelation of Jesus Christ from you. It's sealed into you by the Holy Ghost Himself.

[**Luke 22: 34**] *Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with spending too much time and energy on indulging yourself with pleasure, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life which is (worry and apprehension about what may happen), and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap or snare. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand in the Presence of the Son of Man."* And then in [**Luke 14: 33**] Jesus Said, *"Whosoever be of you who is not willing to forsake all that he has, he has cannot be my disciple."* Now, those are pretty strong words from our Lord, but 99% commitment just won't cut it with Him. It's either all or nothing. Either you're in or your out. He said, *"He that is not with me is against me."* *"And because they are neither cold nor hot I will spew thee out of My mouth."*

Now, the rich young ruler did all the commandments of God yet when it came time to surrender all that he had in a final gesture of total commitment to Christ, he could not depart from his material possessions. He almost made it. Almost, but one word off is Satan's kingdom. The Bible even tells us that Jesus loved him much, but later Jesus tells us the story of how this rich young ruler had died and was burning up in hell, and asked Abraham to send the beggar Lazarus with a drop of water to quench his thirst. And looking up from hell he pleaded with Abraham to send some one to warn his brothers, But Abraham said, *"Though one be raised from the dead they won't believe Him!"* And I tell you this

morning, that One has Raised from the dead and is standing in your very midst today and yet you believe him not!

It was King Agrippa who said to Paul, "***You almost persuaded me to be a Christian.***" How many almost Christians will there be in that day. How many almost Christians do we have hanging around the Message. How many almost Christians will go through the Tribulation because they were almost Christians. They were almost there, but they didn't quite make the roster. How many here this morning and those who are not here this morning who fit into this category of **Almost Christians**. Almost won't count when the Rapture takes place and the Fully committed and fully Revealed Christian are taken out of this pest house. "***Thou almost persuaded me***", they'll say. "***Thou almost persuaded me.***" And what good will Agrippa's words be when he lifts up his eyes from hell and his words echo over and over in his ears , "***Paul, Thou almost persuadedest me to be a Christian.***"

And yet we must ask ourselves, "***What is an Almost Christian?***" And if I were to tell you the answer many of you would fall to your knees in sheer horror because even we who claim to believe this Message with all of our minds would seem to come up so short if we were to know what an almost Christian is. Jesus defined an almost Christians when he asked the Rich young ruler if he obeyed the Ten Commandments and he replied that he believed and practiced them all. An Almost Christian Believes in One God and has nothing in his life, no idols, or toys that he worships, nothing but that One True God. Secondly the Almost Christian Honors God by honoring His Sabbath. He doesn't work on the Sabbath. He honors God's day. The Almost Christian will not worship any graven image nor does he speak God's name in a vain and useless fashion, He honors his father and mother, and he does not lie, nor does he steal, nor does he kill, nor does he commit adultery, or bear false witness against his neighbor, nor does he covet what his neighbor has.

Paul tell's us more about this Almost Christian, he says that he ***has a form of godliness***. John Wesley said, "*The Almost Christian does nothing which the Gospel forbids. He taketh not the name of God in vain; he blesses and curses not; he sweareth not at all, but his communication is, yea, yea; nay,nay. He profanes not the day of the Lord, nor suffers it to be profaned, even by the stranger that is within his gates. He not only avoids all adultery and fornication and uncleanness, but every word, or look, that either directly or indirectly tends thereto such as movies and television. Even all idle words are watched and he abstains from backbiting, tale-bearing, evil speaking, and from all foolish talking and jesting and from all conversation that is not "good to the edifying" and that consequently grieves the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption.*"

*"The almost Christian abstains from strong drink, from revellings and gluttony. He avoids as much as in him lies, all strife and contention, continually endeavoring to live peaceably with all men. If he suffers wrong, he avengeth not himself, neither returns evil for evil. He is no railer, no brawler, no scoffer, either at the faults or infirmities of his neighbor. He will not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any man: but in all things acts and speaks by the Golden rule, " Whatsoever thou wouldest not he should do unto thee, that thou doest to another." And in doing good, he does not confine himself to cheap and easy offers of kindness, but actually labours and suffers for the profit of many, that by all means he may help some. In Spite of toil and pain, "**whatsoever his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his might.**" Whether it be for his friends or his enemies, for the evil or for the good. He is not slothful in this or any business, as he "hath opportunity" he doeth all manner of good, to all men." He reproveth the ignorant, comforts the afflicted, labours to awaken those who sleep, and he constantly frequents the house of God, as well as stirs up those who are saved through faith. And when he approaches the table of the Lord it is not with lightheartedness, nor is it with a careless behaviour, but with an air, gesture and deportment which speaks nothing else but "God be merciful to me a sinner."*

"And to this add family devotions, and prayer and a setting apart time to worship God as a family. Now with all these things we have spoken which are the attributes of an Almost Christian we have but one more and that is sincerity. By Sincerity I mean a real, inward principle of religion from whence these outward actions flow. And indeed, if we have not this we have not even a heathen honesty. For even the most wretched heathen will abstain from doing evil in order to avoid punishment. If then a man does all these things to avoid punishment or to avoid loss of friends, or his reputation or even his gain, and if you do ever so much good and show ever so much Grace to others, and yet we could not say this man is never so much as an almost Christian if his motive if his motives are thus. Sincerity therefore, is necessarily implied in being almost a Christian; a real design to serve God, a hearty desire to do His Will. A desire to please God in all things; in all his conversation; in al his actions; in all he does; or leaves undone. This design if any man be almost a Christian, runs through the tenor of his life. This is the moving principle, both in his doing, his abstaining from evil, and his using the ordinances of God."

"Yet you might ask, How could it be possible that any man living could go this far and nevertheless be considered by Jesus Christ, as Only Almost a Christian? What more than this can be implied in being a Christian altogether? And I answer, yes, it is possible to go this far and remain almost a Christian."

You ask the question, " What more than all this is implied in being altogether a Christian? And I answer, First, The Love of God. For thus Saith His Word, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Such a love as this engrosses the whole heart, and takes up all the affection, and fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all it's faculties. He that thus Loves the Lord His God, his spirit continually rejoices in the God of His Salvation. His heart is ever crying out, " Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" And
"There is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee!" And indeed what can the altogether Christian desire beside God? Nothing of this world or the things of this world, for we are crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.

The Second thing implied in being altogether a Christian, is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy ghost. True Christian Love which knows no boundaries. For Jesus told us, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor even as thyself.*" And if any ask who is your neighbor? We reply, Every man in the world; every child of His Who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. And this even implies our enemies, for Jesus Said, we must Love those who despitefully use us.

And **thirdly** we can not leave out **Faith which is Revelation**. For without it no man can know the Lord, and thus without Revelation we would be only an almost Christian, no better than the kind old priest or the liberal bleeding hearts. For Revelation is what separates the sheep from the goats and the wise Virgins from the foolish. Revelation is the key that was given Peter, and that which can only come from God through His Prophets. And Once it has been revealed to us we become sole possessors of it. The transfer of title takes place and we possess what has been revealed and it belongs to us and our children forever.

Now in getting back to our study of the Wise and foolish, we find in [**Matthew 10: 16**] Jesus warning us that of the importance He places on being wise in a prudent and sensible form of the word. He says, ***Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*** He wants us to be wise. Not wise in our own way, or as Paul says, "***Be not wise in your own conceit.***" In other words, we are not talking about wisdom for wisdom's sake, but being wise in a practical sense. In a way that will do you some good.

Again in [**Matthew 24: 41 - 51**] we see Jesus use this word "***wise***" in another parable in which He is trying to get us to see the importance of applying what we know to our benefit in a spiritual sense of the word. [**42**] *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

[43] *But know this, that if the Goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.* [44] **Therefore be ye also ready:** for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. [45] **Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?** [46] **Blessed [is] that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.** [47] *Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.* [48] *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;* [49] *And shall begin to smite [his] fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;* [50] *The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for [him], and in an hour that he is not aware of,* [51] *And shall cut him asunder, and appoint [him] his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Now it is very apparent by this parable that Jesus is letting us know through illustration that He expects us to be busy applying what we know rather than being lax, uncaring, unsuspecting and like fools, not ready when He comes. He says, those that are not ready when I come will be placed outside with the hypocrites where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth which we know is tribulation. We find that right after Jesus tells us this parable, He then tells the parable of the five wise Virgins and the Five who are foolish.

And so we pick up this parable of the wise and foolish virgins at verse 3... [3] *They that [were] foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:* Now what good does a lamp do without any oil to light up the darkness with. A lamp without Oil in it is useless. In [**Exodus 29:7**] we see that Oil is a type of The Spirit or anointing of God. **Then shalt thou take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him** Again we see the oil is used for anointing in [**Leviticus 8: 10,12**] *And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the Tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.* Since we know that Oil represents the Anointing of God's Spirit in Scripture, we can then see that the Lamp (representing) the Word of God, is without any anointing of God's Spirit upon it.

So let's get back to the condition of the church here in [**Matthew 25**] and let's pick up again at verse [4] *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* (In other words, the Word was anointed to them which makes all the difference in the world, because to those whom the Word is anointed, it is a living Word, whereas to the others it is not a living Word, but a set of rules and regulations in which they must follow.) In [**Isaiah 28: 9-13**] NIV we see what happens to them who hear this

Message but understand it not. *Who is He trying to teach? To whom is He explaining His Message? To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast? For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there. Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom He said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest" ; and "This is the place of repose"- but they would not listen. So then, the Word of the Lord to them will become: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; as little here, and a little there- so then they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured."* And so we see the foolish virgin whom did not have the anointed Word of God when they realized how late it was they went to those who did understand the Midnight shout and they began to seek this anointing but it was too late. And so when they realized they did not have it they went into a works program and tried everything they could to work themselves up into a condition of anointing but it was to no avail. So let's read on and see what happens to them.

[**Matthew 25: 5**] *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* [**6**] *And at midnight there was a cry made, **Behold, the bridegroom; come out to meet him.*** (**now I know your King James version says, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go out to meet Him, but this is a mis-translation. The original says, "Behold the Bridegroom, come out to meet Him).** You see, the Message is always come out, not go out, for the one declaring the message is not inside with you, but is on the outside saying come out from among them as we see in [Rev 3: 20 James 5: 9, 2 Cor 6: 17 Rev 18:4 etc.

Now lets continue Jesus parable of the virgins with verse [7] *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.* (Now I want you to notice, they all heard the midnight cry, right? So it had to be pretty loud, right? And this word cry here means to speak very loud or with a loud voice, which is called a shout right? So we can say that all the virgins both wise and foolish heard this Midnight Shout? And what was the Shout? "**Behold,**" which means "**Look and See, The Bridegroom is standing here knocking!**" "**Behold I stand at the door and knock,**" "**Behold the Judge standeth at the door.**" [8] *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.* (Give us of your understanding, because we do not understand what this Shout is all about?)

[9] *But the wise answered, saying, [Not so]; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* [10] *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.* (Now, I want you to notice something here. While the others who were considered foolish went out looking to try and find some anointing in

order to understand this Midnight Shout, the others went into the Marriage in the Presence of the Bridegroom as it says, ***They went in with Him.***) [11] *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* (Afterwards, the other realized who it was that was knocking and who it was that was Present, but it was too late then, they missed Him because they had not been ready. The Word had not been anointed to them and they missed the Revelation of Jesus Christ. They were left behind for the tribulation period.) [12] *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* This word **know** here is a Greek word which means to **fully know** but in the context that Jesus is using it, it would suggest that He's saying, ***"I never really had a consummate relationship with you"*** and therefore, (as Doctor Hoyer from Wheaton Illinois who was at one time considered the greatest U.S. student of the Greek said, *"this should be translated as " I used to know you as my wife, but I do not know you as my wife any longer. "In other words, we never consummated our relationship together and therefore I really never knew you in a conjugal sense of the word.* Finally we here Jesus speak forth words of warning concerning this parable and what it means in verse [13] ***Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*** And of course this word watch means to ever be keeping a vigilant eye, or spiritual alertness for the Parousia of the Son of Man.

And remember, as we spoke last Sunday, if this Midnight Cry or Shout is still a secret to you then it has not been revealed to you, and as long as it has not been revealed to you then it does not yet belong to you. For we read in [Deuteronomy 29:29]] ***The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law".***

Notice, Brother Branham said, ***"when you have been truly baptized by the Holy Spirit, then the Message is no longer a mystery to you, it is no longer a secret to you, you know it!" "It's all lit up before you"*** I don't think you'll need to have someone take you aside and tell you about tithing, or the need to be in church, you'll just automatically be there when those doors open, because it's real to you, and because you Love Him so much that you can't get enough of Him. And because it is real, you'll hunger and thirst for as much of Him as you can get. You won't need someone to hold your hand and baby you through, because you're ready to Live, or Die, Sink or drown, or whatever is necessary for His Word's sake. You see, that is what the New Birth is all about. It's not just coming to a fellowship. It's about being born again as a new individual, a new Creation in Christ Jesus. Old things are done away and all things have become new. You don't live for your job, you don't live for your vacation, you don't live for your new car like the rest of the world does. **You live because Christ lives in you.** You have no taste buds for the

things of the world. I'm not saying that some of those things aren't nice to have, but they can't really satisfy. And there is only one thing that can satisfy, and that is to know Him.

In closing let me teach you a song about this hungering and thirsting for Him. I sang I to you on Wednesday night, but let's sing it together this morning.

Just the time I feel that I've been caught in the mire of self. Just the time I feel my minds been bought by worldly wealth. That's when the breeze begins to blow, I know the spirit's call, and all my worldly wanderings just melt into His Love. Lord, I want to know you more, deep within my soul I want to know you , Lord, I want to know you . To feel you heart and know your Mind, to look into your Word stirs up within me, cries that say I want to know you, Lord, I want to know you more.

When - my daily needs - ordinarily - lose life and song. - - - And when my heart bleeds - of sensitivity- to Him is gone. - - - I've run the race - but I've set my pace - and face a shattered soul, One look to His Word takes over my heart and my hunger to be whole. Lord, I want to know you more, deep within my soul I want to know you, Lord, I want to know you; and I would give my final breath to know you in your death and resurrection, Lord, I want to know you more, Lord I want to know you more.

Oh, brothers and sisters, to only know Him in the power of His resurrection, that He is alive today, and He is the same as He was yesterday, so is He today and forever. Jesus Christ, the Lover of our souls. And to just enter into fellowship will never do. We must come into the Door and Christ is that door, and He is the Word for the Hour. Come into Him. Empty yourself of all that you long to be and become what He wants you to be.

"My beloved is mine and I am His, His banner over me is Love, My beloved is mine and I am His, His banner over me is Love, My Beloved is mine and I am His, His banner over me is Love, His banner over me is Love. "He brought me to the banqueting house, His banner over me is Love. He brought me to the banqueting house, His banner over me is love. He brought me to the banqueting house, His banner over me is love, His banner over me is love.

And what is the evidence that He has filled you with His Spirit, that you have been baptized in the Spirit of the Living God? , ***"when you have been truly baptized by the Holy Spirit, then the Message is no longer a mystery to you, it is no longer a secret to you, you know it!" "It's all lit up before you"***. And if it is no longer a mystery to you, then it has been

revealed to you. And if revealed to you then it belongs to you. You are a possessor of it as we read in [Deuteronomy 29:29]] *The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law".*

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