

FAR FROM THE KINGDOM

Text: Mark 12:34

INTRO: A few years ago I read an article by a preacher who was called upon to preach the funeral of a man who had lived & died among Christians. His wife was a Christian. Some of his children were Christians. The preacher hadn't been in the community very long, so he asked if the deceased were a Christian. Someone in the family answered by saying, "No, but he leaned that way."

I've had to preach a few funerals of some who leaned that way. I cannot give much comfort to the family in that sort of situation. There is no real hope in being near the kingdom.

I. THE SCRIBE IN OUR TEXT WAS NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD. MARK 12:28-34

- A. He had some knowledge of the truth, recognized that Jesus had answered the Sadducees correctly, vs. 28.
- B. Recognized that Jesus' answer to his own question was also correct, vs. 32.
- C. Jesus described the scribe as "not far from the kingdom of God," vs. 34. But not IN the kingdom either.
- D. Matthew's account shows that the scribe's question was asked to test Jesus rather than to ascertain the truth, MT 22:35

II. FELIX, THE ROMAN GOVERNOR OF JUDEA,
ACTS 24:22-27

- A. Heard & believed Paul's sermon, vs. 24-25.
- B. Delayed obedience till a convenient time.
- C. Evidently put material wealth ahead of kingdom, vs 23, 26
- D. More interested in playing politics than in doing right, 27
- E. The day he heard & trembled, he might not have been far from the kingdom--but that seems to be the closest he ever came. Not in it.

III. THE RICH YOUNG RULER, MARK 10:17-22.

- A. Interested in eternal life, vs. 17. ran, asked
- B. Good moral character, vs. 20
- C. Didn't lack much--but he lacked, vs. 21
 - 1. Even worshipped Jesus, vs. 17
 - 2. Treasure in wrong place, heart in wrong place, Matt. 6:21
 - 3. So close--yet so far away. Sad. vs. 22

IV. KING HEROD AGRIPPA, I, ACTS 26:26-29

- A. Already knew much of which Paul spoke, vs 26
- B. Believed the Scriptures, vs. 27
- C. Almost persuaded, vs. 28
- D. Almost was not enough, vs. 29

CONCLUSION: You have probably already had more opportunities to respond to the gospel than the scribe, the rich young ruler, Felix or Agrippa. What are you doing about Jesus & His kingdom?

1. It is not enough to be near the kingdom.
There are no spiritual blessings
promised to those who come near the
kingdom.
2. It is not enough just to believe. Agrippa did
that but he did not become a Christian.
3. It is not enough to believe & tremble. Felix
did that. The demons do that, JS 2:19.
4. It is not enough to lack one thing. It is not
enough to be almost persuaded.
5. Think about it. Not far from the kingdom of
God. Just outside that kingdom. But in
the eternal realm, to be outside the
kingdom of God is to be lost in hell
forever.

Judgment is surely coming, Coming to you and me.
We will be judged that moment, For all eternity.
Some will go into Heaven, Others will be denied;
Will you be in that number Standing just outside?

Standing outside while loved ones Enter the pearly
gate.

Knowing that there forever You will then separate;
To be away from loved ones, And by your God
denied.

O what an awful picture, Standing just outside.

Can you not see the picture Of those who are lost
in sin,
Standing outside the portals, Without a hope to
win?
Some crushed with deepest sorrow Without a
friend to guide?
O what an awful picture, Standing just outside.

Refrain:
Standing outside the portals, Standing outside,
denied.
Knowing that with the demons, Ever you shall
abide.
Never to share the beauties, Awaiting the
sanctified.
O what an awful picture, Standing just outside.
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READ REVELATION 22:14-15

Cox Springs, TX, May 8, 1966
Springhill, LA, May 28, 1972
La Porte, TX, March 21, 1976
Exton, PA, December 24, 1989
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 8, 1992