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THE GLORY OF COMPLETENESS OR
THE TRAGIDY OF THE LAST STEP
Acts.26:29/

We read much in these days of tragedy and yet we also see some thing of the glory of achievement. Let us think for a while this morning on the glory of completeness or the tragedy of the last step.

Any thing unfinished if left that way gives off a bad appearance. If a thing unfinished is being worked at toward completion it looks good to me. There is a great glory in completeness. That is to say you begin some project and you visualize the goal yonder when it will be finished. You labor to that end and one day in magnificence your dream stands in concrete form.

This leads us up to think of the tragedy of the last step. The last may be a tragedy in two ways: To take the last step may be tragical or not to take the last step may also be ruinous.

A man may so live that all the people think well of him and his influence is good in the community but one day he gives off an expression that grieves you because you see in it that you have been mistaken in the man all the while. His real self has been hidden behind desires to make a good impression and likely to hold a job. Under some little provocation his real self is allowed to spring forth like a tiger and puncture his influence and like the soap bubble it vanishes out of sight. I saw that happen on your streets here not long since. The tragedy of the last step. Dr. Weatherford tells of a young man who was in Vanderbilt University. He often went in to the lower districts of the city to study social problems. In his own words he went there also to meet with temptations that he might learn to resist them. But after four years of this just near his graduation he made the fatal step and ruined his physical body and blighted his future hopes. I have told you before of a young man in Millsaps College who made fine grades up to the last term of his senior year and then was found cheating on his examination, was expelled from college, and disgraced before the whole student body. Tampering with sin leads you on to that point where you step over the precipice.

Sin in your early life may make the last lap of your ideal a tragedy. Moses had a goal away out yonder to go into the promised land but a sin in his life kept him from reaching his goal. David also had an ideal of building the temple but a sin in his life left the building of the temple to another his son Solomon. All along through life you should do as you are advised to do as you enter a train to day. You see before you this advice, "Watch your step."

Now as to the last step untaken being a tragedy we have many examples in the Bible and in other places. A rich young ruler came to Jesus to know about this thing of receiving eternal life. Jesus told him of the commandments and he said that all of these he had kept from his youth. With that Jesus told him that there was only one other step to take. To take that step meant eternal life for the young man, not to take it meant tragedy. We have no account of the young man ever taking the step. In other words he never finished out his course.

Jesus reemphasizes this doctrine in Rev. 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Too many border land Christians like the Israelites who wanted to stay with their pastures rather than go on into Canaan. Satisfied to let the other fellow go on. This should be re-

No 2. Tragydy of last step.

membered though that just because some like to stop short of the goal does not mean that the Kingdom is going to stop. All the powers of hell can not stop its onswep. Oh yes it can be hindered there is no question about that but wee unto the one who does hinder. Getting next to a goal does not mean that you have reached it. Being in the Wilderness near Canaan did not mean that they were in Canaan. A woman had her tooth removed because she was having tooth ach so badly. Some one asked her if she had had the tooth removed and she replied "I ahd a tooth removed, the dentist made a mistake and got the one next to it." The ache remained.

aa Another tragical last step is to put off being a Christian. "Go thy way at a more convenient season I will call for thee." And Agrippa said to Paul "Almost thou pesuadest me to be a Christian." Almost can not avail, almost is but to fail, almost but lost."

Perhaps the greatest tragidy in the church today is the almost Christian. Member of the church but not at heart a real Christian. Most all of the amusements whaich have been stamped by the church as worldliness when written up as having happened, you notice almost invariably ~~iiivaa~~ the entertainment was given in a church members home. The church can not have power to the nth degree without a consecration of its membership and of its pastor to the point where all that is questionable is put beneath their feet and the church, its Christ, and its every work exalted to a realm high and lifted up above all else.

"Almost thou pesuadest me to be a Christian, 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 save these bonds."

There is glory in completeness, in getting things just right. If you lack a little it is just tragidy. Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have FINISHED MY COURSE." He completed the thing, got it right and ~~there was glory and satisfaction in it.~~ Air men started for Paris were wrecked on the shore and got to Berlin further than Paris, A lady and a man started to Paris got nearly across but landed in the water and were picked up by a ship, A Mexican started to Washington on a non stop flight but en account of fog had to stop for just a little while on the way. He got to Washington but said, "I have arrived but my people will not be preud of me because I had to stop. But previous to all this a lone man started to Paris and storms were met and problems were faced but straight as an arrow Linbergh from the clouds shot into Paris.

This my friends is the only kind of Christian life that can be r ally forceful. Making the last step right, not almost but altogether, and complete.

O LORD GIVE GRACE I PRAY TO ME
THAT I WITHHOLD NO POWERS FROM THEE
FOR THOU CANST TAKE MY LITTLE---ALL
AND ON IT LIKE THE DEW MAKE FALL
THY BLESSING TILL MY LITTLE'S GROWN
TO WONDROUS SIZE-----AND ALL THINE OWN.

MY ALL MY ALL TO BE FOR THEE
LIKE BREAD AND FISH IN GALILEE
THOU CANST INCREASE; AND THEN CANST BLESS
WITH WHAT THOU CALLEST SUCCESS
LORD HELP ME TO INCREASE THIS DAY
AND FOR SOME OTHERS LEAD THE WAY.