

A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft
10232 – “Close to the Trail, But Lost”
Mark 12:34

March 31, 2026

Allison and her daughter and two friends were out for a trail ride in a remote area. They were to rendezvous later, actually, in the afternoon with other family members at their overnight campsite. When it came time to head back, they were somewhere on the side of a mountain, picking their way through very rocky ground. No matter which way they went, they couldn't find the main trail that would take them back down the mountain. They could see where they needed to be, but the terrain was too rugged to get down any other way. The hours wore on, dark began to fall, and Allison's two friends finally made an attempt to get to a cabin they could see. Well after dark, Allison and her daughter finally saw flashlights moving up the mountain. Her friends returned with the man from that cabin. He helped them pick their way to a point where they could actually get right back on the trail. Much to their surprise, while they had been lost, they had been very close to the trail all along!

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“Close to the Trail, But Lost”**.

It's possible to be close to the trail and still be lost in the great outdoors or in your search for God. And without a rescuer, you will never make it home – to God, to heaven.

Jesus met a man who was, like many of us, almost where he needed to be, but still lost. What He said to that man gives all of us religious folks something to think about. This man, who came to Jesus as an honest spiritual seeker, indicated that he really seemed to understand and agree with Jesus' teachings. Then in Mark 12:34, our word for today from the Word of God, “Jesus said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’” My friend was “not far” from the trail home, but she was still lost. This man was “not far” from belonging to Jesus, but he was “not in.”

That's what Jesus might say to a whole lot of us church folks, us Christianity veterans. We agree with Jesus. We go to His meetings. We like Him a lot. We look like we belong to Him. But see, you can have all that and still be lost because there's never been that moment when you fully committed yourself to Jesus as your personal Rescuer from your personal sins. You've never actually grabbed Him like a drowning person would grab a rescuer and you've said, “Jesus, you're my only hope! Save me!” It's His death for your sins on the cross that really is your only hope of having your sins forgiven...of having a relationship with your Creator...of going to His heaven when you die.

But the Rescuer has come to you right where you are – close to the trail, but still lost. He's come looking for you today. We'd never find Him. He'd have to come looking for us. The sheep never finds a shepherd. The shepherd always comes and finds the lost sheep.

He's come to where you are today to bring you home to Him. Maybe these words right now are His way of reaching out to you. He's ready to bring you home to the relationship you were made for; the relationship you've been missing your whole life. Let this be the day that you finally actually belong to the One you've been around for so long. Tell Him, "As of today, Jesus, I am Yours."

You know, our website is a destination for people who want to be sure they belong to Jesus Christ and their eternity is settled and their sins are forgiven. I want to urge you to get there as soon as you can today. It is ANewStory.com.

You may be very close, but you're not in. Could there be a greater tragedy than for you to get to the gates of heaven one day and hear Jesus say, "You were so close, but you're not in." That can change this very day. You can go to sleep tonight knowing that you belong to Jesus!

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