



The Last Parachute

Scott Huckaby's Toastmaster ATM-B #1

ATM-B #1 – Warm Up Your Audience – Objectives:

- Prepare a speech that opens with a humorous story.
- Personalize the story.
- Deliver the story smoothly and effectively.
- Time: Five to seven minutes

INTRO

Mr. Toastmaster, ladies and gentlemen...

Who here has ever been in a life-threatening situation? Whether you realize it or not, all of you have at one time or another. I'm here today to talk about the ultimate survival plan for the worst that can possibly happen to you.

SHIP

A friend of mine told me about a life-threatening experience he had as a college student when he spent the summer in Alaska working on a commercial fishing boat. During a break, he booked a flight on a bush plane to kill some time.

PLANE

The bush-plane was a single engine aircraft fitted with pontoons. Besides the pilot, there were two other passengers besides himself: a professor of sociology from Berkeley and a preacher. The professor made an impression on my friend because he was proud of the fact that he had just been voted the smartest man in the world by Mensa International.

INSTRUMENTS

The flight over the Alaskan wilderness was uneventful until the pilot started pounding on one of the flight instruments and strapped on a parachute. He radioed a mayday then he told his passengers that the fuel line must since there was no place to land they were going to have to jump.

JUMPER

He said there is just one problem, he only had three parachutes. Since he had a family to support he was going to let the three passengers decide who would have to ride the plane down. He said that the best

chances to survive the crash landing would be to put the plane into a stall just before you hit the trees by pulling back on the elevator control. He flung the door open and jumped out.

Before anybody could say anything, the professor grabbed the next pack, strapped it on and said he could not deprive the world of its smartest man and jumped out.

The preacher looked at my friend and told him that he did not fear death since he was confident he'd be going to heaven and that my friend was a young man who had his whole life before him so he should take the last parachute.

My friend replied, "Don't worry about it, the smartest man in the world just jumped out with my backpack."

It is unlikely that any of us will actually face such an extreme situation as this. It seems like life threatening situations don't happen very often in our society but I think they are actually more pervasive than we realize.

FREEWAY

I guarantee that anyone who has driven the Southwest Freeway has had a life threatening experience. We get complacent about the routine danger we're in on the freeways. When something happens where we do recognize the danger, it is usually after the fact because things happen so fast. Such events should serve as wake-up calls to us to consider what will happen after death. Now I know this is not a very popular topic and it is easy to put-off any consideration of life after death.

PASCAL

But someone who did give some thought to life after death was the French mathematician Blaise Pascal back in the 1600s. You may recall that a computer language was named for him. Pascal became known for his experiments with fluids in physics and his work in mathematics distinguished him as the "Father of Probability Theory."

WAGER

Pascal applied probability theory to the question of life after death and this led to his becoming a Christian. The rationale that led him to Christ has become known as Pascal's Wager and says: *"God is or He is not... Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that He is."*

CHART

Pascal's Wager says that either God exists or He doesn't. You can't avoid choosing, a refusal to choose has the same result as betting that God does not exist. The power of Pascal's Wager is profound: it is logical to bet on God's existence.

YOKE

If you wager correctly that God exists, there is some cost in the here and now. Jesus said we should *"count the cost"* (Luke 14:28) but He also said that this cost is small, *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11:30).

GLORY

The Bible goes on to say that the eternal reward for believing far outweighs the price we pay in this world. For example, Romans 8:18 says, *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

LOST

Consider the case that God does not exist and you believe... When I first researched this topic a few years ago, I ran across a website called the Global Village Atheist. This website no longer exists (which has a lot to say about the durability of its message), but it did represent the atheist perspective arguing that you do lose a lot by believing in God in the here and now... they said: *"What you have lost is the opportunity to live the one life you will ever have to the fullest and discover the wonders of the natural world unfettered by theology."* If religion is what the Global Village Atheist seeks to avoid, he is already lost because atheism is as much a belief system as any a theology.

GAIN

If a person is correct in their belief that God does not exist, they don't really gain very much... The "Global Village Atheist" says *"what you have gained is whatever gain arises from believing truly"* but does not go on to say what this is.

EAT & DRINK

The Bible says that all you gain is an attitude of, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (1 Cor 15:32).

REVELATION

Betting wrongly about God's existence has the severest of consequences. The Bible says in Revelation 20:10-14 that those who reject a personal relationship with their Creator will be cast into *"the lake of fire and brimstone where... they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."* Not allowing God into your life has eternal ramifications. It hardly seems worth the risk to bet against Him.

CONCLUSION-1

Well, I hope we don't have any Global Village Atheists in this group. My experience has been that genuine atheists are pretty rare but we do live in an age where logical reasoning is less important than feelings.

CONCLUSION-2

So if you encounter an atheist, tell them about Pascal's Wager and encourage them to investigate the Bible where they'll learn about the ultimate survival story.

CONCLUSION-3

God has a parachute reserved for all who seek to know Him and He does not want anyone to exit this world without it.

Mr. Toastmaster...