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PAUL UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF FELIX

ACTS 24

Introduction:

This chapter covers a period of approximately two years. And the details of it have to do mainly with the early part of it. Felix is the governor and dwells at Caesarea. It is estimated that Paul is about 61 or 62 years old. And the story itself begins where we left off - when the prisoner was taken to Caesarea under heavy convoy. They brought him here for protection and for an appearance before the governor.

Back in Jerusalem, there had been a plot against his life. And so under darkness, the journey of 60 miles - Paul had been delivered safely to the governor. And had been placed in prison. Chapter 23:25. With the promise, I will hear thee fully. When your accusers arrive from Jerusalem. In the meantime, Paul was held in Herod's judgement hall.

Felix had legal power to decide Paul's case. He had the authority to hear the cause and to decide it. The entire chapter is given over and devoted to the judicial situation of Paul.

The story in itself is very simple - but is very full of interest and value as you consider the history of Paul's life. We will be able better to discern the enemies of Christ. And if you ask tonight, what is the chief enemy of the soul, or of Christ. What would you answer. Would it be procrastination, the thief of time. Would it be the old Spanish proverb

- the road of by and by leads to the house of never. When Satan becomes the master of a situation, just as long as he can get a soul to say - not today, or some other time - I will give heed to it. Not now, but by and by. Then you discover in this simple story tonight that illustration. There are three definite things that I see in this chapter that we might give attention to as we come to consider it. First, the lawyer's oration - V. 1-9. Second, the defenses observation - V. 10-23. And third, the defendant's orthodoxy - V. 24-27.

I. THE LAWYER'S ORATION - V. 1-9.

V. 1 - One cannot imagine the great interest that the situation had at that time in Jerusalem and in Caesarea. However, when you read v. 1 - it says that Ananias, the high priest, descended with the elders. The presence of Ananias, *Later Kipped with Dagger -* the high priest, certainly brought great inspiration. When you think of an old man like Ananias willing to make a journey of 60 or 70 miles. And to do so in such great haste. Just the memory of that fact will help you to understand something of the opposition which Paul was up against. And the hatred which these men had toward Paul. And this committee from the Sanhedrin came to Caesarea to reason with the Roman court. They brought with them an orator - a man who had passed the bar examine and was accustomed to the order of the court. He was able to plead the cause of the high priest and his friends. And to present the accusation in correct legal terms.

That is exactly what (Tertulus) the orator, the lawyer - intended to inform the governor. *Paul Prosecutor, Paid Orator -*

V. 2 - Tertulus, the lawyer, steps forth to (set forth his case). The case of these clients who had employed him as their attorney.

Felix - ...
11 Hoped Paul by Bribing he returned 3-

He begins by flattery, of Felix. Now keep in mind that Tertullus had been paid and hired as an attorney to come and to give his oration. The court was in session. Felix was seated on the throne. Or in the chair of judgement when the lawyer stepped forth. He wanted first of all to gain the favor of the governor. So he started out by flattering him on the wonderful record he had made. And he expanded greatly on the things that he knew - even though they were untrue - to magnify the leadership of Felix. He congratulated him on bringing peace to his nation - it was very much in the providence of God, he said.

V. 3 - We accepted always and in all places, most noble Felix. With all thankfulness. He rings first of all the praises of Felix. Now this must have been something to hear - it was certainly as Luke presents it. We may know that Luke might not have caught every word.

V. 4 - He says, I am going to point out in a very few words - I am not going to be long-winded. And I would pray that you would hear that. Because the case seems already settled - and I believe that I can convince you in a few words what your decision should be. He was playing on the sympathy of the judge.

Mark Twain - Story Steamboat, Blind Blair, Stopped dead everytime its whistle was blown. Could not move until more steam developed. This is like some speakers, blowing his own horn - "Blessed are they, that Toot their own horns, for verily, they shall be well tooted!"

V. 5 - He begins his charges and unfolds what the indictment was and what should be considered very carefully.

Now this is a very serious charge against Paul. That the lawyer intended this to be something against Paul's character. And it was to prejudice the mind of the Roman Governor and the court. And it was suggested that Paul was a man of very basic morals. It was meant anyways for an offensive description.

Pestilent - like a plague! like syphrous spots.

That means that he was not a man of high character - but he was thoroughly diseased and he was a danger to the people because of his morals.

² Second, a mover of insurrections. Or sedition. V. 5. Among the Jews throughout the world. This labeled Paul as a man who stirred up trouble. Who disturbed the national peace was an enemy of the Roman government and that he created civil disorder, wherever he went - that he had traveled. No doubt, he mentioned his missionary journeys over in Ephesus, and other places. And in Athens, where they had some problems. And in Lystra, where there were some up-risings. And no doubt this orator brought in all these things against the Apostle Paul.

³ Thirdly, he is a ring leader of the Nazarene's. The sect called the Nazarene's. Now the Romans knew what havoc false Messiahs had caused and how people would come along and whip up groups of people and unsettled folks. That the Messiah had already arrived. We have maybe some of this today - I don't know how you would classify it - as pop religion. This movement and that movement. They call it a bumper-sticker religion. The kind that is very flashy. The kind of ministers to the popular culture of the day. You know the methods and the things that are going on in the world today. People like witches and revelations, and hundreds of things that people drum up as being most popular in this age.

⁴ The fourth thing was he profaned the temple. V. 6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple, whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. He pictures Paul as the defiler of the temple, and to defile the temple was to infringe upon the laws and the rights of the priests. Therefore,

the orator was saying that this man here, has infringed upon the authority of the high priest who is also sitting here in this court today.

Truth of God Twisted -
Misrepresented -

V. 7 - He says we were in the process of judging this man according to the law but we were interrupted by the captain - and he took him away from us with violence. Took him out of our hands.

V. 8 - The whole case has been transferred here to you at Caesarea. And that is the reason why we are here today.

V. 9 - All the Jews will give assent to all I have said as being the truth.

Now the lawyers oration was to do simply one thing - he really didn't want Paul tried, by Felix - but he was hinting at trying to get Paul transferred back to Jerusalem. To take him back to Jerusalem and let us try him under our law. That is what he wants Felix to say. That we will try him - and then we will handle the prisoner. But the lawyer had said, it was half-truth, and some of it was twisted truth. And the information that had been given him about profaning the temple of God was untrue. A charge that was very foul and was stamped by the father of liars. And Paul never took part in any such thing.

II. THE DEFENSE'S OBSERVATION - V. 10-23.

The defense of Paul is a great illustration of his ability.

V. 10 - Paul says that he was happy that he could speak. And bring an answer to Felix of the charges that had been placed against him in the court. He recognized the situation, and in contrast to Tertullus, Paul's arguments were strictly logical because he followed in the footsteps of the orator and unfolded exactly what the facts were.

V. 11 - He says it has been now just 12 days since I went to Jerusalem. For the purpose of worshipping - that was a main business.

V. 12 - Paul proceeds with his observations and defense.

First, a denial.

V. 12 - First, not disputing in the temple. He was not in the temple disputing with anyone. But he was there for purification reasons and he is going to deny this charge and he is going to demand proof. Paul knows the Roman law and there is clear evidence when he declares that those who accused him ought to be present to prove their case.

Second, he said, I deny stirring up the people in the city, in the synagogue, or in the temple. V. 12.

Third, I deny the things that I have been accused of in V. 13.

They cannot prove the things which they have here stated. And Paul challenges them right on the spot that they have no proof.

Now Paul's observation, a very clear and very simple in his defense. He makes an outright denial.

He makes a confession. Paul gives a positive side.

V. 14 - First, a (follower of the way) Now they called him - but he confessed that he served the God of our Father. His claim was his religion and he carried it to it's ultimate conclusion. In effect, he claimed that they had proclaimed their own religion and violated the point by stopping short when they should have gone on.

Second, I am a worshipper of God He claimed that his religion was according to the Hebrew religion. So serve I to God, the God of our Fathers.

Third, I am a believer in the law and in the prophets He declared that his belief was in harmony with all that had been preached and written by the prophets.

V. 15 - Fourth, he said I believe in the (resurrection) He declared that he had faith in the resurrection which was at the heart of the Hebrew religion. That he said, both the just and the unjust will one day be brought from their graves.

V. 16 - Fifth, I have a (conscience) void of offense of God or man. In this regard, Paul had taken pains not to be an offender in relations to God or man.

V. 17 - Sixth, he said, I confess that I brought an offering, a gift, to my people - the Jews. To help those that were in poverty.

V. 18 - Seventh, he said a group of Jews from Asia came and objected to my being purified in the temple. They should be here at this trial - but they are not.

V. 20 - He challenges each accuser to say if the council found him evil of any one point in Jerusalem.

V. 21 - Paul says the resurrection seems to me to be the big charge - that everyone has against me now in this committee that has come up.

V. 22 - When Felix heard these things, Felix had been governor there for some time and he knew a little bit about the Christian religion. For I imagine that some of his soldiers had been converted. He did not have the complete knowledge of it but he knew about it.

V. 23 - Says that he deferred it - he postponed the case. And he ordered that the chief captain should come down that he might get a little more information on just why the Jews had created this mob action. And why Paul had been taken into custody.

Now Felix did not wish to offend the Jewish people. Hence, he postponed the decision until a later date.

V. 23 - Paul was sent back to prison, with a centurion in charge. And secondly with the instruction that friends might visit him. And thirdly, that he might have certain freedoms as a prisoner.

III. THE DEFENDENT'S ORTHODOXEY - V. 24-27.

Hence, we have discussed the lawyer's oration. V. 1-9. The Defenses Observation - V. 10-23. And now we come to the Defendant's Orthodoxy in the last verses of this chapter.

V. 24 - Now there are three people in this part of the story. Paul, the preacher, the missionary, the prisoner - a great Christian. But he is in chains. What should he say? He did his best - but failed to win them to Christ.

Felix, the governor of Judea. A high position - he had political power. With a word sent a man to lions - burn at stake - Power to take away life.

Drusilla, a Jewish wife of Felix, a wicked woman. But she was the wife of another man. Married at age 16 to a petty king in Syria - social circles - left husband go off with Felix. Her great grandfather slew The Babe in Bethlehem - Heret uncle slew John Baptist - same uncle Herod wanted Jesus to do magic tricks.

The interview that we now consider is not putting Paul on trial. But Paul makes it so as he reverses the situation and brings Felix and Drusilla to trial. In fact, he brings them to the very judgement seat of God. And he tries them under the text of righteousness.

We are now in the city of Caesarea - a marble city, houses and temples of marble, splendid architecture, and the splendor of Governor Felix's residence, and there were probably statues, pictures, and carvings. wine was drunk out of golden vessels

V. 24 - After certain days, Felix came with his wife Drusilla. He sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith of Christ. Here sat a woman of extra-ordinary beauty. Whom he had stolen by breaking up another man's domestic circle. She was only 18 years of age - a princess by birth. And of course, she was waiting her doom because she was to be buried, in the ashes of Mt. Vesuvius. Which in sudden eruption one day brought her to her death.

No doubt they were seated together one afternoon in the palace and were talking about odd things that had gone on - perhaps in the way. And Felix knew about the Christians. He knew they didn't go around stirring up trouble. So Tertullus had not fooled him. He had been born a slave you will remember. And he was in this position of power.

Now I imagine, he said, you have a very distinguished prisoner. I believe his name is Paul. You know, is he one of my countrymen. I should like very much to see him. In fact, I would like to hear him speak - I have heard so much about him. Around the courtyard. And she may have heard part of the trial through a window that was open. Or heard the applause that greeted the speech of lawyer Tertullus. When he denounced Paul. I imagine Felix said yes, we have such a man - I have ordered him to come up right now. So they brought him up - chains and all. A little old man beyond 60 years of age. Probably looking nearer to 100.

Really, what brought this meeting up -

First, (curiosity) She knew something of Paul but she had never met him. Felix had met him face to face in the court trial. But Paul had handled his own case with such skill that it impressed Felix. And his enemies had said, that he turned the world upside down.

Second, they were bored. Now Felix's name signifies happy - but he was not happy

all the time. No pleasure was lasting to them and things were growing stale.

They were both living in sin - and sin has no new tricks.

Third, they were looking for (material gain) hoping that Paul would come in before them. And maybe would offer them some money - maybe for his freedom. They were trying to capitalize on this to advance their own ambitions.

In the fourth place, these two people might have been (longing for something in their hearts) Maybe a better life - maybe some motivation in their hearts that they were searching for something. Like the motto in the department store, it is not what the customer comes in after, but what he goes out with that matters.

So because of curiosity and probably some unreasonable ideas - they thought that they would bring Paul in. Maybe for an afternoon of entertainment. They had heard how Paul could speak. You remember that night in Ephesus when he - past midnight and on into the morning - and the man went to sleep in the window and fell out. So Drusilla and her husband wanted to hear one of Paul's (sermons). I can imagine when Paul walked in - that Drusilla sent word up to him. "Now let us hear some of your great thoughts."

If ever a man had a chance to show off, it was Paul. And if ever a man had an opportunity to entertain the leaders and the rulers of the country, Paul could have talked about the Grecian art that he had seen. He could have told them about the Acropolis. How it looked in the moonlight. He could have talked about his life in prison at Philippi. He could have told him about all the gods he met in Athens. Paul could have told them a string of jokes.

I think something else Paul could have done, as a traveling evangelist and missionary - he could have told them some horror stories that would have raised them up out of their seats. But the strange thing is, that Paul did not do any of this. And he walks into this place, and he immediately launches into his orthodoxy. Paul talks to them about some immoveable great facts. And he is going to tell them about God, some facts that are as stationary as a mountain. He is going to tell them about a God that they are responsible too. And he is going to tell them, in a way, that he will diagnose their case. And what a tragedy the patient walks out and refuses the cure. But Paul is going to be a physician here. And the patient is going to adjourn the meeting before the benediction is given.

And Paul begins, not by entertainment - but by preaching the Gospel to Felix and Drusilla.

V. 25 - Three things in Paul's orthodoxy.

First righteousness He reasoned, he did not rant. He did not beat the air. He did not pull any magic tricks off. He spoke with common sense with down-right being right with God. There was no flattery. God hates sin. He wants them to feel the awfulness of their sin before God.

Man and woman are wholly unrighteous.

There is no real living without righteousness. And God endured his full sanction to a righteous man and a righteous woman. Nothing that will substitute

for right living.

Paul was challenging whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto man more than unto God. And Paul's purpose is not to save his skin. To win the applause of these high government people. Nor was it to create an easier time for himself. But Paul wanted to be right - as God had given him insight. And nothing can take the place to be right with God and with man.

*Tragic when matrimony goes sour - Today Need hear this message
Bible injunction Eph: 5:33 love your wife as yourself
"Reverence your Husband"*

This old missionary, peeled like thunder
His voice, this grand old man of God
Stooped over, and begins to eliminate
The glories of the future life
And he begins to talk about
The shackles of sin.

As he reasoned with this man - his first note was righteousness. Before him sat a couple in sin - Felix and Drusilla. It would be hard to paint in a few words a more sinful picture than he has before him. Drusilla was the third wife of Felix. And she was on her second husband. She was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa. She is vanity, selfish ambition, a social climber. And probably Felix had little difficulty in seducing her away from her husband who was a king to enjoy the social advantages of being a Roman Governor's wife.

Look at her family tree.

Her father murdered the Apostle James. Acts 12:1ff. Her great uncle slew John the Baptist. Mark 6:17.

Her great grandfather Herod the Great, killed the babies of Bethlehem.
In an effort to slay Jesus. Matt. 2:16.

Drusilla was a sinful product of sinful fervor - and it was all compounded into a life of evil.

Felix was a former Greek slave. Who had risen in the corrupt Roman court to a position of influence. He revealed cruelty and lust. That his power was carried out with the mind of a slave. In other words, his happiness consisted of cruel, misuse of power, sensual lust after another man's wife. And he lived by corrupt practice of receiving bribes.

Few if any, listening to me ^{today} today equals Drusilla and Felix in open living in sin. But no one should excuse himself for that reason. The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23. And doubtless this corrupt couple had broken everyone of the Ten Commandments.

You remember that James 2:10 says for whosoever shall keep the holy law and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.

Sin is something that wrecks the life and it destroys the peace. And first, last, and always - it violates the holiness of God. Sin puts nails in the hands of the son of God on the cross. And there they remain for judgement.

Paul bore down on the orthodoxy of righteousness. That God hates wrong and loves righteousness. He tried to get Felix to bring his life into conformity - and the ideal standard of righteousness, which God has set up for all mankind.

I think it is most likely that Paul explained how we become righteous. In God's sight - through faith in Christ. Paul evidently talked to Felix and Drusilla about faith. And union with Christ. And belief.

Second, his orthodoxy include temperance. Self control, self-mastered. He was talking to a man and woman whose souls were enchained and were mastered by everything else except the power of God. Again, this point is a point of Felix's weakness. A dissipated man uncontrolled sinner - and he lived and was unworthy in himself. He lived in adultery. He was unclean. He lived for greed and for wealth. And Paul said, you have given your reigns of your life to fowl hands, to passion, appetite for bad things.

And they were both uncontrolled in sin. Impure lives. And Paul could have said like Nathan, thou art the man. Thou art the woman.

When Paul was talking about this part - that he believed in Drusilla may have leaned over and told Felix - let's send that preacher back to his cell. Because here were two people living in open sin. And a strong systematic theology says "there was a great preacher before Louie XIV. He talked of the struggle between the old and the new man. And Louie the King, from out in the audience said "Oh, sir, I know those two men. The two are in this man. And the preacher looked down and said - "but one or the other must die. One must conquer."

That is exactly what Paul was saying to this couple. Your adultrous union

- one must conquer. I think he tried to bring them to a realization and to a self knowledge that it would be better for self control and some self reverence before God.

Third, the judgement. Orthodoxy included righteousness, temperance, and judgement. Ministers used to preach much on judgement. All of us must stand before this judgement seat of Christ to give an account of ourselves to God. This is one of the great certainties that Paul always stressed. This was a most dramatic incident in the life of Paul. We know there is a judgement because of the judgements of the past. Think about Babylon, think about Rome, think about Sodom. That was judgement.

Now you cannot leave this out of this belief. As Dr. Robert G. Lee preaches a sermon on Ahab in which he entitled it - "Payday Someday". And through that sermon he talked some payday someday coming to each of the characters in the story of Ahab. He talks about how the King met his payday. How the Queen met her payday in judgement.

Now we may get away and think that we are getting by with sin today. But someday we are going to have to face God. And the wicked times that we have today is going to be given in account.

You are a Governor, you must face God!

Mark it down, there will be a day of reckoning, a day of revelation. And of rendering accounts. And how ever far wrong you have gone, the final facts of every human life, your private habits of life, are going to come up before you.

And this great fact is pointing out before Caesar's throne here.

Thank God for a preacher like Paul. And thank God for preacher's today who still preach on this great need. That is what they needed to here. Here are your sins. Here is the orthodox creed of God. Every word that Paul spoke was true. Every word that Paul used here was faithful to the Scripture.

What was the results of this Orthodox belief as given by Paul. He could not sneer at it. He could not laugh at it. He might have said in his heart, now Paul is trying to frighten me.

He could have gotten angry with Paul. Like the old farmer used to describe the preacher who preached on sin - and layed it out pretty close for people to understand. With this phrase - "he was plowing close to the corn."

"The judgments of the Lord are true & righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold yea than much fine gold." Psa 19:9-11

Felix could have said, you are my prisoner. Now you can't talk to me like that.

Rev. 21:8 "But the fearful, & unbelieving, & abominable, & murderers, & whoremongers, & sorcerers, & idolaters, & all that love and hate have part in lake burneth fire & brimstone"

This was the zero hour of the life of Felix and Drusilla. It was the crisis of their souls. Their sins had become real to them. They saw themselves wrong in the sight of God. Their hearts were stirred. The Bible says -

V. 26 - Felix trembled. He grew very white about his lips. His heart beat unevenly. He put his hand to his brow. His robe he drew tighter around his body. His knees began to shake. He clutched the side of the chair in terror. He had heard kings speak. He heard emperors speak. He had heard lawyers like Tertullus speak. But both of them had deep sin.

And Felix was pale - perspiring. And he was saying - that's enough.
That's enough. That moment marked the doom of Felix.

He said, you are right Paul in his conscience. He stopped the sermon. I
don't want to hear anymore about your theology, or about your God. Maybe sometime
later you can finish. When I have a moment, I will call for you.

V. 25 - Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will
call thee. The Spirit was working, but Felix did not wait for the close of the
sermon. And no doubt, he did not wait for Paul's invitation. And his giving
the remedy - in which Paul could have told him about one that could have set him
free. But he was hopeless and helpless - why not accept Christ. *Most Tragic Words in Bible*
Tomorrow is too late.

Felix knew that if he accepted Christ, he would have to give up his sins.
He would have to send Drusilla back to her husband. Felix would have to give
up his immorality. Felix would probably lose his job. But Felix would gain
more than he lost because he would have gone to Heaven.

He said, simply, some other day. And that some other day never came. He
was later driven into exile and died without God. How different, the jailer heard
and he is in Heaven tonight. But Felix was afraid to look into his conscience
and examine his sins. There are many who may listen to this sermon tonight,
and yet will go away no better off. But someday, you will cut the last rope
and the last opportunity that you have of becoming a Christian.

Why did Felix want Paul to go away - and why did he fail.

First not because he was ignorant - it was not because he did not understand

the sermon. Or that the sermon was too deep for him and went over his head.

He knew a plenty.

2 It was not because he was a big sinner. That is not the case. But it is because he refused to give God a chance.

3 It was not because he was wholly hardened. That he had sinned against life so much. The Bible says he trembled. He was not beyond hope. The spirit was still working in him.

Fourth, it was not because he could not meet the demands. He did not want to pay the price. He did not want to give up Drusilla. There are a lot of "almost" folks in this world today. A man in California digging for gold in 1849 stuck his pick in the ground and sold the claim for a song. The purchaser soon found rich veins and became a millionaire.

Fifth, it was not because he could not be changed, but because he was unwilling to be changed. He did not want to rise and follow Jesus.

I had a woman once to tell me following a church service, that I came near going forward in the service today. After you preached, I felt like dedicating my life to God. But I failed. And that is just like Felix - almost he became a Christian. But he wasn't willing to give it up. And he was willing to go on without God's love.

Sixth, he did not know what constituted a convenient season. Now he may have thought that he could turn to God when he pleased. But he hoped someday to be

religious. That the position would be more favorable and that the religious advantages would be greater. And that he would feel the still small voice operating within. And that God would make it more convenient. What a mistake.

Seventh, He got rid of a disagreeable subject. God's warning of judgement. Who wants to be righteous. Who wants to have self-control. Don't you worry about God's judgement. Delay is really a decision in the wrong way. It robs us of large blessings.

You have a chance today. What are you going to do with it. If you say, I have to think it over! You are saying, I want to hold on to my sin a little longer!

The Scripture says, come now and let us reason together. Someday you are going to (face God) - and God is going to say, I called, and you refused. You would not come.

Let me summarize why Felix failed here.

First, (political reasons) He kept Paul in jail and pleased the Jews. He was like Pilate washing his hands of the blood of Jesus. He sold his soul for a few votes and for his office.

Second, there were (financial reasons). It says that Felix listened to Paul a little oftener. V. 26 - That he hoped that money would be given him. He was looking for a bribe - nothing more. Nothing is more tragic than a man who loves money - and sells his soul for it. He exchanges his salvation for this.

Life is uncertain - when, where, and how will you take your first step....
toward God. God alone has the secret.

The power of habit and delay will keep you putting it off for eternity. ✓
Your lost condition ought to be a fact before your eyes. You rebelled, you
refused, and he resisted. I call you to decide today about your soul. In your
delay now, and come to him immediately and let your decision be made known.

Answer Burn

College - Revival -

Prudent, interested, -

" Wait till cool off -

Burn to Room - Pulled shade -
"Good Bye God"

God never spoke to - again -

(No Convict Season ever came) →