

## Pt. 14 “The Peril of Postponement”

### Acts 24

#### A. See the tragedy of Flattery & Lies...vs. 2-3

Flattery is nothing more than a propped up lie

Flattery...

- a. It appeals to your prideful nature
- b. It makes us think improperly
- c. It is the most effective tool used by a Con-man
- d. It should send up a danger signal
- e. It denounces Biblical Truth
- f. It is a downward road

1. Paul’s Boldness of Truthfulness...vs. 10

2. The Folly of Foolishness

Fallacy of Believing a Lie

- a. You will form conviction by convenience
- b. God will not bless conversion by convenience...vs. 25

#### B. Paul’s Message to Felix...vs. 24-25

1. He spoke of Righteousness

- The Good News of Jesus

2. He spoke on Temperance...self-control

- Felix had many problems....money-ego-moral-emotional
- Felix, whom Tacitus said indulged in "every kind of barbarity and lust"
- Felix first enticed and chased Drusilla... granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra.
- He dumped this Drusilla and replaced her with another Drusilla,
- Felix was captivated by this younger Drusilla's beauty, he wooed her away from King Azizus her husband with the aid of a Cyprian Jew named Atomus, who pretended to be a magician.
- This 2<sup>nd</sup> Drusilla married Felix as much to escape the hatred of her sister Bernice, who abused her because of her beauty, as in response to his amorous spell
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- To such a messed up couple Paul preaches *faith in Christ [Messiah] Jesus*

- (1) Given Felix's and Drusilla's past, Paul focuses on matters that are foundational to a call to repentance: *righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come* (Jn 16:8-11).
- (2) The couple, needed to understand God's standard, their accountability and the reality of a final reckoning.
- (3) In brief, they must face the bad news of their lost spiritual condition before they can grasp and embrace the good news.

- (4) Neither has pursued...
- (a) *righteousness*, "right conduct before God which follows the will of God and is pleasing to him"
  - (b) *Self-control*, whether in regard to sex, money or power, is foreign to them.
  - (c) *The judgment to come* ...Felix, a Roman freedman, knows of it only in a different form, probably being "vaguely persuaded that souls went down from the tomb to some deep places where they received rewards and punishments" (Cumont 1959:86).

In Today's World...

1. The majority view all moral values as relative,
2. We Christians need to find a way to speak of God's righteousness again in such a way that it raises a standard for all.
3. In a time when sin is viewed as alternative lifestyles, psychosocial dysfunctions, addictions or even disease, the gospel witness needs to find a way to speak meaningfully of responsible moral self-control.
4. In an age of anxiety when humans know "something is wrong," though they have rejected the moral categories--absolutes, sin and guilt--that would enable them to know "someone is wrong," the Christian witness must learn how to declare a judgment to come in terms that make sense.
5. Unless this happens, repentance will be impossible and the salvation rescue will appear unnecessary and hence irrelevant.
  - (a) Paul always preached for a decision, and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit Felix knows this message is for him. It fills him with fear. He is startled, terrified, at the prospect of the last day (Lk 24:5, 37; Acts 10:4). But this does not lead to humble faith. Felix uses procrastination to stay in control of his own destiny. He will determine when and to what extent these matters are considered in the future.
    - (b) How often does fear hide behind a busy schedule?
      - How many have fooled themselves into thinking that by not deciding they have truly "kept all the options open" and at a *convenient* time in the future they will give the claims of Christ the serious attention they deserve?
      - Actually indecision is a decision--a choice to remain where we are, outside God's saving grace, with the condemnation of the judgment to come our only prospect (Jn 3:18, 36).
    - (c) Felix's procrastination is more than a coping strategy.
      - It also expresses his greed.
      - Following common provincial administrative practice, he demands gold--seeks a bribe--from Paul in exchange for his
      - He is evidently willing to trade hope of life eternal later for hope of money now
    - (d) Felix's desire for glory led him to trade the approval of fellow human beings for justice. He left office under a cloud. A Jewish delegation's complaint to the emperor about his ruthless suppression of a dispute between Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea led to his removal
    - (e) As he leaves, he curries the Jews' favor by leaving Paul in prison.

**Felix's profligate life warns us all not to let sex, money or power put us into a "don't call me, I'll call you" stance toward the gospel.**

3. He reasoned with Felix concerning the coming Judgment
  - a. Do what is right before God
  - b. Don't listen to polls or popular opinion
  - c. Don't seek to make profit off weakness of others
  - d. He reasoned with Felix concerning the coming Judgment

### **C. Five Mistakes Felix Made**

1. Ran the Peril of God's Wrath
2. Ran the Peril of a Merciful God...(Genesis 6:3)
3. Ran the Peril of Death
4. Ran the Peril of a Hardened Heart
5. Ran the Peril of Following your Feelings
  - e. How did you feel about that experience