

I. A CRITICAL DEFECT

- A. Last week we met the slick orator who the Chief Priest and Elders hired.
 - 1. We saw last week Paul before Felix. This week it is Felix before PAUL!
 - 2. A Roman who would speak for them to the Governor Felix
 - a. Who was supposed to know all the Roman laws and traditions.
 - b. Who would be able to talk circles around Paul.
 - c. Who would flatter Governor Felix.
 - d. PSA. 5:9 – “For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.”
 - 3. They brought a bevy of charges against Paul.
 - a. He was a pestilent fellow.
 - b. A mover of SEDITION / a RINGLEADER of the Nazarenes
 - c. A profaner of the Temple (why would the Romans care?)
 - d. They even badmouthed Captain Lysias in his absence.
 - 4. But they didn’t know who they had – they faced PAUL.
 - a. A Pharisee of the Pharisees, educated in Jewish Law
 - b. ALSO, a Roman citizen who knew his rights as a Roman!
 - c. They got more than they bargained for!
- B. But they had one problem with their case – there were no witnesses.
 - 1. And Paul was quick to point out their lack of legal standing (vs. 13)
 - 2. They have no proof, no evidence, and no witnesses.
 - a. They don’t even have a motive! Why would he do these things?
 - b. If ANY of these things were true, someone would have SEEN it.
 - c. No eyewitnesses! No direct testimony!
 - 3. One more thing: The plaintiffs aren’t here! (vs. 18-19)
 - a. Roman law is much like our English Common Law
 - b. You have the right to face your accusers.
 - c. The Jews from Asia ought to have been here to make their case.
- C. This is very damaging to the Jews case, and everyone knows it!
 - 1. Notice that the Jews have nothing more to say, Tertullus silent.
 - a. Felix was not a just ruler, but he was a careful one.
 - b. He wanted to hear all sides, but he never “ruled” (vs. 22)
 - c. He ALSO wanted a bribe (vs. 26)
 - d. Paul’s family may have been well-off.
 - 2. So Felix DEFFERED the case for another day
 - a. DEFER – “To delay; to put off; to postpone to a future time; as, to defer the execution of a design.”

- b. ECC. 5:4 – “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.”
 - c. PROV. 13:12 – “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”
3. The Jews have a CRITICAL DEFECT in their evidence, and their CASE IS DEFERRED. In the meantime, Paul gets a CHANCE DIVINE.
 4. We will see the governor’s CHARACTER DISPLAYED and hear a CALL very DESPARATE!

II. A CASE DEFERRED

- A. Felix was a lost man, but in this case, at least knew his job! (vs. 22)
 1. He wanted to hear the full case not just one side.
 - a. MLB suspended a Cy Young award-winning pitcher.
 - i. No hearing, no investigation, BLACKLISTED HIM
 - ii. He’s pitching in Japan and suing.
 - iii. Even the judge ruled ex-parte
 - iv. Defense attorney withheld video and information.
 - v. And put HIMSELF on the release list!
 - b. In this case, let us make no mistake – sexual relations of ANY type.
 - i. Must be within only the bounds of holy matrimony.
 - ii. If he had never been alone with the woman, no charge!
 - iii. Mike Pence – made a laughingstock, but HE IS RIGHT
 - iv. There was a time when people lived ABOVE BOARD
 2. Felix knew his job. He was to find out what happened.
 3. If only people today had enough professional curiosity to find out!
 - a. News media, courts, businesses, etc.
 - b. A charge of racism, transphobia, sexism will get someone FIRED.
 - c. Lives are destroyed with words and political correctness.
- B. Felix probably believed Paul.
 1. For one thing, Paul was a Roman and that’s just how Rome worked.
 2. But also, Paul was rational – he spoke for himself, and he spoke well!
 3. Most importantly, there was no EVIDENCE or EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY
 4. Once upon a time, the Roman Character could not be bribed (vs. 26)
 5. Now, during the time of the Caesars, the culture had declined.
- C. Paul was given liberty – not thrown into a dark hold, but “house arrest” (vs. 23b)
 1. His friends could come and visit.
 - a. Friends like Philip the Evangelist – who lived there.
 - b. ACTS 21:8 – “And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.”
 2. Also, the Centurion named Cornelius – who Peter had visited.

- a. ACTS 10:1 – “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,”
 - b. If still stationed there, he was likely a member of the church.
 - c. And PHILIP was his pastor!
3. As well as ALL the people that Cornelius knew!
- a. He had gathered them all up to hear the GOSPEL.
 - b. ACTS 10:33 – “Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.”

III. A CHANCE DIVINE

- A. God had additional plans for Felix
- 1. The HOLY SPIRIT of God was working on the heart of the governor (vs. 26)
 - 2. It’s obvious that he wanted to be bribed, but that was easy enough.
 - a. There was no need to call for Paul and commune with him.
 - b. There was more at work here than just greed.
 - c. Felix was under CONVICTION for his sin.
 - 3. Sin is simply defined as “missing the mark.”
 - a. It is said that they even used the term once in archery.
 - b. But in this case the target is Jesus Christ
 - i. Jesus, who died for OUR sins, not His own.
 - ii. 2 COR. 5:21 – “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
 - c. I tend to define it more basically – Disobedience to God
 - i. Whether sinning by omission or commission
 - ii. Not doing what God said do.
 - iii. Do what God said don’t do.
- B. In our world today, few will simply be straight with us.
- 1. They will flatter. They will coddle. They will “affirm.”
 - 2. We need someone to give us the TRUTH, not a comforting lie.
 - a. If someone thinks drinking cyanide is a good idea
 - b. They don’t need someone to say, “follow your heart.”
 - c. They don’t need to hear affirmations of “live your best life.”
 - 3. They need someone to tell them that it is POSION!
- C. Paul here has a chance to do what NO ONE ELSE may ever do – Witness to FELIX
- 1. God may have put you into a spot where YOU are the only one too.
 - a. At school or work or in your neighborhood
 - b. Or in your family
 - 2. Paul REASONED with Felix and Drusilla (vs. 24)
 - a. Righteousness – the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ
 - b. Temperance – Felix had none, but neither do we (wicked heart)

- c. Judgement to come – because this world IS judged.
- 3. HEB. 9:27 – “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”

IV. A CHARACTER DISPLAYED

- A. When confronted by his sin and convicted by the Spirit, Felix trembled (vs. 25)
 - 1. We know that Felix did not get saved in this chapter (maybe never)
 - 2. But we do have to give him enough credit for being CONVICTED.
 - a. Some do not have the self-awareness to know their need.
 - b. They think ROM. 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” does not apply to THEM.
 - c. They believe they are a “good” person.
 - 3. Felix at LEAST appeared to understand his own guilt.
 - 4. But he put it off!
- B. Paul’s character is ALSO on display – a man who CARED for souls.
 - 1. Even the soul of this Roman governor, an enemy and conquering people
 - 2. Yet he (at personal risk – a PRISONER) witnessed to him!
 - 3. Gave him the GOSPEL!
- C. It tells a great deal about our character when we give someone the gospel.
 - 1. MATT. 6:21 – “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
 - 2. It tells a lot about our priorities when we read our Bible.
 - 3. It shows what motivates us when we come to church (all services)

V. A CALL DESPARATE

- A. The gospel Paul gave to Felix is the same Gospel that we preach this morning.
 - 1. Righteousness – He is righteous / Ours is nothing but filthy rags.
 - 2. Temperance – In a world where self-control is a rarity.
 - 3. Judgment - JOHN 16:11 – “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”
- B. It is a call to Salvation – REV. 22:17 – “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
 - 1. It is a call to everyone – and it is DESPARATE! URGENT
 - 2. PROV. 27:1 – “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”
- C. Be Saved Today!