

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

When a Believer is Surrounded by Scoundrels

Acts 24:1–27

Let's take our Bibles together and turn to Acts 24. We are continuing our series, "No Other Name." And we are racing towards the conclusion of the book of Acts in these final chapters. And the question I want to ask and answer today is the following—what do you do as a Christian when you are surrounded by scoundrels?

Now, just to be clear, I don't know what your work environment looks like. I'm not around at your family reunions. I'm not making any kind of value judgment on you or your family with this question. This message today won't apply to everyone in this room or every situation. But we do live in a fallen world. And sometimes false accusations fly. What's a Christian to do in a situation like that? Sometimes bad things happen to good, godly Bible-believing people. What do you do?

Well thankfully we are not left in the lurch as to what to do. The Bible records many instances like that. Think Daniel in the lions' den. Think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Think the prophet Jeremiah. Think Stephen in the book of Acts. Think Peter, James, and John in the book of Acts. And think Paul in the book of Acts. It's almost as if Jesus *actually* meant it when he said, "In this world, you will have trouble..." (John 16:33). Paul knew something about that. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

More specifically today we want to look at the Apostle Paul and his trial before a Roman governor in Acts 24. And not to spoil things for you, but let me just tell you ahead of time—in our passage today, Paul is going to be tried by *wicked* prosecutor, on behalf of *wicked* plaintiffs from Jerusalem, in front of a *wicked* governor in Caesarea, who governs on behalf of a *wicked* regime, namely the Roman Empire.

What's Paul going to do in this quagmire of unrelenting wickedness? What does a believer do when he or she is surrounded by scoundrels? Well, let's find out.

Now just to get you up to speed, last time in Acts 23, Paul did some questionable things before the Sanhedrin. He lost his temper and lashed out verbally at the high priest. And instead of testifying about Christ, he started a debate between Pharisees and Sadducees about the resurrection.¹ That turned into a nightmare. And he had to be rushed out of the Sanhedrin by the Romans, so that he wouldn't be torn to shreds.

And then, he had to be rushed out of Jerusalem by the Romans, because a group of vigilantes took an oath to kill him. It was a tough week for the Apostle Paul. And in this dark moment of Paul's life when all of his failures and frustrations were stacking up, Jesus appeared to him and said, "Take Courage, Paul. I'm on your side. Don't be afraid." And Jesus gave Paul this promise. He tells him, "You will testify about me in Rome just like you've testified about me in Jerusalem" (Acts 23:11).

So at the end of Acts 23, we saw this great standoff between the will of men and the will of God. Forty oath-taking vigilantes said, "Paul's not leaving Jerusalem alive." But Jesus says to Paul instead, "You're getting out of Jerusalem alive, and in fact you'll testify about me in Rome." Who's going to win that little standoff? God does!

And God, through providential means, allows Paul safe transport out of Jerusalem all the way to Caesarea. And that's where our passage picks up today. Paul is about to go on trial for his actions in Jerusalem,

¹ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 483–4: "Paul's reference to the resurrection is the high point of his witness in all the speeches of Acts 23–26. This was not by accident. Paul's conviction in the resurrection constituted the real point of contention with the other Jews."

and the man who will decide his fate is a scandalous Roman governor named Felix. At the end of **Acts 23**, Felix says to Paul, “I will give you a hearing, when your accusers arrive” (**23:35**). So Felix is to Paul what Pontius Pilate was to Jesus. He will decide Paul’s fate. Will Felix do to Paul what Pontius Pilate did to Jesus? Let’s see.

Look at **verse 1 of Acts 24**.²

¹ And after five days³ the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman,⁴ one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul.

So as this trial gets under way we see that the Jewish leaders are taking no chances with Paul. The high priest comes up to Caesarea for the trial—that’s a distance of about sixty miles!⁵ In his commentary on **Acts**, **Al Mohler** states **that this would be the president of the United States showing up to prosecute a trial at the Supreme Court**.⁶ Ananias is way outside his lane with this matter, but again, he’s taking no chances with Paul.

And we already know this high priest, Ananias, was a scoundrel.⁷ He was not a well-respected leader of the Jews. And Luke tells us that some Jewish elders came with him as well to Caesarea. And along with them, they brought a “hired gun” so to speak—a slick, smooth-talking lawyer named Tertullus.⁸ And Tertullus is going to use all of his renowned rhetorical powers to get Paul convicted before Felix.⁹

And Luke shows us his rhetorical powers in the text. Look at **verse 2**:

² And when [Paul] had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: “Since through you we enjoy much peace,

Now who’s he talking about there? He’s not talking about Paul. He’s talking about Felix, the governor. “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation,³ in every way and everywhere¹⁰ we accept this with all gratitude.

Now does any of this seem a bit disingenuous to you? This guy is slick, right? What’s he doing? He’s buttering up the governor. He’s flattering and trying to win favor with this judge.¹¹ Why? To obtain a favorable ruling. To get a conviction against Paul! Right? So he uses what’s called a *captatio benevolentiae* with his opening remarks. That term, *captatio benevolentiae*, means “winning the goodwill” of your listener. Paul did the same thing in Athens in **Acts 17**. But this guy, Tertullus, is over the top with his comments about Felix.

Here’s why I say that. Let me just give you some historical background on Felix. I told you already that the high priest, Ananias, was a dishonorable character. **But compared to Felix, Ananias was Mother Teresa.**

² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 479: “Luke most likely only gave a precis of the proceedings.”

³ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 302: “Perhaps they feared Felix would release Paul if they did not move swiftly to bring charges against him.”

⁴ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 689: “Tertullus makes the opening speech as the ‘rhetorician’ (ῥήτορος, *rhētoros*) or, better, ‘legal advocate’ ... He is a hired pleader, a legal gun, if you will, whose ethnicity is not clear.”

⁵ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 302: “That the religious and political leaders of Israel came in person to accuse Paul shows how serious a threat he posed to them.”

⁶ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Acts 13–28 for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2019), 145.

⁷ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 145: “Ananias is a very complicated figure. He was appointed in AD 47 and was known for having an explosive temper. He was deposed by King Agrippa in AD 59 and murdered by Jewish assassins six years later. He was horribly unpopular with the Jews, but he was still the chief priest, and the fact that he shows up to prosecute the case against Paul sends a strong signal. It would be the equivalent of the president of the United States showing up to prosecute a trial taking place in the Supreme Court.”

⁸ JOHANN SPANGENBERG: “They hire a speaker, a tongue-slinger [*Zugendrescher*] and scandalmonger, Tertullus, who is to do his best and defeat Paul with words... they do not delay long but in five days arrive in Caesarea: the high priest himself with the elders and the speaker Tertullus. They had no other intent than to crush Paul.” Quoted in Chung-Kim et al., eds., *Acts*, RCS, 325.

⁹ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 479: “Whether Tertullus was a Jew or a Gentile hired by the Jews is uncertain. It was not uncommon for Jews to hire pagan lawyers who would be more familiar with Roman law than they”

¹⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 690: “Alliteration greets us in verse 3 with the phrase “in every way and everywhere” (πάντη τε καὶ πανταχοῦ, *pantē te kai pantachou*).”

¹¹ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 145: “Tertullus’ purpose in his opening lines is simple: to massage and pamper the Roman governor Felix (v 2–3). He shamelessly flatters Felix... Yet everything Tertullus says about Felix is a lie. Felix’s regime was one of the most corrupt and incompetent to ever rule in the name of Rome. During his tenure, peace was the last thing Judea enjoyed. Roving bands of insurrectionists constantly wreaked havoc in Judea, assassinating Roman soldiers and Roman citizens. And every reform he sought seemed to have been aimed at increasing his own personal gain. Felix was a spectacularly crooked governor. Yet that did not stop Tertullus!”

Despite what this slick lawyer says about Felix, he was not a man of peace.¹² Felix had done much in Jerusalem and Judea to anger the Jews.

His wife, Drusilla, was Jewish—his third wife, just to be clear. But still he wouldn't hesitate to execute Jews on a whim or stir up trouble to his own advantage. One commentator wrote the following about him: **“The only way Felix endeavored to bring peace was by having his soldiers hunt down and kill extremist Jewish freedom-fighters. In reality, Felix did more than any other governor to disrupt any semblance of peace there might have been in the Holy Land.”**¹³

Felix was amazingly a former slave.¹⁴ And after being freed, he had a meteoric rise in the Empire. But, probably because of his humble origins, he always tended towards brutality and paranoia.¹⁵ The Roman historian Tacitus said that Felix, **“with all cruelty and lust wielded the power of a king with the mentality of a slave.”**¹⁶

Eventually the Jews conspired to get Felix extradited from the country, and he almost lost his life before Nero because he had allowed so much unrest in Judea. All that to say this—he was not a man of peace. And he had not established peace as a governor.

So why would Tertullus say that he was a man of peace?

“Since through you we enjoy much peace... most excellent Felix

Why does he say that? Well, he's lying. And I'm sure Ananias was paying him big bucks to get Paul convicted. So part of his job description is to smooth talk the judge with a little flattery. **“A lawyer would never do that, Pastor Tony!”**

Look at **verse 4**.

⁴ *But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.*

“Your kindness”! This guy knows how to brownnose.

For we have found this man [here's where Paul comes in] a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world¹⁷ and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

This guy is like Perry Mason delivering his oratory! “He's a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.” In other words, he's not Jewish. He's not one of us. He's part of that “Jesus of Nazareth” riff-raff.¹⁸

It's interesting to me that Paul never, never stop saying, **“I am a Jew.”** Have you noticed that in the book of Acts? He was as Jewish and any of these Jewish leaders. But they don't acknowledge him as such. **“He's part of that sect!”**

Look at **verse 6**. Tertullus is still laying it on thick here.

⁶ *He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him.*

Look at **verse 8**.¹⁹

¹² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 479: “There was less peace in Judea during Felix's administration than for any procurator until the final years before the outbreak of the war with Rome... the Romans prided themselves in preserving the peace (the *pax Romana*), and such a comment was sure to win the governor's favor.”

¹³ Arnold, *Acts*, ZIBBC, 235.

¹⁴ Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Kindle Edition, chapter 37: “Antonius Felix was the first slave in the history of the Roman Empire to become the governor of a Roman province.”

¹⁵ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 936: “Several of Felix's decisions can be seen as overcompensation for the blemish of his servile origins.”

¹⁶ Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 285.

¹⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 480: “Compare the charge with that of the Asian Jews in 21:28. They too had charged Paul with causing trouble ‘everywhere,’ but they had correctly seen it as involving the Jewish law and temple. Tertullus attempted to broaden the scope a bit into that of provoking insurrection throughout the Roman world. It was the charge of sedition, a charge the Romans would not take lightly. Roman officials would scarcely concern themselves with matters of Jewish religion. They *would* take seriously any threat to the *pax Romana*. Felix in particular would have become attentive at the hint of such a charge. His entire administration had been marked by having to put down one insurrection in Judea after another. He had done so decisively and cruelly. He maintained the peace at any cost.”

¹⁸ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 304: “Nazarenes was a derisive term for the followers of Jesus, who was from Nazareth and was called the Nazarene (cf. 6:14; John 1:46; 7:41, 52).”

¹⁹ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 146–7: “Verse 7 presents a textual problem. That's because it does not appear in many translations. The passage is preserved in the Western Text, but relegated to a footnote in other texts. Some scholars omit the verse, believing that scribes added it to better connect verse 6a to verse 8b. Others include it, arguing that the context points to Claudius Lysias as the

⁸By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

Now we already know what he’s talking about with this “profaning of the temple” accusation. In **Acts 21**, the Jews accused Paul of bringing his Gentile friend, Trophimus, into the temple. But that was a lie.

And even though it was true that riots were started among the Jews all throughout the world over Paul, Paul was not the *instigator* of those riots. Paul was the *victim* of those riots in Jerusalem and elsewhere.²⁰ So there are bits and pieces of truth in what Tertullus is saying here, but his words are very deceiving.

And like I’ve said before, the most effective lies aren’t total fabrications; they’re half-truths. And by the way, the most effective liars aren’t bald-face liars; they’re truth-twisters. So this guy is very convincingly twisting truths and rearranging facts to get Paul convicted.

And **verse 9** tells us,

⁹The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

So, the false accusations are flying, and Paul’s accusers are piling on. And the scoundrels are scoring points with Felix in the courtroom. **What’s a man of integrity to do in a situation like this?**

Write this down as a first point in your notes. What do you do in a situation like that? Well, you trust God. And...

1) When **false accusations fly**, [you] stick to the truth and stick to the gospel (24:1–9)

The story is told about a sixteenth-century preacher who was addressing the issue of gossip. After a woman came up to him and confessed to gossiping and slandering other people in her community, the pastor asked her, “Do you frequently fall into this fault?” She replied, “Yes, very often.” He said, “Your fault is great, but the mercy of God is still greater.”

And then he said this, “Go to the nearest market, and purchase a chicken just killed and still covered with feathers. You will then walk a certain distance, plucking the feathers of the bird as you go along. When you finish your work, return to me here.”

She did as she’d been instructed and returned anxious for an explanation. “Well,” said the man. “You’ve been very faithful to the first part of my instructions. Now what I want you to do is to retrace your steps and gather all the feathers up one by one.”

The woman said, “But I cast them carelessly on every side. The wind carried them in every direction. How can I ever recover them?” “Well,” said the preacher, “So it is with your words of slander. Like the feathers, they have been scattered. Call them back, if you can.”²¹

Now God help us to hold our tongues and swallow our pride when false rumors are spread about us by unbelievers. That shouldn’t surprise us when it happens. I don’t think Paul is surprised by anything his accusers are doing. But God forbid that we as Christians would play that sinful game. Don’t do that, Christian! Don’t use your tongue to do evil! And if you’ve made that mistake in the past, do your best to rectify it. In other words, go pick up the feathers as best you can. And make sure you don’t repeat that mistake again in the future.

The Bible says that “the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness... set on fire by hell” (Jas 3:6). The tongue can and should be used for good. But too often in this fallen world, it’s used for evil. But that should not be so for Christians.

person to be questioned by the governor (v 22). While the passage does present a rather curious textual variant, it ultimately does not obscure the clarity this section of Scripture (nor undermine the inerrancy of the Scriptures).”

Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 698: “The Western text has an additional explanation after the mention of the Jews’ seizure of Paul. It is that the Romans take Paul from Jewish hands. The legal advocate’s point would be that the Jews had the right to judge the case, since they had seized him in the temple area. The remark is not true, but scholars question whether the original version of Acts made this additional point. It is possible that this is original because it states an objection to the Roman initiative, but the better MSS evidence is for the shorter reading (Ⲡ⁷⁴, ⲛ, A, B, H, L, P; Polhill 1992: 481; Witherington 1998: 709). It is likely that the Western text added the expression because the copyist, failing to recognize the original remark’s rhetorical dimension, found it hard to accept that Tertullus would commend Paul’s testimony.”

²⁰ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 304: “But while it is true that Paul had been involved in riots, he had been the riots’ victim, not their instigator.”

²¹ This illustration is taken and adapted from Alistair Begg and his sermon “I Was Only Borrowing It!” 11-07-93: <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/i-was-only-borrowing-it/>

So when people in this world uses their tongues to utter falsehoods against you, don't return fire. He who slings mud loses ground. Instead, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel.

And that doesn't mean you can't defend yourself.²² Look what Paul does in **verse 10.**²³ He's just been slandered by Tertullus. And now Paul gets his chance to speak. What's Paul going to do here? He could just fire back with his own false accusations. **"O yeah, well you say I did this. I say you did that! How do you like me now?"** He doesn't do that.

He could excoriate them again publicly, **"God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"** He doesn't do that. He could try to sweettalk Felix like Tertullus did or try to get another riot started between Pharisees and Sadducees. But no, he doesn't do that. He just speaks the truth.²⁴

He just tells them what happened, and in his own unique little way he subtly points them all to the gospel.

Watch this... this is brilliant in **verse 10.**

¹⁰ And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: "Knowing that for many years²⁵ you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense.

Paul's got his own rhetorical powers! He attempts his own *captatio benevolentiae*.²⁶ But he doesn't flatter or embellish. He just states the facts. **"You know what Felix... the best thing I can say about you is ... well... you've been in charge for a lot of years."**

Look at **verse 11.**

¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days²⁷ since I went up to worship²⁸ in Jerusalem,

²² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 480: "Should such a charge be made to stick for Paul, the whole Christian community would be viewed as a dangerous, revolutionary movement. Fortunately, Tertullus could not substantiate the charge, and Felix was already too informed about Christians to take it seriously (v. 22)."

²³ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 480-1: "Had Tertullus substantiated this charge, it would have obligated Felix to turn Paul over to jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin and almost certain death. The accusation, however, was totally false and based on an erroneous conclusion by the Asian Jews (cf. 21:29). This probably is why they were not present to substantiate the charge (v. 19)."

²⁴ CHRYSOSTOM: "Did you notice his gentleness in the midst of dangers? Did you notice how he kept his tongue from speaking evil? How he sought one thing only, to do away with charges against himself, and not to place charges against them, except in so far as he was forced to defend himself?" Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 286.

²⁵ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 956-7: "The assertion that Felix has had judicial experience 'for many years' (ἐκ πολλῶν ἐτῶν) is not merely 'flowery language' without biographical foundation. While Felix was governor of Judea only since AD 52, i.e., since five years at the time of Paul's trial in May AD 57, he had earlier ruled Samaria under Cumanus and thus held office in the region for eight or nine years."

²⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 692: "Paul has a shorter *captatio benevolentiae*, simply recognizing Felix's role for many years as judge and expressing appreciation for an opportunity to defend himself."

²⁷ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 692: It has been debated how twelve days are reckoned here. (1) Is it twelve days since the incident, counting to the day he was taken to Caesarea (Bruce 1988a: 443)? (2) Is the statement merely adding Acts 21:27 and 24:1 (Marshall 1980: 376)? Or (3) is it simply saying that twelve whole days had gone by without trouble emerging (Barrett 1998: 1102; Witherington 1998: 710)? Either the first or the last option is possible, as 24:1 and those five days are irrelevant with Paul in custody."

Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 957: Luke's narrative provides the following chronology:

1st day	Paul's arrival in Jerusalem	21:17
2nd day	visit of James	21:18
3rd to 9th day	seven days of purification	21:26
9th day (+ X)	arrest	21:33
10th day (+ X)	hearing in the Sanhedrin	22:30
11th day (+ X)	plot against Paul	23:12
12th day (+ X)	arrival in Caesarea	23:32

Paul didn't spend a whole lot of time in Jerusalem. And as we've seen already, his trip wasn't great. But Paul is doing something subtle here. Tertullus is implicit arguing that Paul was some kind of revolutionary or insurrectionist.²⁹ Paul says here, **“I was in town for just twelve days. That's not long enough for a revolution.”**

¹² and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. ¹⁴ But this I confess to you,

“Here's the truth in what they are stating about me.”

that according to the Way, which they call a sect,

Remember “the Way” is the prominent term used for Christianity in the book of **Acts**.³⁰ Paul says, **“We're not ‘a sect.’ We're ‘the Way’... based on Jesus's words, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’”**³¹

I worship the God of our fathers,³² believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept,³³ that there will be a resurrection³⁴ of both the just and the unjust.³⁵

Do you see what Paul is doing there? He's giving a defense. But he's *also* preaching the gospel. He's letting Felix and everyone else know that there will be a resurrection for everyone, the just and the unjust.³⁶ In other words, everybody gets resurrected. That's an essential aspect of our *imago dei* nature. Some will be raised to everlasting life and some will be raised to everlasting death. Paul is using this moment to create *gospel urgency* in the lives of his listeners.³⁷

And by the way, let me be clear about this for the benefit of those who are gathered here today. The Bible makes clear in **Daniel 12:2** that some will be raised to everlasting life and some will be raised for everlasting shame and contempt. Jesus said in **John 5:28–29** that an hour is coming when “all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who

17th day (+ X)

trial before Felix

24:1

²⁸ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 958: “Paul affirms that his visit to Jerusalem was innocent: he went to Jerusalem in order to worship (προσκυνήσων); i.e., he came as a pilgrim for purely religious reasons when he went to the temple (cf. 21:26).”

²⁹ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 146: “Tertullus’ attempt to cast Christianity in terms not of a religious faith but a fanatical political party. At the time, political sects which were really just rebellious groups of bandits terrorized the region. Essentially, Tertullus equates Paul and the sect of the Nazarenes with radicalized insurrectionists.”

³⁰ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 958: “For Paul, as for the other followers of Jesus, the worship (λατρεύω) of God is now fundamentally and irrevocably connected with Jesus, Israel’s Messiah whose life, death, resurrection, and exaltation constitute the only ‘way’ to salvation, and who is thus Savior and Lord.”

³¹ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 482: “Tertullus may have referred to the Christians as a ‘sect,’ a party within Judaism. Paul would not deny his affiliation with the group, but he preferred another term. He preferred to be seen as a follower of ‘the Way,’ not a party, not a ‘Jewish denomination,’ but the true, the *only* way of the Lord for his people.”

³² MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 307: “‘The God of our fathers’ [is] the historic title for the God of Israel (Gen. 48:15; Ex. 3:15; Deut. 26:7; 1 Chron. 12:17; 29:18; 2 Chron. 20:6; Ezra 7:27; Dan. 2:23; Acts 3:13; 5:30). To be a Christian, Paul insisted, was not to forsake worshipping the true God but to be devoted to Him.”

³³ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 148: “In verse 15, Paul theologically strips Ananias and the other Jewish leaders naked before Felix. Paul is being cleverer than may immediately meet the eye, for Ananias was a Sadducee (and the Sadducees did not believe in life after death, and so rejected the doctrine of the resurrection) but clearly at least some of the elders who had come with Ananias (v 1) ‘themselves accept[ed]’ the ‘resurrection of both the just and the unjust’ (v 15). Paul appears to be identifying and widening this theological faultline among his accusers. They are divided over the notion of a future resurrection for judgment—for Paul and the other apostles, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was proof of it (17:31), and was fundamental to the Christian faith. Christ’s resurrection came as the first of many in the eternal family of God.”

³⁴ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 484n115: “One wonders how the Sadducees in the Jewish delegation of Caesarea reacted to Paul’s words. They shared neither his faith in the prophetic writings nor the resurrection.”

³⁵ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 307: “This is the only time, either in Acts or the epistles, that Paul explicitly refers to a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (cf. Matt. 25:31ff.; John 5:28–29; Rev. 20:11–15).”

³⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 693: “Those in this movement of God believe what the law and prophets teach and in the hope of the resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 10:42; 17:31; 23:6; Matt. 25:31–34; Luke 10:12; John 5:28–29; Rom. 2:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:12–15; OT: Dan. 12:2–3; Judaism: Ps. Sol. 3:12; 1 En. 41.1–2; 51.1–2; 54.1–6; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.3 §14).”

³⁷ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 687: “Such a trial is open to the public.”

have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.” According to the Bible, every single person will live forever (see also **Rev 20:11–15**).

There’s all this talk circulating right now about universalism and annihilationism and conditional immortality. The Bible clearly presents two options for you. The world and some Christians are confused about this right now, but the Bible is not. Paul is not in Acts 24. Every single person in this room will live forever. It just depends where you’re going to spend that forever. There’s no purgatory. There’s no annihilation of our souls. There’s no third option. There’s the righteous and the unrighteous. There’s the just and the unjust. There’s heaven or hell for eternity.

Which path are you on? For those who have faith in Christ Jesus, in his death and resurrection, his righteousness is our righteousness and makes heaven for eternity a reality. For those who don’t have faith in Christ, there is eternal death and separation from God... in hell... for eternity. Full-stop! Those are the options.

And look again at **verse 14**. Here’s another thing that Paul is stressing.

I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

Paul worships the Jewish God. Paul believes all the Hebrew Scriptures that have been inspired by God. And all those Scriptures point towards Christ. He’s saying, **“I’m more Jewish than those guys are... I believe the Bible more fervently than they do. They missed it. They missed who the Scriptures pointed to!”**

And by the way, what did Jesus say about the Law and the Prophets? What did he say to the Jewish leaders twenty-five years before this. He said, **“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39).**

Paul says in **verse 16**,

¹⁶ *So I always take pains to have a clear conscience³⁸ toward both God and man. ¹⁷ Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation³⁹ and to present offerings. ¹⁸ While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple⁴⁰*

In other words, **“I didn’t do anything wrong. I was just a Jew worshiping in the temple. In fact, I had brought money with me to bless Jerusalem after they went through that horrible famine.”**

without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia—

Those are the guys who started the riot. And by the way, why aren’t those guys at Paul’s trial?

¹⁹ *they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me.⁴¹*

In other words, **“Tertullus wasn’t there. Ananias wasn’t there when this allegedly happened. Where are the guys who originally made the accusation? They’re nowhere to be found.”⁴²**

³⁸ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 148: “Verse 16 is a restatement of the same words he spoke before the Sanhedrin a few days earlier (23:1). Paul can say that his conscience is clean because he always strives to fear God rather than men. He knows that he will one day stand before God to give an account for his life and conduct.”

³⁹ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 693: “The reference to alms is the one clear remark in Acts confirming the fact that Paul had brought a collection for the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:10; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8–9). For Paul, this offering was appropriate as a reflection of the church’s unity and the contribution Jerusalem has made to the Gentiles’ faith. It also was for ‘my nation’; here Paul is supportive of Judaism and the nation of Israel and identifies with it.” Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 484n117 sees the issues differently, “Most interpreters see v. 17 as Luke’s sole allusion to Paul’s collection. It may be, however, that Luke’s silence on the subject was total. ‘My people’ (τὸ ἔθνος μου) most likely refers to the whole Jewish nation and not just the Jewish Christians (for whom the collection was destined). Likewise ‘offerings’ most naturally refers to a pilgrim’s offerings to the temple, not to a collection for the poor.”

⁴⁰ JOHN CALVIN: “How he says that he came in order to worship, when the religion of the temple had already been abolished and all distinction in the temple taken away. Here I also reply that although he does not explain his purpose, he does not make any false pretension. For worship in the temple was not forbidden to believers in Christ, so long as they did not attach sacredness to the place but lifted up pure hands freely and with no distinction of places. When Paul had come to Jerusalem, he was at liberty to enter the temple in order to give evidence of his piety and there engage in the customary rites of the worship of God, because he was undefiled by superstition as long as he undertook no expiations contrary to the gospel.” Quoted in Chung-Kim et al., eds., *Acts*, RCS, 328.

⁴¹ RUDOLF GWALTHER: “It serves for our instruction that Paul so diligently refutes the charge of sedition against him. For by this ministers learn that they must guard themselves, lest they throw the commonwealth into confusion through sedition—there is nothing more destructive than this.” Quoted in Chung-Kim et al., eds., *Acts*, RCS, 327–8.

⁴² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 484: “For Tertullus to have made an accusation against Paul with the total absence of the witnesses for the prosecution was a serious breach of court procedure. There was simply no evidence to counter Paul’s own defense.”

By the way, if you have an ESV Bible, that hyphen before verse 19 is a good representation of the Greek. It's actually not called a hyphen; it's called an "em dash." And it's used when a sentence is abruptly broken off. And that's what happens here with Paul. It's as if he gets lost in the middle of his sentence and says, "Where are those guys anyways? They should be here!"⁴³

And by the way, this was a very shrewd maneuver by Paul right here. Roman law actually called for a "face-to-face" confrontation between the accusers and the accused. In fact, in the Roman world, those who abandoned their accusations were not looked upon kindly. You know in America, we can make all kinds of false accusations with impunity, and it doesn't matter. But that was a serious "no-no" in the Roman judicial system.

So Paul is saying, "Where's the evidence for these accusations against me? Where are the eye-witnesses? This is just a Kangaroo court with Tertullus, their high-priced lawyer, making unsubstantiated allegations."

Look at verse 20.

²⁰ Or else let these men themselves say⁴⁴ what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, ²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'

It's interesting to me how Paul admits here that starting that argument in the Sanhedrin probably wasn't the best course of action. I used to read that story about Paul starting an argument between Pharisees and Sadducees in Acts 23, and think to myself, "O that's was great. Way to go Paul! Way to get them fighting amongst themselves. That was brilliant." But I don't think that's how Paul saw it. Not after the fact, anyway. He regrets that action. And he even confesses here before Felix, "I shouldn't have done that." **Stick to the truth and stick to the gospel. That's what Paul does here.**

And here's the point of all this. Here's what I find so fascinating about Paul's defense. He doesn't fabricate facts. He doesn't exaggerate details. He doesn't mislead anyone. He even, at one point, admits a mistake that he made. "I could have handled that differently."

What does Paul do? He just delivers truthfully and with integrity all the details that have unfolded regarding this case. And, at the same time, he finds a way to subtly testify before Felix and the accusers that Jesus Christ is "the Way." He's the fulfillment of OT expectation. And he's coming back to judge the dead. Masterful! This is an absolute clinic on how to handle false accusations as a Christian.

Write this down as a second point from our message. When false accusations fly, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel. And secondly:

2) When **judgments are forming**, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel (24:10-21)

When you've got to defend yourself against false accusations. When you've got to represent Christ before a hostile world... conduct yourself with honor and integrity. And let God sort it out in the end. The Bible says, "Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall" (Prov 28:18). **When judgments are forming, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel.**

Now some of you might say, "How do I do that, Pastor Tony?" "What does that look like in our day?" Well let me give you some examples. 1) **When people lie, slander, and gossip about you, you don't return fire. Okay? Every time you sling mud, you lose ground. Instead you speak the truth and trust God.** 2) **If you find yourself or your business in a legal dispute...or if some injustice is perpetrated against you in the work place. You speak the truth and represent God well. Don't falsify facts. Don't slander in return. Don't manipulate people's opinions or massage the truth. Just speak truthfully and honestly and with integrity and trust God.**

3) **If God forbid, anyone in this congregation ever got sued or wrongly accused, you do the right thing. Don't get hateful. Don't be deceitful or manipulative. If your legal counsel says, "It's normal in cases like this to exaggerate the facts." You say, "No, I won't do that. I'm a follower of Jesus Christ and**

⁴³ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 484: "Paul was obviously quite incensed by the thought of these accusers, as is indicated by his breaking off in midsentence at the end of v. 19. They should have been there and brought charges against him face-to-face. That was good Roman legal procedure (cf. 25:16)."

⁴⁴ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 694: "Like Tertullus in verse 8, Paul asks Felix to examine his opponents."

there's an expectation of integrity on my life." Stick to the truth and stick to the gospel. Trust God; do the right thing. And let the chips fall where they may.

Remember what Peter said about Jesus. "He entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Pet 2:23). **That's what we have to do. We entrust ourselves to him who judges justly. God is no man's debtor. He will repay at the proper time good for good and evil for evil.**

You know, we are living in a world right now where it's getting increasingly difficult to live a life of integrity. And we as a country have gravitated so far from Biblical principles, that if you do live a life of integrity, you will be an oddball in this world. You will be weird in your workplace. So be it.

And you know, here's what's interesting. You might be surprised just how instrumental being an "oddball with integrity" is for leading people to Christ. Because people are desperately looking for something different in our world.⁴⁵

And let me say this too, just be way of clarification. Integrity doesn't save you. There are plenty of non-Christian people that have integrity. But integrity is what saved people do! Do you feel me? Does everyone understand what I'm saying there? We aren't justified by works; we're justified by faith. But justified people live lives of integrity. They produce fruit in keeping with repentance. That's what Paul does here.

Now watch what happens next with Paul. Because what happens in these last few verses is amazing. Jesus prophesied in the Gospels that his disciples would be "dragged before governors and kings for [Jesus'] sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles" (Matt 10:18). Jesus said, "You will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake" (Luke 21:12). And wouldn't you know it, Jesus's prophecy actually come true. Anyone here surprised by that?

Look what happens with Paul and this powerful governor of Judea, Felix. Look at **verse 22**.

²² But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way

That's an interesting statement. But not entirely surprising. Christians are all over the Empire now, So Felix knows about "the Way." Maybe even Cornelius, who got saved in Caesarea, has witnessed to him already. Maybe Philip the Evangelist, who lives in Caesarea, has witnessed to him. Who knows?

²² But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way put them [Paul's accusers] off,⁴⁶ saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case."⁴⁷

So Paul pours out his heart defending himself. And Felix essentially postpones the case until a later date.

²³ Then he gave orders to the centurion that [Paul] should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

Maybe Luke was close by. Maybe Philip. Maybe Agabus. Maybe the church in Caesarea worked together to take care of Paul's needs.

You know, Paul was surrounded by scoundrels in the courtroom, but thankfully he's not surrounded by scoundrels all the time. He's got the church and his fellow believers to take care of him. **As do we, by the way.**

Look at **verse 24**.

²⁴ After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla,⁴⁸ who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.

⁴⁵ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 697: "In today's world, where the moral compass has lost its magnetism, such a life stands in contrast to that of many. This contrast, if lived out in an effective, engaging manner, can be attractive when people sense the chaos of the alternative lifestyle that a lack of morals produces."

⁴⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 694: "To use Roman legal terminology, he 'reserves judgment' (*amplius*) until he can gather more data. This nonresolution is summarized in the term ἀναβάλλω (*anaballō*, bring a hearing to a close), an NT hapax."

⁴⁷ JOHN CALVIN: "It is apparent that although Felix gave no decision on the case, he sensed that Paul was being charged through no fault of his own, but by the ill will of the priests. For when Luke narrates that the action was deferred until the arrival of Lysias, he inserts at the same time, as if instead of a reason, that the governor had precise knowledge about the things pertaining to the Way. By these words I think is meant either that long experience had already made him familiar with the practice of the priests and how they were accustomed to behaving; or that he perceived, from the things that had been said on both sides, how trivial the accusation was. And that is confirmed by the more considerate and more indulgent treatment given to Paul himself. For he commits him to the charge of a centurion, so that he may have, so to speak, greater freedom in custody." Quoted in Chung-Kim et al., eds., *Acts*, RCS, 328–9.

Huh? This man, Felix, has the ability to decide Paul's fate. And what's Paul doing. He's telling him and his wife, Drusilla, about Jesus. Is that awesome or what? Paul is a gospel-preaching machine. He's the Christian terminator in Acts. You can't kill him. And you can't get him to shut up about Jesus. And when he gets a chance to preach the gospel to the most powerful couple in Judea, he takes it. You got to love that about Paul.

And here's why this was so fascinating with Felix and Drusilla. Let me give you a little historical background on these two people. Drusilla was Felix's third wife. She was the great-granddaughter of Herod the Great, who tried to kill Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem fifty plus years before this (see **Matt 2:1–12**). And Paul's like, **"Yeah, that baby that you great-granddad tried to kill... he's the Savior of the world!"**

And here's another historical wrinkle. Felix was Drusilla's second husband. She was nineteen years old when Paul met with her. Felix had lured her away from her first husband when she was only sixteen. And both of these individuals were about as lost as you could possibly be. They were cruel. They were sinful. They both had an unquenchable thirst for power. They were adulterers.

Felix had basically stolen Drusilla from her first husband by promising new opportunities for power. And Felix was seduced by Drusilla because it was said about her that she was exceedingly beautiful in her time. It was basically a marriage built on lust and thirst for power.⁴⁹

And watch what Paul preaches to them. Look at **verse 25**.

²⁵ *And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,*⁵⁰ Felix was alarmed⁵¹

I bet he was. **Just so you know that's not a seeker-sensitive message right there. That's not Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, Felix.**⁵² Paul knew about their sinful reputation.⁵³ And so he's preaching repentance, hell, fire, and brimstone to this couple.⁵⁴

And maybe as part of that he said, **"You know what, I was the chief of sinners. I killed Christians and persecuted the church."** And I bet he was saying, **"Such also were some of us, but now we have been washed by the blood of Jesus."** I bet Paul was preaching, **"I know a way that you can escape the judgment to come. Put your faith in Christ and you can have new life."**

But unfortunately Paul's pleas fell on deaf ears.⁵⁵

²⁵ *And as [Paul] reasoned about righteousness and self-control*⁵⁶ *and the coming judgment,*⁵⁷ Felix was alarmed and said, **[not "I repent." Not "what must I do to be saved?" Not "praise be to God for providing this way of salvation for sinner like me" but instead]**⁵⁸ *"Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity*⁵⁹ *I will summon you."*⁶⁰

⁴⁸ CHRYSOSTOM: "The wife also listens, along with the governor. This seems to me to show great honor. He would not have brought his wife to the hearing, unless he thought great things of Paul." Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 287.

⁴⁹ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 150: "Drusilla's father—a minor provincial king—promised her in marriage at the age of six to Epiphanes, the son of King Antiochus of Commagene. Drusilla was a Jew and Epiphanes a Gentile. In order to validate the marriage, Epiphanes needed to submit to the Jewish practice of circumcision, but he refused, so the marriage did not take place. When she was 14, Drusilla's brother, King Agrippa II, married her off to King Azizus of Syria. But Drusilla left Syria to marry Felix and become the wife of a Gentile, thus defying Old Testament law."

⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 697: "When Paul speaks to Felix of 'righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come,' he is preaching what he himself is seeking to live, because Paul's major goal is to live in a manner that honors God, not just to talk about God."

⁵¹ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 695: "The term ἐμφοβος (*emphobos*; Luke 24:5, 37; Acts 10:4; 24:25; Rev. 11:13) reflects emotions that are more intense than those indicated by the Greek word φόβος (*phobos*, fear)."

⁵² Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 697: "Paul's directness here, borne out by Felix's own personal history, points to a need of Felix's that parallels what many need and need to hear."

⁵³ Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Kindle Edition, chapter 37: "Preaching the gospel (the good news) must include the lostness of man and God's universal moral demands. If we leave this out, we are not preaching the authentic gospel of Christ."

⁵⁴ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 151: "Preaching the gospel also means preaching conversion and a turning away from sin. Without repentance, the gospel is turned into a message of cheap grace."

⁵⁵ Mohler, *Acts 13–28 for You*, 151: "Rejecting the gospel by refusing to repent does not make it untrue. Rejecting the gospel and banishing the thought of judgment to the outer rim of your mind will not stop the coming day when Jesus Christ judges the whole earth. Judgment approaches. It will come swiftly. It will come unannounced. Will you be ready when the trumpets sound? And will you share the gospel until that time, undeterred by those who reject the message and cling to their sin?"

⁵⁶ ἐγκρατεία is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).

⁵⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 483: "Paul's words had a certain ominous tone. To mention the resurrection of the unjust could only imply one thing—the coming judgment. Paul was not about to miss the opportunity for witness. Even the Gentiles present, who might not comprehend the idea of the resurrection, would have some understanding of judgment (cf. 24:25)."

²⁶ At the same time he hoped that money⁶¹ would be given him by Paul.⁶²

Who cares about a bribe, man?⁶³ You need to be concerned about your soul!⁶⁴

So he sent for [Paul] often and conversed with him.⁶⁵ ²⁷ When two years⁶⁶ had elapsed,⁶⁷ Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor,⁶⁸ Felix left Paul in prison.⁶⁹

Write this down #3 in your notes.

- 1) When **false accusations fly**, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel (24:1-9)
- 2) When **judgments are forming**, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel (24:10-21)
- 3) When **uncertainties abound**, stick to the truth and stick to the gospel (10:22-27)

Now I've preached this message today mostly from the perspective of Paul. And I've challenged you and I've been challenged myself with the concept of truthfulness and integrity. Stick to the truth! Stick to the gospel! Live lives of integrity and keep telling people about Jesus when you are surrounded by scoundrels.

But before we finish today, I want to flip that script. I want to say something now to those of you who might have more in common with Felix, or with Drusilla, or with Tertullus, or with Ananias than you do with Paul. You don't have the Holy Spirit in your life. You've never made a decision to follow Christ.

And maybe you, like Felix, have been intrigued by the gospel and wanted to learn more about it.⁷⁰ Maybe you've even been fearful like Felix is fearful when you hear about the judgment to come. But you've never given your life to Christ. You've never put your faith in Christ and had your sins forgiven.

⁵⁸ Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Kindle Edition, chapter 37: "If Felix is the classic example of what not to do, the Philippian jailer is a good example of what to do. The phrase that describes his fear, in the original, is almost identical with that describing Felix (compare 16:20-30, esp. v. 29)."

⁵⁹ Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Kindle Edition, chapter 37: "Felix did not say he never wanted to hear Paul and his saving message again. He just made the potentially fatal error of procrastination. When God's Word comes to us with convicting power, we must never put off our response, for several reasons."

⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 697: "Paul has met his responsibility by sharing. He is not responsible for the result or the response. The same is true today for those who spread God's message, reflecting Paul's example."

⁶¹ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 696: "The term *χρήματα* (*chrēmata*) generally refers to possessions, in this context it means a bribe... The term appeared earlier in Acts when Simon tried to offer money to Peter to gain the right to distribute the Spirit (8:18). Felix knows from Paul's remarks about alms and offerings that Paul has access to large amounts of money, and he may assume that Paul can get more."

⁶² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 486-7: "Such bribe-taking was frowned upon officially, even forbidden by law, but was rampant in the Roman administration. Other Judean procurators were known for their propensity to receive bribes, and Felix was not himself above the temptation."

⁶³ Mohler, *Acts 13-28 for You*, 150: "Acts presents its readers with spectacular stories of conversions and repentance. Who can forget the turning of Saul to Jesus? How could the conversion of Cornelius pass away from memory into the recesses of history? The Philippian jailer fell before Paul and cried out for salvation. Acts demonstrates the power of the gospel to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh... But at the same time, the Scriptures present this real and unembellished story of Felix's rejection of the gospel as a sobering reminder that those spectacular stories are not inevitable, or even the norm, when the gospel is preached."

⁶⁴ CHRYSOSTOM: "See his stupidity: after hearing these things, [Felix] expected that money would have been obtained from [Paul]; and not only this, but as he was at the end of his tenure, he left him in chains, in order to please the Jews, so that he did not only desire money but fame too. How can you, scoundrel, look for money from a man who preaches the opposite?" Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 287.

⁶⁵ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 698: "In an addition by the Western text, it is Drusilla who wants to hear Paul."

⁶⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 697: "It is plausibly suggested that Luke may well have done his initial research for his Gospel and Acts in this two-year period... At this location he had access to multiple witnesses of such events."

⁶⁷ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 936: "Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea dates to the last two years of Felix's governorship, from summer AD 57 to summer 59."

⁶⁸ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 694: "Luke later notes that Felix kept Paul in jail as a favor to the leadership of the Jews (v. 27), even though the end of Felix's rule resulted from his insensitivity to them (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.13.7 §270; *Ant.* 20.8.9 §182). The impression is that Felix is saying one thing but doing another."

⁶⁹ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 309: "Like many politicians before and since who have been trapped between justice and popularity, Felix decided his wisest course was to avoid making a decision."

Can I just challenge you with this passage of Scripture? Hebrews 3:15 says, “Today if you hear [God’s] voice, do not harden your hearts.” I mean that verse is true for all of us who are here this morning and have sensed the Holy Spirit’s conviction. But that’s especially true for those of you who came this morning without any faith in Christ. If you’ve heard the voice of the Lord today... if you heard the truth of the gospel... do not harden your heart.⁷¹ Respond in faith and repentance.

Don’t do like Felix and Drusilla, “Go away from me now, and I’ll call you when it’s more convenient.” Don’t do that! Don’t miss this opportunity.⁷²

I heard a pastor say once that this passage about Felix and Drusilla is one of the most heartbreaking passages in Scripture.⁷³ They were right there! They had the greatest preacher of their generation telling them about Jesus. And their hearts were convicted. And Felix was fearful for his soul. And he just dismissed it. They let the opportunity pass, and they dismissed the greatest news that any person could ever receive. The gospel! That you can be forgiven of your sins completely, no matter what you’ve done. No matter who you are!

And maybe some of you are trying to live a life of integrity out there, but you don’t have the resources in and of yourself to be honorable and live with integrity. Christ can help you with that. God is willing to give you the gift of the Holy Spirit in your life that can produce something that you couldn’t produce yourself. And I just want to invite you today to put your faith in Christ and make a decision to follow him. Repent of your sin and follow Christ.⁷⁴⁷⁵⁷⁶⁷⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁰ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 301–2: “Felix was tragically similar to Judas. Judas lived with the Lord Jesus for more than three years; Felix had Paul in his palace for two. Judas had many opportunities to talk with Jesus; Felix ‘used to send for [Paul] quite often and converse with him’ (v. 26). Judas betrayed the Son of God for money; Felix ‘was hoping that money would be given him by Paul’ (v. 26). Judas betrayed the Lord to the Jewish authorities; Felix, fearing those same authorities, betrayed Paul by refusing to release him despite his innocence.”

⁷¹ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 311: “All who are tempted, like Felix, to postpone a decision about Jesus Christ would do well to heed the sobering warning of Hebrews 3:7–8a: “Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’”

⁷² Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Kindle Edition, chapter 37: “Paul’s example shows us how to share the Word, and the example of Felix and Drusilla shows us how not to receive the Word.”

⁷³ MacArthur, *Acts*, vol 2, MNTC, 300: “This chapter presents one of the most tragic examples of missed opportunity in all of Scripture. Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, had the privilege of spending much time with the apostle Paul. Yet, sadly, he let the opportunity slip away, and there is no evidence to indicate he was not eternally lost.”

⁷⁴ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 956n2462: “The addition is found in E Ψ 33. 323. 614. 945. 1505. 1739 and part of the Majority Text; the rewritten version vv. 6–8 reads as follows: ‘whom we seized and wanted to judge according to our law. The tribune Lysias, however, interfered and took him away with great force out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you.’ Manuscripts \mathfrak{B}^{74} \aleph A B H L etc. omit the addition.”

⁷⁵ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 956: “Considering the situation of the trial and his role in the legal proceedings before the governor, it is understandable (from the Jewish leaders’ point of view) that Tertullus omits any mention the fact that Paul was arrested in the middle of a tumult caused by Jews from the province of Asia, and that Paul’s life was saved by the intervention of the Roman commander of the garrison in the Antonia Fortress.”

⁷⁶ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 955: “While establishing local assemblies with regular meetings was a potential problem given the suspicious attitude of some emperors concerning voluntary associations, the connection between Paul’s group, labeled as ‘Nazarenes’ (Ναζωραίοι) by the Jews, and Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by the Roman governor twenty-seven years earlier, explains the seriousness of the second charge... Tertullus charges Paul with leading a party that pledges devotion to a man executed by the Roman authorities as a teacher who (allegedly) seduced the people and falsely claimed to be the king of the Jews.”

⁷⁷ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 953: “While the background of Tertullus’s statement in specific legal reforms during Felix’s tenure as governor of Judea remains unclear, due to lack of evidence, Tertullus’s comment seems to have been justified, considering the fact that Ummidius Quadratus, the governor of Syria, had appointed Felix to assist Claudius in deciding a legal matter regarding the Samaritans, which had resulted in Jonathan, the high priest in AD 36–37, asking Claudius to appoint Felix as governor of Judea.”

⁷⁸ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 958: “It should be noted that the legal strategy of Paul’s accusers is successful: their rather general accusations are difficult to prove, but they are also difficult to disprove; despite Paul insistence that he is innocent, he is not officially declared innocent and released by Felix.”