

August 5, 2018

“Empowered: The Church on Fire!”

“A Journey through the Book of Acts”

“Maintaining A Fire That Never Goes Out”

“Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.” Acts 24:16

A. Paul is held in prison...

“When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I removed him to safety.” Acts 23:27b

1. After 5 days, the high priest, Ananias, the Jewish elders, and the lawyer, Tertullus, came to present their case against Paul.

“Five days later Ananias, the high priest, arrived with some of the Jewish elders and the lawyer Tertullus, to present their case against Paul to the governor.” Acts 24:1

2. After complimenting Felix, Tertullus offers three punishable charges against Paul.

“When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented the charges against Paul in the following address to the governor.” Acts 24:2a

- a. Spreading unrest throughout the Empire
 - b. Being a ringleader of a heretical religious sect that is not recognized by the Roman government
 - c. Desecrating the temple
3. Paul responds with this defense:

“The governor then motioned for Paul to speak.” Acts 24:10a

- a. He arrived only 12 days ago to worship at the Temple.
- b. He never argued with anyone, nor did he create any riots.
- c. He then turned his response into a testimony of his belief.
- d. He identified with all the Jews in their beliefs.
- e. He even honored the beliefs by the purification ceremony.
- f. His only response that brought controversy was his belief in the resurrection.

4. Felix’s response was to wait for Claudius Lysias.

“At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, “Wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case.” Acts 24:22

B. Paul shares his faith with Felix and Drusilla...

1. “Felix and his wife were quite colorful characters. Felix was the slave in the household of Antonia, the daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia and the mother of Roman emperor Claudius. Felix and his brother, Pallas, were given freedom and rose to positions of great influence during Claudius’ reign. Pallas became the chief accountant to the public treasury and amassed enormous wealth. Through his connections in high places, Felix got appointed as governor of Judea, a position that he probably held from A.D. 52-59. From his personal perspective, he had not done badly for a slave. His first wife was the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. Drusilla was his third wife, a famous beauty who he seduced from her husband, a king in Syria. She was 18 or 19 when Paul spoke to them here. She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, who executed James and planned to do the same to Peter. She was the sister of Agrippa II and Bernice.” –Stephen J. Cole

2. Paul talked about his faith in Jesus to Felix and Drusilla multiple times.

“A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus.” Acts 24:24

3. Paul spoke about the hard issues of righteousness, self-control, and judgment.

“As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment...” Acts 24:25a

4. Felix became frightened by their conversations.

“...Felix became frightened.” Acts 24:25b

5. Felix sent Paul away until it was more convenient.

““Go away for now,” he replied. “When it is more convenient, I’ll call for you again.”” Acts 24:25c

6. Paul was left in prison for two years.

“After two years went by in this way...he left Paul in prison.” Acts 24:17

7. Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus.

“...Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people...” Acts 24:17

8. Shortly after Festus was in power, he heard the complaints against Paul and Paul appealed to be sent to Rome.

“About eight or ten days later Festus returned to Caesarea, and on the following day he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in.” Acts 25:6

9. King Agrippa and Bernice arrive to pay respects to Festus and hear of Paul’s circumstances. Festus decides to send Paul to Rome.

“But in my opinion he has done nothing deserving death. However, since he appealed his case to the emperor, I have decided to send him to Rome.” Acts 25:25

C. Points to ponder...

1. When Paul was confronted with false charges, he carefully responded.

Takeaway: Whenever false accusations are brought against you, don’t let emotions control your responses.

2. When Paul was held prisoner because of false charges, he continued to share his faith.

Takeaway: Keep focused on the highest priority no matter what you face. Let the Light of Jesus shine through.

3. Paul was held in prison far longer than he ever anticipated.

Takeaway: Trust God with the delays in your life. Delay does not mean denial. God works through all the circumstances in our lives if we keep surrendered.

4. Paul’s only defense against the charges brought against him was his life of integrity. He spoke the Truth, he lived the Truth, and kept the Truth in his heart.

Takeaway: Your integrity speaks much louder than your words. How you live when no one is watching is your integrity. Keep your conscience clear!

5. Paul talked about his belief and obedience to the Jewish laws.

Takeaway: Whenever you are trying to reach someone for Jesus, find common ground. Always look for opportunities to share. Step by step, Paul had been obedient and never realized how God would use it.

6. Paul shared the tough issues with Felix and Drusilla.

Takeaway: When God gives you the opportunity to share, don’t be afraid to share truth.

7. Paul honored all authorities, in spite of their lifestyles.

Takeaway: Honor goes to those in authority, even when you don’t feel they deserve it.

8. Felix’ response to Paul’s words.

Takeaway: When is it ever convenient to follow Christ?