

Truth Is Not Abstract - Acts 24:1-27

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[0 : 00] My title is Truth is Not Abstract. As we pick up with Paul's life in Acts 24, he is... At the end of 23, if you remember, he was in Caesarea.

He was taken there, or sent there, sorry, by the captain of the guard to Felix, who was the governor at that time in Judea.

So he would have gone from Jerusalem up along the Mediterranean Sea and up north to Caesarea, which was the Roman capital in that region, shall we say. And he sent him up there because he kind of couldn't get anything out of him, and he knew that there was a plot against his life.

And we saw that Paul, how did Paul respond? Did he respond as the protester, the politician? No, he responded as Paul the prisoner, and a prisoner of God for the sake of others. And that man could manipulate, they could politic, but we saw that God's will was not going to be altered.

The outline for tonight, verses 1 through 9, is an assault on dignity. And it's this lawyer that the Jews brought with him, and he just talks a load, a load of hooley.

[1 : 20] And it's just an assault on dignity. 10 through 21 is the truth defends. The truth defends itself. We don't need to defend the truth. It defends. 22 through 23 is a decision deferred.

For Felix, defers a very important decision. In 24 through 27, we see that at the very end, the truth still stands. But truth is not abstract.

Abstract means existing in thought or as an idea, but not having a physical or concrete existence. So abstract art. And Cynthia, I don't mean to pick on your art. So abstract art, it's art that does not attempt to represent external reality.

Right? And it's okay. It doesn't look like water. You know, it's not meant to represent external reality, but that's okay. We, you know, most fiction doesn't necessarily represent reality.

That's why we like it so much, because it gives us a way to escape into something else. And not escape from this world, but to broaden our imaginations. But the number, let's see, it's the number fifth on the list of most expensive paintings ever was an abstract painting sold by Jackson Pollock, painting number 17A.

[2 : 41] And it's just drift painting. He was the one to kind of start that style. You know what that is? Yeah. Yeah. And it sold for \$200 million. And in 2015, and is listed fifth on the list of most expensive paintings.

So he kind of started that whole thing in 1948. A year after he kind of invented or that took off that idea of the drip painting.

So threw something at the wall and it stuck. But it didn't start out at \$200 million. Right? It's just some investor just bought it for that \$200 million. But truth is not abstract.

So abstract being existing in thought as an idea, but not having a physical or concrete existence. Truth isn't abstract. It isn't just some kind of like something that's out there. Some kind of thought or something we're hoping to find or feel or come across.

But at the end of the last chapter, it says that Felix responds to Paul and he says, I will hear you, said he, when your accusers are also come, and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

[3 : 48] So the judgment hall there in Caesarea. Paul, by Roman law, could not be kept more than two years without being tried under Roman law as a Roman citizen.

But right now he's just being kept until his accusers come. And after five days, Ananias, the high priest, descended with the elders, excuse me, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

And so here we see the Jews, we see Ananias and the other elders. They're all coming down. They're making a big show. They brought their man with them. And there's this big show. And we're going to see that this is all like a distraction because they don't have any truth.

They don't have any foundation here. And so they just want to distract from that. And Tertullus, his name or Tertullus means triple hardened. I mean, what a name. They're bringing this guy who's triple hardened.

This is a tough dude. You know, this is like, this is the lawyer. I don't know any famous lawyers. And, you know, whoever that guy was, the defendant, OJ Simpson, this is who you want. And so here comes the Jews with their man.

[4 : 57] Proverbs 29.5 says, a man that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. And this is what Tertullus is going to attempt to do here with Felix. Flattery seeks a desired end.

And when he was called forth in verse 2, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, seeing that by thee, Felix, we enjoy great quietness and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy province.

We accept it always. And in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. So he begins to accuse Paul, but he doesn't even address Paul. He's talking to Felix here.

And he starts to flatter him. Felix was known. He was a, his brother was very famous in the court of Rome. Felix was a slave at one point and was set free. He was the first slave to be made a governor in, within the Roman system because of the influence of his brother.

And it was said he ruled as a slave. He was a man who was very wicked. He was very indulgent in all of his appetites. And he was very cruel in his retribution to the Jews, any wrong they did.

[6 : 05] He was very, very cruel. This is all a lie that Tertullus is saying. It's just flattery because it seeks a desired end. He wants an end and he's trying to move Felix to that end.

And that's where a man that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. And that's what he's attempting to do here. Romans 16, 18 says, For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies.

And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. But truth, what does truth seek? Truth seeks itself. Truth doesn't have any other ulterior motives.

It just seeks itself. And it does so in love, right? We looked at this Sunday, Ephesians 4, 15. But speaking the truth in love. May grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ.

You can't have the one without the other. Why? Why couldn't you have truth? Well, since we're all here, we can be more interactive. Why couldn't you have truth without love? Where do they originate?

[7 : 05] God. God is love. And he also is the way, the truth, and the life. So they don't exist without each other. And so truth, it seeks itself. It's not seeking anything else because it's complete in itself.

Because God's complete. So the truth doesn't need defending. The truth doesn't need to be added to. I don't need to create a pretty story to try and capture someone with the truth. I just need to give them the truth, but in love.

So the truth is not abstract. The thing is, it's not just even, the truth isn't just that it's a fact. But what would you say it is? It's a person. Truth isn't abstract, but it's a person.

I almost tapped on the slide to make it come up. It's going to happen a lot. I prepared like usual because you never know. And then I'm so used to teaching this format. I never wanted to be an iPad teacher.

Here I am. But anyway, the truth is not abstract. It's a person. John 14, 6 says, well, that's what we just quoted, that I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

[8 : 02] So Jesus says that he is the truth. Truth. Truth. Whereas Tertullus, to him, truth was fluid. Truth was his own truth. Truth was whatever worked to get to a desired end.

So we accept it always in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. So flattery attempts to win the argument before the case is presented. He hasn't said anything about Paul.

He's just using flattery. He's trying to maneuver Felix to try and get him to a point where he's going to be, he's trying to back him into a corner where the only option he has is to choose the decision that Tertullus has already made for him.

Felix's name means happy. It's kind of ironic. I suppose maybe he was happy, but nobody around him was. Notwithstanding, says Tertullus, notwithstanding that I be not further tedious unto you, I pray you that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words.

I mean, this makes you want to throw up. What he's essentially saying is, Felix, the small favor you are doing us is well worth the price for all the praise we just bestowed upon you.

[9 : 09] You now owe us, Felix. The small price of going along with our judgment of Paul is well worth the praise that you don't deserve that we just gave you. So here, Mr. Triple Hardened is attempting to corner Felix into being unable to disagree with his conclusions about Paul because he's linking that with the conclusions he's just made about Felix.

So he's saying, Felix, if you disagree with my judgment now against Paul, well, you're essentially going to disagree with all these nice things I've said about you. He's linking the two of them and making it very hard for Felix to say anything against his argument.

For we have found this man, now he goes into attacking Paul's character, a pestilent fellow, he's a plague, and a mover of sedition or someone who makes things unstable.

Among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. So the characterization of Paul was to paint him in the light of illegitimacy.

Saying, Paul, he's not legit. There's nothing legit about this guy. He's a plague, he makes things unstable, and he's a ringleader. So they claim that Paul, he disseminates, he destabilizes, and he directs.

[10 : 35] He's disseminating all kinds of infectious thoughts and ideas with this. He's a plague. He destabilizes things. He's a leader of sedition, and he's directing all of this as the ringleader.

In contrast to you, O noble Felix, is essentially what his argument is. I'm contrasting you, Felix, with this guy, Paul. So if you don't agree with us, then you're essentially siding with Paul.

And to side with Paul, let's decide with sedition. This is the web he's trying to weave here for Felix. He says, Paul, in verse 6, he's also gone about to profane the temple.

So their claim here now is not only Paul, not legit, but he has no respect for that which is truly legit. The true legitimacy in the temple and true judgment. Who also has gone about to profane the temple whom we took, and we would have judged according to our law.

We were going to do the right thing, Felix, but we were prevented from that. And we hope that you will do the right thing, too. But the chief captain, Licious, came upon us, and with great violence, took him away out of our hands.

[11 : 44] Remember what his name meant? Lame releaser? Mr. Triple Harden is talking bad about lame releaser. But the chief captain, Licious, came upon us, and with great violence, took him out of our hands.

He commanded his accusers to come unto you, by examining of whom thyself may take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

So the Jews are contrasting their just cause against the injustice of any who would disagree with them. We did the right thing. We were doing justice. Anybody who would disagree with us, well, they're obviously on the side of injustice.

Obviously, they're not on the side of truth. But what is truth, as this man is painting it, right? He's weaved this whole perspective. It's his truth, right?

My truth is not the same as your truth. Your truth isn't the same as my truth. It's very abstract. And the Jews, you know, the peanut gallery, they also assented, saying that these things were so.

[12 : 46] Essentially, Felix, you owe us for our flattery. Here's what we've offered to give you. Now, what are you going to give us in return? And then Paul, after that, the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered.

But Paul's just standing there watching all this, which I find remarkable. He's not like, wait, what? No. I think I probably would have been a little more like, right. Okay.

Doing something. But Paul just, he kind of waits because the truth patiently outweighs the lie. It doesn't need to worry about the lie. The truth already is complete in itself.

It's never going to be moved. It's never going to be added to. It's never going to be taken away from. And so no matter how many lies are swirling around, no matter how big the lies are that they build, it just patiently outweighs it because it eventually ends.

Tertullus, for all of his talking, he eventually ran out of things to say. For all of his flattery, he can only flatter so long. And he had nothing actual substantial against Paul. So eventually he just kind of, yep, ended with, and we hope you agree with us too, Felix.

[13 : 58] Then Paul, after that, the governor had beckoned unto him to speak. He answered. For as much as I know that thou has been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do more cheerfully answer for myself.

Interesting. The way Paul starts out. Paul's trying to flatter him here. He's saying, Felix, I know you've been a judge for many years of this nation. And because of that, I'm glad that I get to answer you, that I have an opportunity to do this.

Paul's emphasizing that by speaking for himself, he's declaring he has nothing to hide. Paul's saying, I am so glad I get to answer for myself because I don't have anything to hide.

Later, he's going to point out that the Jews from Ephesus accused him. But where are they? Okay. They didn't come down. They sent this other guy and the gratuitous, the lawyer.

They sent the chief priests. They sent the elders. But where are those who actually accused him? And here's Paul. He doesn't have anybody else. He just has himself. Paul is able also to inject positivity without flattery.

[15 : 05] So he, Felix was, like we said, he wasn't a nice, the nicest guy. The Jews did not like him. He was not a good governor. But Paul was able to be positive towards this guy and inject positivity without any flattery.

When he says to him, Felix, I know you've been a judge for many years in this nation. And I am so thankful that I get to answer for myself before you. That was all true. That was very positive.

Instead of saying, you know, well, Felix, you know what kind of judge you are. You're probably not going to like what I have to say. We can speak the truth in love.

And it can still be truth and it can still be loving. Right? And here Paul is able to do that. With nothing to hide.

In verse 11, he says, Because thou mayest understand that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. In other words, Paul says, I went to worship, not to revolt.

[16 : 02] And Felix, all these things these guys said I did, that's only been twelve days. Man, I didn't have time to do all that. How in the world did I do all these things? You know, I'm the ringleader of seditious Jews the world over.

Or speaking against the Jews, the sedition against the Jews the world over. I've only been twelve days with these guys. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man.

Neither raising up the people. Neither in the synagogues nor in the city. Paul is saying that he's able to back up everything that he is declaring to Felix.

He's like, I can back up every single one of these things. They didn't find me in the temple disputing with any man. I wasn't raising up the people in any synagogue or any city. And I can back that up. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

So Paul's defense, what's it based on? You know, their, what is the prosecution? The prosecution of Paul had no substance to it.

[17 : 09] They had to weave this net of flattery. They had to try and link their view of Paul with their flatterous view of Felix, hoping that he would take that bait and be trapped by that.

Trying to get him to their side, but without any substance to it. Paul's defense was not based upon opinion, but it was based in provability. He's like, I can prove, I can back up everything I say.

And the same with us. We don't have to defend the truth, but we can prove it. We can back up everything we say. Well, prove there's God. No problem. Prove there's God. I can go to the scripture and show you where it says God, God has proved that God is true, that every man in his heart knows that and that the creation declares that.

And if you say there's not, well, then you're just proving God because God already, God already, God already talked about you, that you're going to reject him and say there's no God. And you're going to worship the creator instead of the, or the creature instead of the creator.

And then it goes down that whole list. Well, that's just proof. You know, it's like people say, well, I don't think, I think the Lord delays his coming. I don't think the rapture is anytime soon.

[18 : 14] It's like, well, thank you. You're just, you're just fulfilling scripture, which means it's even closer. Thank you. You know, all you're doing is proving that the truth exists. We can't escape it. Even when we're in a lie, even the world in a lie, they can't actually escape the truth.

They're just trying to hide from it. Proverbs 14, five says a faithful witness. I like this proverb. A faithful witness will not lie, but a false, a false witness will utter lies.

Wow. That's deep. It's just, it's one of those, like you had to put that one in there, didn't you, Lord? A false witness or a faithful witness will not lie. Yeah.

A false witness will utter lies. That's true. Proverbs 14, 25. A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies or literally breathes out lies.

That is, that's his natural, um, it's natural to him. It's part of who he is. It's what keeps him alive. He's a deceitful witness and it just is what comes out. But a faithful witness will not lie.

[19 : 16] What does that mean? Well, it means if someone's lying and as much as they're trying to declare they're a faithful witness, they're not. Because the fruit of their life is a lie. So they're not a faithful witness. It doesn't matter how good they sound.

It doesn't matter how nice they smell or how they dress or whatever or who they are. If they lie, they are not a faithful witness. We're contrasting that a faithful witness will not lie.

So it doesn't, it doesn't matter. Like, well, I don't, you know, you get the person who comes in and they're on the witness stand. They're like, wow, I really resonate with them. Yeah, I can see that. And, but they're lying.

The person who comes in and maybe they're rough, maybe they're gruff, maybe they're from a different class of the culture than you are. But if they speak the truth, then they are a faithful witness.

You think of what we're called to do, to be faithful witnesses, right? We don't have to have anything but the truth. That is the qualification for what makes us a faithful witness.

[20 : 13] Not my eloquence, not my ability to weave words together like Mr. Triple Hardened. But can I speak the truth?

And then Paul says, I do have a confession though. In verse 14, I do confess this unto you. That after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

Like I have, I have a confession. Hi, my name is Paul and I believe the Bible. After the heresy which they call the way, which he says is what? He says, I worship God, the God of my fathers.

And the heresy is that I believe all things that are written. Paul's essentially saying, I will never deny my association with the word. Never going to deny that I'm associated with the word.

I was reading recently. Just some of the kooky things in the church. People do not that church, but like the fringe church.

[21 : 15] Just like, wow, that's a thing, huh? I just saw that, what's it? One of the mainstream churches, I'm not going to say the name. They did a virtual church, VR church on Facebook, on Meta, you know, that virtual reality thing.

Yeah, and people were like, oh, it's like being there. It's like the real thing, you know. Like, have we really come to that? You know, I mean, we don't need fellowship. We can stay home and just watch it on TV.

And that's a wonderful option to have when you can't make it somewhere. But we've replaced the body with that. And now we're replacing that with, well, I can just enter my virtual world.

And it was kooky. Like, you know, the little avatars, like one person was like a chicken and one was a dog and one was some crazy person. And it's like supposedly, you know, this is who they are all at this virtual church. And it's like, wow. But how do you get there?

My point is, how do you get there? Because you walk away from your association with the word. You begin to compromise on the word. It's not the foundation. We've been talking recently just in the house, just the difference between letting the Lord direct your life and asking the Lord to be a part of your life.

[22 : 31] Right? I can be like, you know, I want to do this with my life, this career. I want to go and do this. Oh, but, you know, I want God with me too. And I want to invite God into my life. And I'm going to do the youth group for young adults or I'm going to go to studies and all that.

It's going to be great. And God's going to be a part of that. Well, there's a difference between that and first starting with, well, what do you want from my life? Let me seek you first, your kingdom and your righteousness.

And then what do you want me to do? And I think we have this idea that as soon as we do that, oh, it's going to be something I hate. Instead of realizing, like, he's created us for the most perfect thing.

For me, it was, I was like, Lord, if I just surrender this whole idea of who I marry, I know you're going to force me to marry someone I don't like. It's going to be my, it's going to be the friends of my older sister. I know it.

But, you know, and it's like, I don't want it because those are only girls that were in my life that were believers that I knew. I'm like, oh, man. And I remember surrendering that and just being like, wow, this is wonderful.

[23 : 28] I'll just, I'll just bounce from ministry to ministry. It'll be great. I don't need to get married. And it was like, the Lord was like, that's the one right there. Oh, wow. That's fast.

But just allowing that to be something the Lord decides instead of I decide. And it's so, it's such a blessing. And so as we, we never deny our association with the word. Why? Because it's this foundation.

It's not something I just add in that works conveniently to these parts of my life. But it's in every part of my life. Paul said to Timothy that from a child in 2 Timothy 3.15, you've known the Holy Scripture, which are able to make you wise unto salvation.

And that's why we hold to it. Because the Holy Scripture is what makes us wise unto salvation. Verse 15. And Paul says, and I have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead.

Dot, dot, dot. Even for you, Felix. Romans 8.24 says, For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen, excuse me, is not hope.

[24 : 40] For what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. So what is our hope? Our hope is the resurrection.

And then we wait for that. We've not yet attained. We're not there yet. But hope is also not abstract, is it? Hope is also a person. 1 Timothy 1.1.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope. Our hope is not abstract either. Paul says, I have hope towards God.

It's not just I hope things work out. I hope I feel good. I hope my life goes well. I hope I make it to heaven. But hope is a person. The hope of the resurrection, Felix, it's for you too.

It's going to happen one way or another. And you can receive that hope. If you don't, the only alternative is a resurrection of separation. And herein do I exercise myself.

[25 : 40] I train myself with intention to have always a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men. That word offense means there's no stumbling.

It means it's smooth. Paul says, I train myself. I intentionally am training myself that my conscience is smooth. That there's no wrinkle in it.

There's no rumple. There's no stumbling block in it. That towards God or towards men, I know that my conscience is clean. Romans 14.13 says, Paul says, And whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumults.

Paul's like, my statements are easily proven. I mean, there was no great riot or uproar until these guys, you know, the Jews from Asia, until they made an uproar.

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm reading from Acts. I jumped to the wrong thing. Acts 21.27 says, And when the seven days were almost ended, this is a flashback to when Paul was there in the temple.

[27 : 16] The Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people and laid hands on him. Who stirred up the people? Not Paul. They did. I was like, I didn't. It wasn't me.

You can ask anybody who was there. And they ought to have been here in verse 19 before you, and they should object if they had ought against me. Proverbs 18.17 says, He that is first in his own cause seems just, but his neighbor comes and searches him.

His neighbor, one familiar with him, one of them come and say, no, that's not how it happened. Proverbs 12.22, Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight.

Paul continues, Or else, let these same that are here, let Mr. Triple Hardened and the high priest and the elders, if they have found anything.

That means like to discover. You know, if they've investigated and they've looked into this, let's see the proof. If there's any evil doing, if there's any misdeed that I've done, if they found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice that I cried, standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called and questioned by you this day.

[28 : 35] The enemy will always try to either imply sin where there's none. He's going to say, oh, that's sin. Or imply innocence where there's none.

One or the other. And so they're implying to Paul that there's sin where there is none. And they're implying to themselves that there's innocence. That's the way the enemy works. But sin is also not abstract.

It's not just some, like, well, we're all sinners. Or, well, sin is just some bad thing that's out there. A bad feeling or something evil. It's not abstract.

It's not simply a vague impression of doing wrong. You know, I'm sorry. What are you sorry for? Well, just, I'm sorry for being wrong. It's very specific.

1 John 1.9. If we confess. In the Greek. Right?

[29 : 34] To say the same thing as. To confess is to say the same thing as. If we say the same thing as. About our sin. Who are we saying the same thing as about? I mean, with.

Who are we saying the same thing with? Right? It's the Lord. If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. These are specific. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I'm confessing specifically. Saying the same thing as about that sin. And then. Thankfully. Cleansing is not abstract either. It's specific.

I can know that sin. Is cleansed. I used to say to the youth group. The kids are like. Man, if you have not. You haven't lived. If you haven't. Come to the Lord. In repentance.

In confession. Knowing. That you deserve. Get it. And he just. In his grace. Says, I got that. That's okay. And he lets you go.

[30 : 30] And you're just like. Wow. Lord. That's not. That's not fair. And he's like. Yeah, I know. I forgive you. I release you. Go and sin no more.

Sin is not abstract. But it's identifiable. It's not something that's just. Vague. It can be identified. That's a. That's a blessing. When you're dealing with people.

That are struggling. With sin. And it just can feel like. Because the enemy tries. To muddle things. And they just feel like. I don't know. I'm just. And he's like. Well, let's get. What's going on in your life. You know. Well, that specific practice.

You're doing. Is sin. And so that's weighing on your soul. You know. That's separating you. And your fellowship with the Lord. If you confess that. Then you regain fellowship. And God will cleanse that.

Ephesians 5. 8. Speaking of that. Specific. Specific. Specific. Specific. Specificity. No.

[31 : 28] I'm not going to say it. Ephesians 5. 8. Talks about how sin is specific. It says. For you were sometimes darkness. But now are you light.

And the Lord. Very easily contrasted. There's no. There's no question on what is light. And what is darkness. When they're compared with one another. Walk as children of light. And so he says.

Except it be that for this one voice. I cried among them. Touching the resurrection of the dead. And for that reason. I'm called in question by you this day. So Paul's defense was not about being acquitted.

It wasn't like. I want to be acquitted. But it was all about what he's acquainted with. Like man. I'm acquainted with the gospel. My defense is the gospel. That's why I'm here. Because I stood with the truth.

If you want to condemn me because of that. Go ahead. But you're condemning me. Because I stood with the truth. And when Felix heard these things.

[32 : 24] Having more perfect knowledge. Of that way. So Felix knows about. Christianity. Word perfect knowledge there. That word. It's combined word means. Exact.

Accurate. Or diligent. But he has very exact knowledge. Very accurate knowledge. Very diligent knowledge. About. Christianity. So Felix.

When he heard this. Knowing where Paul was going with this. He deferred. Means to put off. Or literally to throw back. Like. Threw it back at Paul. Like.

Nope. He didn't take that back buddy. He deferred. He deferred them. And said. When Lysias. The chief captain. Shall come down. I will know the uttermost.

Of your matter. Uttermost means. Know for certain. Or to examine. Like. Well wait a minute. Felix. You already know. Exact. Accurate. And diligent information here. What more do you need to know?

[33 : 20] The truth was taking Felix. Where he did not want to go. I mean. It was definitely a little cringy. And. What Tertullius did. With all that flattery.

But you know. Hey. I'd rather. Okay. Yeah. You know. Pretty good guy. Yeah. Thank you for flattering me. I can tell you're spreading a net for me. But you know. I appreciate that flattery.

But the truth. That took him where he did not want to go. Felix had heard the gospel. He'd understood the gospel. Then he delayed dealing with the gospel. So he puts all these guys off. Says.

No. No. No. I'm putting off this decision. This decision. Because Paul. Your testimony. Is forcing me to decide on the truth. And I'm way too uncomfortable with that.

Ecclesiastes 11.4. Says. He that observes the wind. Shall not sow. And he that regards the clouds. Shall not reap. Here Felix is. He's trying to. Which way is the wind blowing here?

[34 : 16] Politically. Which way is the wind going to blow? So. You know. Do I see a storm brewing? Man. If I side with Paul. That's going to be. There's going to be some storm clouds. And so he doesn't sow.

And he doesn't reap. Back in Acts 17. When Paul cried out. About the resurrection.

Says. And when they heard the resurrection of the dead. I'm sorry. This isn't that. This is back when he's in. Athens. Sorry. He was in Athens. And then he was preaching to them.

The resurrection of the dead. Because he saw the. Altar to the unnamed God. And then those that were there. The Stoics. And all of those that like to. Hear a matter told. When they heard the resurrection of the dead.

Some mocked. And others said. Well we'll hear you again on this matter. The same kind of thing. Some mocked. But then some deferred. Did they ever hear him again on that matter? No. He left Athens. Second Corinthians 6.

[35 : 13] Verse 1. Says. We then as workers together with him. Beseech you also. That you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he says. I have heard you in a time accepted.

And in the day of salvation. Have I strengthened you. Behold. Now. Is the accepted time. Behold. Now. Is the day of salvation. And so that's our part.

As workers together with Christ. Is to say. Do not defer. Now is the day. Now is the time for salvation. And he commanded. A centurion to keep Paul.

Felix did. And to let him have liberty. And that he should forbid. None of his acquaintance. To minister or come unto him. Oh that's nice of him. You know. Let's see. How does that work? You take away.

All of. Someone's freedom. You give them back a little. And then they feel a lot of gratitude. Right. Hmm. When did that happen? Recently. And that's what he's doing.

[36 : 11] Gracious tyranny. Or tyranny. Gracious tyranny. Is still tyranny. Right. Injustice is not made better. Through benefits. Well. Yeah. Yeah. I know this isn't just Paul.

But we'll give you a bunch of benefits. So that you're comfortable. Proverbs 12. 10. Says a righteous man regards the life of his beasts. That's not the point of what I'm about to say here. But it also tells us.

That tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. That tender mercies of the wicked. They can't even be kind to an animal. Their tender mercies is cruelty. And so for Felix.

Where he might have thought he was being gracious. He was still being unjust. And where it might sound. Like okay. Well. You know.

At least he gave him his liberty. We're going to see that the whole point here. Is Felix is trying to get something from Paul. And after certain days. When Felix came with his wife. Drusilla. So we're going to see Drusilla in the next chapter.

[37 : 06] Drusilla. I'm not. Yes. No we're not going to see her. I was thinking of. Agrippa's sister.

But anyway. In certain days. When Felix came with his wife Drusilla. Drusilla was his third wife. Yes. She is the sister of Agrippa the third. Agrippa's going to come down. As well.

To visit Felix. And he's going to bring his sister Bernice. I thought they were married. Until I was reading. Oh it's his sister. It's not his wife. So Agrippa and Bernice are going to come down. She had come to live with him.

I believe she had a really rotten marriage. And he's like. Come live with me. And then Drusilla. She is very young at this point. Felix was a lot older than her. She was married to someone as well. And Felix seduced her.

And it's his third wife. He sent for Paul. And heard him concerning the faith in Christ. He's like. Okay. You know. My wife wants to meet you. But all of a sudden.

[38 : 03] He doesn't seem to be too bothered anymore. He's going to continue to bring Paul in. And listen to him. Proverbs 29.1. He that being often reproved. Hardens his neck. He shall suddenly be destroyed.

And that without remedy. It's kind of like his conscience is seared. He's continued to harden himself. To the gospel. To where now. It doesn't affect him.

So. But Paul's going to. In verse 25. He's going to get back at him one more time. As he reasoned of righteousness.

Temperance. And judgment to come. And as he did so. Felix. Was thrown into fear. And he answered. Go your way for this time. When I have a convenient season.

Literally a willing time to partner. He's saying. Hey. When there's a time. That I'm willing to be partner with this. Paul. When there's a convenient season. When the time is right. I'll call for you again.

[39 : 00] Paul. I can't do this anymore. You're throwing me into fear. Paul's truth. Was contrasting Felix's reality. The reality Felix lived in. Couldn't handle the truth. In John 16.8.

It says specifically about the Holy Spirit. That when he has come. He'll do three things. Who will prove the world of sin. Of righteousness. And of judgment. Here Paul is reasoning. Of righteousness. Temperance.

And judgment. To come. We're also told. In John 14. That the spirit of truth. Who the world cannot receive. That when we receive it. He will dwell with you.

And shall be in you. So we know the Holy Spirit's with Paul. We know in Matthew. Jesus tells us in Matthew 10. That hey. When they deliver you up. To the Gentiles. When they deliver you up.

As a testimony against them. Take no thought. What you shall speak. For it shall be given you. At that same hour. What you shall speak. For it is not you that speak. But the spirit of your father.

[39 : 56] Which speaks in you. So Paul. This isn't Paul speaking. And you can see that. Paul's reasoning. Of the same thing. As the Holy Spirit. Specifically was given to do. Paul is allowing the Holy Spirit. To speak through him.

To reach Felix. But Felix here. Is thrown into fear. And this isn't. It's. He'll continue to. Because for two years. He's going to be left there.

And so Felix at this point. Seems to reject completely. Listening to Paul anymore. Hardening his neck. That last time. But Felix was thrown into fear.

First John 4. 18 says. There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear. Because fear has torment. So the time was not right for Felix. To partner with something so tangible.

So real. That he could hold on to like the truth. He liked it being more abstract. He liked where he could decide. If he wanted to. Benefit. From joining with someone. And he hoped also.

[40 : 55] And this is why I think he gave Paul his freedom. A little bit of freedom he did. He hoped also that money should have been given to him from Paul. That he might lose him. Wherefore he sent for him.

The oftener. The more frequent. And communed. Associated. With him. So he rejects. The witness of the Holy Spirit. So very clear. Is the Holy Spirit witnessing to him.

Reasoning with him. Of righteousness. Temperance. And judgment. He's convicted by that. He's thrown into fear. And instead of responding to that. He rejects that. And now all of a sudden.

Instead of being fearful. He's calling for Paul. To commune with him all the more. And talking with him frequently. It doesn't seem to affect him any longer. But his hope is.

You know. Where he heard that. Oh Paul. You're bringing. You're bringing money to Jerusalem. Huh? You're bringing an offering. Well. You know. I'm sure your friends could pay a little bit. To set you free. Right? A little GoFundMe page.

[41 : 51] To get Paul out of jail. Well. And he hoped. That he might. That they would give him money. That they might lose him.

Wherefore he sent for him. More frequent. And communed. Or associated. With him. More often. First Timothy 6.10 says. For the love of money. Is the root of all evil. And while.

While some coveted after. They have erred from the faith. Pierced themselves through. With many sorrows. Now we know in Mark. The parable of the sower. That the. The seed that sprang up. Among the weeds.

That the cares of this world. And riches. And the desire of other things. It chokes it out. Makes it unfruitful. And so that's Felix. But the world loves.

To associate with the church. Because Felix. He brought Paul in. That he might more frequently. Commune with him. More frequently. Associate with him. The world loves associating. With the church. But only if the cost. Is all on one side. And he's like.

[42 : 45] Paul. You. You. You come. And you associate with me. Maybe I can get something from you. Some money from you. But you're going to have to be bound. Paul. Communion with the world. You know. It's going to waste the church's time.

Now Paul's. He's all bound up. He's going to be two years left here. It keeps the church. Bound by the world. It exploits the church. For worldly gain. And then it places the church.

In a compromising position. As Felix says. Hey. Let's associate Paul. Paul unfortunately. Is now kind of stuck. I don't think Paul thought. He was going to be here two years.

I think he thought. Where's the earthquake. Let's get me out of here. Remember Philippi Lord. Let's go. Let's. We got things to do. I'm Paul the missionary. I'm Paul the church planter. I need to go.

And he didn't realize it. That is. At this point. His entire. Ministry had changed. But after two years. Which was against Roman law.

[43 : 42] Remember he said. Paul couldn't stay for more. In this situation. For more than two years. Without being judged. Portius. Festus. Came into Felix. Portius means.

Swinish. Festus means. Festival. So he had this. You know. This guy. This. He was just a. A pig festival. Yeah.

A pig pig. He's a walking barbecue. Good time. He came into Felix's room. And Felix. Determined. Meaning they're willing. Determined. To show the Jews a pleasure.

Literally to be gracious to them. He left Paul bound. Paul represented political and monetary opportunity for Felix. That's what he was going to. If he couldn't get money out of him. Hey. He was going to use him. To be. To gain political opportunity here.

By leaving him bound. Little. Did they all know. But the whole world at this time. Was revolving around. This immovable force of God's word.

[44 : 39] They think they're moving the pieces. They think that they're deciding for Paul. But what do we see here? Paul's immovable. And all of these pieces are moving around him. We had. Ananias is the high priest.

We had. Lame releaser. I can't remember what his name was now. Lysias. You had. Felix. You have the elders. You have Tertullus. All these pieces that are moving.

Trying to move Paul. And he's just at rest. He's at rest. Why? Because back in Acts 23. After that uprising in Jerusalem. In verse 11.

The Lord stood by him that night. And said. Be of good cheer Paul. For as you've testified of me in Jerusalem. So must thou bear witness also. Of Rome. I was like.

I'm going to Rome. I think he thought it was in a straight line. But it's going to be longer. But Paul's peace. It wasn't abstract either. Was it? Paul's peace was a person.

[45 : 35] That night. The Lord stood by me. He had God's word. He had God's promise. But it came from a person. It wasn't just. I heard the Lord's voice. It wasn't just out of vision. The Lord himself stood by me.

Ephesians 2.14 says. For he. Is our. Peace. Our peace is not abstract. Our hope is not abstract. The truth is not abstract.

And it's more. Dare I say. It's more than just God's word. In the sense of. It's more than just. We read it. And we hold on to sayings. And phrases. We recognize that's a person. Jesus came to reveal the father.

That we might have fellowship with a person. Next time. Paul will continue.

His state in Caesarea. You know as Acts ends. These last few chapters. There's a lot here. That we get from Paul. That we wouldn't have.

[46 : 38] Otherwise. Right. Because when he writes to the churches. He's very specifically writing about. situations at the churches. The narrative through Acts. Was just very much. There was a lot of him talking.

But it's what he's doing. At the different places. But here. Before. Festus. And Felix. And then Agrippa. Before all these people. We're kind of going to see.

Paul's heart and perspective. On a lot of. The situation he's going through. I don't think we would have gotten otherwise. Just as he. Laid out his defense. You might think.

I wonder what Paul would say. If he ever got. In a situation. Where he was before. The Romans. What's he going to say. When he gets to Nero. When he gets there to Rome. It's going to be some great. Powerful.

I think he's going to do the same thing. I think he's just going to get up there. Very calmly. Just say. Well here's the truth. I'm going to reason with you. Of temperance. And of judgment. And of righteousness. And of our hope. Which is the resurrection.

[47 : 32] And just going to present this. Immovable object. Nero. We don't have to dress it up. We don't have to make it pretty. But we do have to do it in love. Right? So.

Lord thank you for Paul. Thank you for a man willing to. Wait. A long time Lord. For your word to come to pass. Lord. And thinking of Abraham. Lord.

That scripture says that. Abraham went out. Not knowing whither. But Lord. He went out. Because he had a promise. But he had more than a promise. He had a person. He had you.

Lord. We have more than the truth. We have more than a promise. We have more than your word. We have you. We have the person. It's not abstract. It's not just the best thing.

It's not a really good thing. Compared to all the other religions. It's not just comfort. That these scriptures. I can read them. Or they come to mind. When I'm in bad situations.

[48 : 30] Or I'm down. Or I'm depressed. Lord. I have you. And more importantly Lord. You have me. You have each one of us Lord. And you have promised to never leave us. Or forsake us. You have promised that you would never fail us.

Lord. That you will bring us to our desired haven. And so Lord. We hold to that. And we believe it. Lord. Whether like Paul. He's got two years ahead of him. He's going to be sitting in Caesarea.

Before he heads off to Rome. Or a weather like us. We've got about two days Lord. And we need to be somewhere. It's nothing to you Lord. And yet. I guess not nothing. It's not a hard thing for you.

But it's everything to you. You've made our lives. Everything to you Lord. You went to the cross Lord. So that our specific sins. Could be confessed. Forsaken.

And forgiven Lord. The enemy tries to bring him back. And he's also. Can be specific. Sometimes he can be very vague. And just. Give us a feeling. Of. But Lord.

[49 : 25] I can go to the cross. And I can say. I have specifically. Received. Salvation. Not something abstract. That a man can know. If he's born again.

And so Lord. I pray that you use us Lord. Use us to be that light to the world. Lord. Like. Like we read Lord. Tonight. That we work with you Lord. To bring that truth. To say to people.

Don't put this off. Don't defer. Don't try and. Move the truth. You can't. It's immovable. So don't try and skirt around it. Just receive. This truth.

And Lord. I pray that we. Would remember Lord. That our association with the word. Lord. That. We're immovable. As long as we stick with the word. As long as we stick with you. Thank you Jesus.

In your name we pray. Amen.