I. INTRO:
   A. Oddny Gumaer - is the co-founder of Partners Relief & Development w/her husband Steve; & the designer & editor of Partners Magazine. And lover of the people of Burma.
      1. Book Signing afterwards - Displaced Reflections both inspiring & challenging
   B. Top Five Things People Put Off Until the Last Minute: #1 House chores/yard work; #2 Holiday gift shopping; #3 Making doctor/dentist appointments; #4 Calling relatives; #5 Changing oil in the car.
      1. One of the topics we'll talk about this morning is procrastination.
   C. Paul had to defend himself 5 separate times during the 2 years in Jerusalem & Caesarea.
      1. Remember form last week 40 men had vowed not to eat until paul was dead.
         a) By now they were pretty mad & hungry! They realized their plot had been foiled.
         b) Recanting their oath, they take advantage of Felix’s wish to hear their side of the story. (They come up with bringing a professional orator extraordinaire!) Let’s meet him!

II. FELIX not felix!
   A. THE CHARGES AGAINST PAUL! (1-9)
   B. (1) Tertullus - wanted Felix to see Paul as a potentially political revolutionary.
      1. Orator - a professional speaker to make a skillful presentation of a case in court. His training not legal but rhetorical.
      2. The Jewish leaders wanted a persuader...it wasn’t about truth.
      3. So he lays it on thick w/flattery!
   C. (5,6) Napoleon said, “He who knows how to flatter also knows how to slander.”
   D. 3 Charges against Paul:
      1. He was a Pest - creating dissension.
      2. He was a Leader - of a sect of the Nazarenes.
      3. He was a Desecrater - profaning the temple.
   E. PAULS DEFENSE! (10-21)
   F. (10) Paul doesn’t use dripping flattery, but polite honesty!
G. **3 Defenses** (counter punches) **against his Charges:**

1. **He was a Pest creating dissension?** (11-13) - No, you can’t get a riot going in 12 days, 5 of which I’ve been here!

2. **He was a Leader?** (14-16) - Not of a sect (Tertullus’ euphemism for a cult) but I am of **The Way**, a *religio licita* (legitimate religion) in the Roman empire.
   a) Described Christianity as *the Way* - “a course of life involving progress!”
   b) 1st, I serve the same God as the Jews; 2nd, I believe the the same Word of God; 3rd, I also hope in God for my future resurrection; 4th, concerning my beliefs & lifestyle, I have a completely clear conscience.
   c) (16) Paul was doing his utmost to live a **genuine Christian life!**
      (1) He *exercised himself* (strive), *practiced* having this *conscience*.
         (a) **God** - Keeping himself upright before God.
         (b) **Man** - Not causing anyone else to be tripped up.
   d) **Conscience** = the *knowing* part of us, that which *knows* what is right & what is wrong. [It *warns* us of evil; *approves* of well-doing; & *condemns* wrong doing]
      (1) Francis Schaeffer said, “Biblical Orthodoxy w/o compassion is surely the ugliest thing in the world”.

3. **He was a Desecrater?** (17-21) - No, matter fact he entered to **purify himself**, thus affirming his own personal commitment to the temple worship.
   a) Also, he came to *bless* the Jewish poor with finances he brought!
   b) He had not gone to the temple to *tear it down*, but to *support it*.
   c) Oh, & by the way, according to Roman Law, my accusers need to be present in person to press charges...where are they?(19)

4. He ends w/ the resurrection proving this was a **religious** matter not a **civil** one.

H. **FELIX’S INDECISION!** (22-27)

1. Why did I title this *Felix not felix*? Felix means happy! And he wasn’t!

J. **Antonius Felix** - procurator of Judea. He was recalled by Nero in 60ad. He was accused of poor administration & had to answer cruelty charges.
   1. He was a brutal, incompetent politician.
   2. He begun his life as a **slave**. His brother, Pallas, was the fav of the emperor.
      a) From his *brothers influence* Felix had risen to be a **freedman** & then to be **governor** of a Roman province. (1st slave ever to do that)
      b) Tacitus speaks of *Felix* as, “wielding the power of a king w/the mind of a slave.”
K. And Drusilla? She was his 3rd wife. When she was only 16, Felix w/the help of a cypriote magician called Atomos, persuaded her to leave her husband & marry him.¹

1. But she wanted to hear Paul...why? - She had been raised in a family full of wickedness & turmoil: [Her dad, Herod Agrippa I, killed James; Her aunt & great uncle Herodias & Herod Antipas, had John the Baptist killed; her grandfather Herod Aristobulus was strangled by his father, Herod the Great, who ordered all the killings of the Bethlehem baby boys] {a little dysfunctional!}

2. Perhaps in Paul’s Jesus she saw hope for a clean conscience & a chance for a new beginning.

3. So, Paul speaks to her & Felix not about marriage & family themes, but about faith in Christ Jesus, righteousness, self-control, & the judgment to come!
   a) Paul’s outstanding character seen not only in public defense but also in private talk.
      (1) The same faithfulness, frankness, & fearlessness.
   b) But Felix was afraid so he told him to go away, instead of repenting & trusting.
   c) Paul held a cup of truth to their parched lips...but they wouldn’t drink!

L. (25) Self-control - Illust: Man’s nature is like a high-spirited horse ridden by an experienced owner. The rider would neither starve the animal till all its spirit had left it, nor pamper it by letting it have its head; rather would he keep it under firm control, that it might recognize its master, feel his power, & so do his will.

M. Procrastination!

1. Actually Felix was the prisoner & Paul was the prosecutor.
   a) Felix knew he was guilty, but instead of accepting Christ he delayed.

2. Paul says, the convenient time to be saved is now!
   a) Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor 6:2
   b) Is.55:6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

3. Once upon a time Satan called together his evil spirits & asked, “how will we deal with continuing to lose souls to the other side?”
   One rose and said, “I will go to the earth and tell men that the Bible is all a fable, that it is not divinely appointed of God.” No, that will not do.
   Another said, “Let me go: I will tell men that there is no God, no Saviour, no Heaven, no hell.” “No, that will not do; we cannot make men believe that.”
   Suddenly another arose and suggested, “No, I will journey to the world of men, and tell them that there is a God, that there is a Saviour, that there is a Heaven - yes, and a hell, too; but I’ll tell them there is NO HURRY; tomorrow will do!” And they sent him!

¹ F.F.Bruce, Commentary on Acts; pg.472,473.
a) A fanciful story? Yes, but understand, Satan doesn’t have to convince people to reject the truth, just put it off!

4. Delay dulls the edge of the sword of the Spirit!

a) Each time we say “tomorrow Lord” the Spirit’s pricking & prodding becomes less effective. Pretty soon it is a lethargic yawn in response to God’s truth. Then, a procrastinatory callous has formed over our hearts, & although the Spirit stabs us w/conviction, we don’t feel a thing.²

b) Imagine that inside your conscience is a large sharp edged box. And that each time you sin, the box turns, causing a corner to prick your conscience. Commit that same sin again, & the corner nicks you again. However, as that sin becomes a habit, the corners are worn down little by little, resulting in less & less pain in your conscience. Eventually, it smoothes the box into a harmless ball. When you sin, you feel nothing!

(1) Has a certain sin in your life been eroding the sensitivity of your conscience?

N. (26) What divine patience, the Lord giving Felix more opportunities to hear the gospel.

O. (27) This was not a hung jury but a hung governor!

1. He had no grounds on which to accuse Paul, but at the same time he did not want to offend the Jews.

P. End: While atheism has slain its hundreds, & vice its thousands, procrastination has slain its hundreds of thousands; & just as men wishing to sleep will draw heavy curtains over windows to prevent light from waking them, so do they shut out the light of conviction...by curtains of procrastination!

² Charles Swindoll; Acts; pg.114