

## “Felix not felix!”

### 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 from 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)

- I. 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.<sup>1</sup>
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!**

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

- 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!

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Swindoll; Acts; pg.114