

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Politics and The Gospel, Pt 2

Acts 24

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: Paul is now in the hands of the Governor Felix in Caesarea. Here again we get to see how Paul worked within the political system rather than fighting against it for the sake of the gospel. Corruption was evident from top to bottom but all that mattered for Paul was the opportunity to give testimony about his conversion and the glory and greatness of his Lord, Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read Acts 24
- B. Last Sunday I spoke of the culture war that is taking place before our very eyes.
 - 1. Started in the 50's and now is easy to see in every area of the Western society and culture
 - 2. Out of all of this comes responses, and one that affects each of us in one way or another, is called Christian Nationalism.
 - 3. This is where I believe examining Paul as he is dealing with his faith as a follower of Jesus Christ while also functioning as a Roman citizen and as a Jew becomes helpful.
 - 4. We left Paul last week with the knowledge that he would finally be able to go to Rome. This came from Jesus Himself. But he also found that the way he would go to Rome was in chains.
- C. Paul works within the system in which he finds himself.

II. Politics and The Gospel.

- A. First, the key characters.
 - 1. The first step is to understand the lawyer hired by the name of Tertullus.

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2. The next individual is of course Antonius Felix.

B. The charges:

1. Paul had been rescued and transferred to Caesarea to continue the investigation into the claims that he was a troublemaker and causing riots
2. As an aside, It is interesting how Tertullus uses classic rhetoric style to make his arguments. We won't get into the details of it but it is worth noting for it shows his education.
3. In verses two through 6 the argument is very simple but focuses upon accusation without proof.
4. Then the rest of the Jewish elders who had traveled to see Felix join in and affirm that this was the truth.
5. Here is a simple principle: Enemies of the Gospel will use governing authorities for the purpose of suppression.
 - a. What you see here is how this age ultimately deals with truth and justice.
 - b. Ideally you hope in a trial that what you will hear and see is truth and justice. But this is seldom the case.
6. You see in vs 7 how he implies that the commander prevented them unfairly from dealing with Paul on their own (6).
7. Liars beget liars and in vs 9 the other elders jump in and affirm the truth of Tertullus.

C. The defense:

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1. Paul uses the exact same rhetorical style as Tertullus.
2. His basic point is very straightforward: He doesn't try to prove innocence, because that is almost impossible. He simply denies the accusations and dares them to actually prove it (13).
3. Here we find that there is no reason why you cannot speak up for yourself or assert your innocence
 - a. 1 Peter 4:12-19.
 - b. Paul understands what Peter overtly teaches in this passage. So let us take note of his stance and his words back in ch 24.
4. Notice how vss 14-18 he goes for a positive confession, meaning, instead of trying to deny, he uses this as an opportunity to declare what he believes and what he did.

D. Felix's response:

1. He realizes that he is dealing with an innocent man.
2. Here again we have a wonderful principle to note. Where and how did he learn of the Way?
 - a. By others who sought to give testimony to him. And not just in passing, it would appear that there had been conversations over time.

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- b. Beloved, if you share Christ, do not lose heart if nothing seems to happen. God is working through the gospel for His purposes and you cannot fail in that task.
 - 3. Vs 22b gives us the character of Felix.

- E. The gospel declaration (25):
 - 1. Righteousness, Self-control, and the judgment to come.
 - 2. Righteousness here would be two-fold:
 - 3. Sanctification here is focused on the nature of self-control.
 - 4. Finally, judgment.
 - 5. And it is here (25b) that Felix is frightened. Why?
 - a. Well he is not a righteous man in himself. He knows his sins, no matter what he tries to say.
 - b. What about self-control? This man has none.
 - c. So shall he stand in the day of judgment?
 - d. Let me ask you. Will you?
 - 6. Here is another principle for you here who love Jesus. When you speak the gospel, speak it in truth. Make it clear that you are not inviting them to have some nice little vague relationship with Jesus. Make the way of salvation clear (faith). Make the call of all who claim Christ clear (self-control) and make the guaranteed future of all clear (judgment).

- F. Felix's response:
 - 1. He has fear at first.

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2. But then, in vs 26 we see his real heart. A love of money. A love of the bribe.
3. Frequent talks with Paul. But not about his soul. Only out of interest of his pocketbook.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Beloved, do not hope in this age and the powers of this age. We are not here to establish a Christian nation. We are not here to establish a kingdom for Christ. We are here to be living witnesses of the power of the gospel.
- B. One thing that stands out in this story is the sadness of lost opportunity.
 1. This man had the incredible opportunity to hear the gospel, hear it from the Apostle Paul himself, and learn the way to forgiveness and life. And he rejected it.
 2. He was convicted of what he had done as a man. He knew he was guilty. He even experienced fear.
 3. But when it came right down to it, he turned his back on the free offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. And he is now an eternal object of God's wrath in hell today.
- C. My mind goes to each of you today. Why did you come? The reasons are likely varied, but the fact is that you are here.
 1. Today you have heard the way of salvation. The only way.
 2. You have heard of who Jesus Christ is and what He did.
 3. You have heard the call to find your righteousness in Him and not yourself.
 4. This is your opportunity to turn from your paths, your sins, your ways and to seek life and forgiveness in Jesus. Will you take this opportunity? Or will you be like Felix and turn your back on Jesus and on life?

Benediction

May the God who gave us the Word sanctify us in it so that we might find ourselves strengthened in the truth, humble of heart, able to encourage one another toward love and good deeds, especially as we see the day of our Lord's return drawing nearer. Amen.