

## Acts 24:1-27 “The Power of the Spirit to Receive and Share the Gospel” 2.22.15

**Intro.** \* 99 cents store & M&Ms contest winner – too late. Moral of the story: timing is everything! Same with the gospel

**Subject:** Paul shares the gospel with Roman leaders [Paul’s defense]

**Object:** Receive and share the gospel

**Context:** God protects Paul from the plot to assassinate him & delivers Paul to Caesarea where he will give a defense before the Roman governor Felix

**A. Don’t fear the accusations of the opposition [1-9]** 1Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. 2And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: “Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, 3we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. 5For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. 7But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, 8commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.” 9And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

**v.1 Ananias:** corrupt tool of Rome, in his late 70s but traveled to Caesarea the center of Roman govt. @ 70 miles away because of his opposition to Paul and the gospel. Elders were the Sanhedrin Council & Tertullus was the lawyer

**v.2-3 Felix:** former slave freed by Antonia the mother of emperor Claudius. Appointed Governor of Judea in 52AD and was brutal. The Roman historian Tacitus said, “He ruled with the power of a king and spirit of a slave.”

### **1. False charges against Paul [4-6]**

**a. Political: creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world [5]** insurrection against Rome a violent uprising against the government.

**b. Religious: defiler of the temple [6]:** Brought a Gentile into temple area restricted to Jews [Ac.21:26-29]

iii. leaders agree with the charges but offer no corroborating evidence as proof [7-9]

### **2. The fear of the accusations of the opposition can keep us from receiving Christ and sharing the gospel.**

? What are some charges brought against Christians today that tend to intimidate many Christians? **How would you respond to those charges**

## **B. Don't neglect to share Christ's gospel [10-21] The Defense Before Felix**

10 Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered:

“Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, 11 because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.

**1. Explain why the charges are false [10-13, 19-20]** Paul was happy to respond to the charges. Since Felix had been Governor of Judea for 5 years he knew what kind of men Paul's accusers were like [10]. v.11 Came to Jerusalem only 12 days ago: no time to organize a rebellion, and the witnesses/evidence of any insurrection should still be available – where are they? Came to the temple to worship: can't profane the temple if there to truly worship v.12 Paul did not incite the crowd against Rome v.13, 19-20 no witnesses or evidence – the charges are false!

**2. Begin to explain the gospel [14-21]** 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. 15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just 16 This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

17 “Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, 18 in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. 19 They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. 20 Or else let those who are *here* themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, 21 unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day: and *the* unjust.

**a. Jesus is the only way to God [14]:** the early church was called the Way ref. Jn. 14:6. Same God as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – the True and Living God Rom.1:16

**b. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies for Messiah [the Christ] [14]** 300+ prophecies in OT re Messiah fulfilled by Jesus in NT

a. can't control: place of birth [Mic.5:2], tribe of Judah [Gen.49:10], virgin birth [Is.7:14]

**c. Jesus' resurrection proves moral implications for man [15-16, 21]**

i. The message of the gospel rests on the resurrection. The truth of the gospel creates moral responsibility to God [1Cor.15]

ii. Evidence beyond a reasonable doubt:

## **3. Don't wait for a convenient time [22-27] Felix Procrastinates**

22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the* Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.” 23 So he

commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him. 27 But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound. Felix knew about Christianity since his jurisdiction included Galilee & Jerusalem, and knew that Paul and the Christians were not leading a rebellion against Rome [22]. That is why Paul was given liberties under house arrest [23]. Waiting for Lysias, the Roman commander who rescued Paul was a way to delay [22].

**a. Further explain the gospel to those who are curious [24-25]** Felix with his wife summoned Paul to hear more about faith in Christ [24]. **Paul reasoned about [25 righteousness, self-control, judgment to come:** God is loving but also completely holy and righteous. No sin can enter His presence. **Rom.3:23** All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our self-control is inadequate! **Rom.6:23** The wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Rom.5:8** But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were opposed to God, Christ died for us.

**b. Don't be afraid to yield your life to Jesus [25-27]** Felix was afraid: knew that he wasn't right with God and knew there would be consequences, conviction of the Holy Spirit; or perhaps was afraid to yield his life to Christ and change his lifestyle

**i. Don't delay & miss one day in re with God [25] When I have a convenient time I will call for you:** *What are you afraid to give up to receive the life only God can give?*

**ii. Don't let love for money keep you from Christ [26 -27]** Greed re hoping for a bribe to release from jail [Mt.6:24 can't serve God and money]. Left Paul in prison as a favor to the Jews. During two years had several conversations with Paul about Christ but no decision for Jesus.

**2Cor.6:2 Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.**

**Conc:** Invitation to receive Christ and prayer to share the gospel

## Discussion Qs

1. What are some charges brought against Christians today that tend to intimidate many Christians?

- 2. How could you respond to those charges?**
- 3. What are some of the reasons that people may be afraid to yield to Christ?**
- 4. How would you urge an unbeliever not to delay a decision for Jesus?**