

SERMON APPLICATION SHEET FOR:

Pastor Tony Felich

The Gospel on Trial

Acts 23-24

January 5, 2020

Sermon Text

Acts 23:23 Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. [24] Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor." [25] And he wrote a letter to this effect: [26] "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. [27] This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. [28] And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. [29] I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. [30] And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him." [31] So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. [32] And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. [33] When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. [34] On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, [35] he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

[24:1] And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. [2] And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, [3] in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. [4] But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. [5] For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. [6] He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. [8] By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him." [9] The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so. [10] And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. [11] You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, [12] and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. [13] Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. [14] But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, [15] having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. [16] So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. [17] Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. [18] While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia— [19] they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. [20] Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, [21] other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'" [22] But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." [23] Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs. [24] After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. [25] And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you." [26] At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him. [27] When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Sermon Notes

God placed Paul in strategic settings so he could testify to the gospel of Christ.

I. Providential appointments (23:23-35)

II. Charges against Paul (24:1-9)

III. Paul's Defense (24:10-21)

IV. Felix's familiar but tragic response (22-27)

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Sermon Application Questions

1. How does God's providence apply to our meetings with people?

2. Discuss this statement from the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 5-
"As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures, so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof."

3. What about Paul's defense helps us prepare for meeting and talking to people?

4. What was Paul's message to Felix (v.24-25)?

5. Discuss the example of Pastor Wang Yi's response to being jailed for preaching the gospel (excerpt below)

I hope God uses me, by means of first losing my personal freedom, to tell those who have deprived me of my personal freedom that there is an authority higher than their authority, and that there is a freedom that they cannot restrain, a freedom that fills the church of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.

Pray that the Lord would use me, that he would grant me patience and wisdom, that I might take the gospel to them.

Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family – the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith; no one can make me change my life; and no one can raise me from the dead.

6. What is so tragic about Felix's response to Paul's message?

Prayer Requests

This week our family will lift up requests for:

This week our family will praise the Lord for:

HFG Notes & Actions:

Next HFG meeting is: