

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE CHARGES (ACTS 24:1–9) PROFESSIONAL HELP

To grease the wheels of justice—really, injustice—the high priest, Ananias, brought with him a lawyer skilled in rhetoric. Tertullus immediately cozied up to Felix with lots of flattery, trying to persuade him to see their side.

- Proverbs 26:28 says that “a flattering mouth causes ruin.” **Our character should be the only defense we need.**

FELIX

Felix was known as a cruel man who hated the Jews and took bribes. He must have been a vain man as well, for Tertullus appealed to Felix's ego rather than the truth.

- **Pride can keep us from doing the hard work of putting to death our flesh. Staying close to the cross of Jesus humbles us, as we are reminded we can't save ourselves.**

THE ACCUSATIONS

Tertullus accused Paul of being three things: 1) a plague that agitated the Jews throughout the Roman world, 2) a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Christianity), and 3) a desecrator of the temple.

- **When Christianity and Christians are attacked, it's often through false accusations. Don't attack back at them.**

A DEFENSE (ACTS 24:10–21)

A PROMISE FULFILLED

Jesus told the disciples not to worry when brought before governors and kings because the Holy Spirit would give them what to say (Matthew 10:18–20). Paul got the opportunity to see this fulfilled as he took his turn to address Felix.

- **This isn't a promise based on us being lazy and not being in the Word and prayer. We prepare, and the Holy Spirit proclaims.**

NOT AN AGITATOR

Paul gave a defense without being defensive. He wasn't causing a disturbance at the temple, or any synagogue, or anywhere in Jerusalem. That was a false accusation.

- **Stating the facts won't always calm situations, and truth won't always—at least seemingly—prevail. But that's no reason to taint or fudge the truth.**

HERE'S WHAT IS TRUE

While not an agitator, Paul admitted to following the Way, in fulfillment of all that his ancestors had pointed to. Paul turned his trial into an opportunity to share the gospel with Felix, the high priest, and all who were in attendance. Paul never shrunk back from proclaiming the gospel.

- **A good skill for Christians to learn is how to turn conversations to the gospel.**

THE RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING

Paul's hope in the resurrection was proven true by the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrected Christ changed everything in Paul's life. He wanted to see this same change in others.

- **We should absolutely preach Christ crucified. But if Christ isn't resurrected, our faith is in vain. The resurrection shows His victory over sin, Hell, death, and Satan.**

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

What got Paul slapped earlier was once again stated before the same man who ordered the slapping, the high priest (23:1; 24:16). Paul said he strived to have a clear conscience before God and men.

- **Striving for a clear conscience before God and men requires humility, quick repentance, and putting to death our flesh.**

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Paul told Felix that he was in Jerusalem to bring a charitable financial gift from the Gentile churches to his suffering people. He was in the temple to be purified. And he wasn't stirring up a crowd or causing an uproar. The people who should have been there to accuse him, the Jews from Asia, weren't there.

- Paul masterfully defended himself.

MOTIVES (ACTS 24:22–27)

KNOWLEDGE DOESN'T EQUAL CONVERSION

While Felix was well-informed about Christianity (whether through personal study or through his Jewish wife), he clearly wasn't a Christian.

- **Demons believe God is one and shudder while remaining unconverted (James 2:19). People listened to Jesus and still rejected Him. Faith, through knowledge, saves.**

KINDNESS FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES

Felix could have released Paul but chose to keep him imprisoned. While imprisoned, Felix allowed Paul some freedom, which included seeing his friends. It was still prison, but it could have been worse, like in Philippi (16:16–23).

- **Even in the pit, we should look for God's presence and kindness. Things may be truly awful. But God is always good.**

THE GOSPEL

Felix and his Jewish wife Drusilla brought Paul before them. Paul preached the simple gospel. God is the Righteous One, and we are created in His image so we should be righteous. Instead of self-control, we sin and fall short of the glory of God. The righteous Judge will one day judge all. We need Jesus!

- **The gospel isn't complicated.**

CONVICTION

Luke says that Felix became afraid.

- **The gospel can bring conviction when we see the reality of God's holiness, our sinfulness, and how we fall short of God's glory. Without the hope of the gospel, conviction will lead to condemnation. With the gospel, conviction can bring confession and conversion.**

NOT CONVICTED ENOUGH

Luke also says that Felix brought Paul in for talks with the hope that Paul would offer him a monetary bribe. This went on for two years, until Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus. Felix should have released Paul but instead tried to curry the favor of the Jews. All this showed that Felix had not repented and was still a slave to sin.

- **Hearts can become hardened to conviction.**

LIKE FELIX OR LIKE PAUL

- Felix only lived for Felix. He thought politically and personally, not benevolently and kindly. Politics and greed kept him from doing the right thing. **What desires keep us from doing the right thing?**
- Paul lived for Jesus and others. He wanted Jesus glorified and people to come to faith in Him. **What motivates us to live for Jesus?**

ARE WE READY?

- How are we preparing ourselves to be **useful vessels for the gospel** should the Lord give us opportunities to speak for Him?
- Do we **pray, read the Bible, attend church, live in community, and serve others** so that we will **grow in Christ**?
- **We can turn just about any conversation to Christ without being weird.**

THE GOSPEL BRINGS CONVICTION, NOT US

- Conviction of sin is a gift when it makes us run to Jesus. Running to Jesus may take time, but it can happen if we remain open.
- Conviction of sin can cause a hardened heart if we aren't willing to humble ourselves.
- Only Jesus can change a heart. **We don't manipulate people or prey on their emotions. The gospel is the power of God for salvation.**

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

- **God:** God created all things, including us in His image to be in relationship with Him forever. He declared that everything was very good as he placed the man and woman in the garden of Eden.
- **Man:** Adam and Eve rebelled against God, choosing their way instead of His way, thus plunging all creation into sin.
- **Christ:** God the Son, Jesus, took on human flesh, lived fully obedient to all that God commanded and demanded through the law, and died as our substitute on the cross, fully satisfying the wrath of God we deserved. He rose from the dead, reigns in Heaven, and will one day return to make all things new.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL?

- **Response:** We must repent of our sins (confess that Jesus is Lord, not us) and by faith trust in all that Jesus accomplished for us (believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead) to become Christians.
- **Works:** Good works don't save us; Jesus does. Works show we love Jesus and have been raised to new life.