

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 3RD–4TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

ANOTHER TRIAL (ACTS 25:1–12) FROM FELIX TO FESTUS

After two years, Festus replaces Felix. Felix was someone who delayed Paul's case, hoped for a bribe, and wanted to please the Jews. Festus appears to act quickly, seeks order, and follows the legal process.

- **Our hope should not be in the political system. Our only hope is Jesus.**

THE OPPOSITION HASN'T GONE AWAY

Paul has been imprisoned for two years, but his enemies have not given up. They ask Festus to send Paul to Jerusalem because they secretly plan to kill him along the way.

- **Sin has a way of taking us farther than we intended to go. If we don't surrender the sin to Jesus, it begins changing us.**

FALSELY ACCUSED

Paul's accusers bring serious charges against him, but they can't prove them. Paul can't control what people say about him, only how he responds.

- **It's easy to act like Jesus when we're being praised; the test comes when we're being criticized.**

FESTUS FACES POLITICAL PRESSURE

Festus wants to please the crowd, but Paul refuses to allow political pressure to determine his future. Paul trusts God and wisely uses the rights God has given him.

- Festus made decisions based on pressure; Paul made decisions based on convictions. **What drives our decisions?**

"I APPEAL TO CAESAR!"

Paul appeals his case to Caesar, and Festus agrees to send him to Rome. Years earlier, Jesus told Paul that he would testify in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul had no idea how difficult the journey would be.

- **When the journey gets difficult, we assume something has gone wrong.**

KING AGRIPPA (ACTS 25:13–22)

AGRIPPA AND BERNICE

Agrippa and Bernice come to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Paul's case comes up in conversation. Nobody in the room realizes it, but God is arranging an opportunity for the gospel.

- Faithfulness in ordinary moments prepares us for extraordinary opportunities.

HERODIAN FAMILY

Agrippa comes from a family with a long history involving Jesus and His followers: Herod the Great tried to kill Jesus as a child. Herod Antipas questioned Jesus before the crucifixion. Herod Agrippa I killed James and imprisoned Peter. Now Agrippa II is sitting down to hear about Paul's case.

"ABOUT A CERTAIN JESUS"

Festus explains Paul's case and says the main issue is: "A dead man Paul claimed was alive." Festus presents the resurrection almost like it's some strange detail in Paul's case. But for Paul, this is the entire foundation.

- **If we really believe Jesus is alive, does the way we're living show it?**

PAUL ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT JESUS

Paul's circumstances have completely changed. He is no longer traveling freely—he's a prisoner. Wherever Paul goes, the conversation eventually shifts to Jesus.

- **Paul doesn't allow his suffering to become the center of his story. Jesus remains the center.**

"I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THE MAN MYSELF"

Agrippa wants to meet Paul because he has heard about Paul. Paul's life has created curiosity before he ever walks into the room.

- **Do we live in such a way that makes people curious about Jesus? Long before people hear what we believe, they are often watching how we live.**

EXAMINATION (ACTS 25:23–27)

THE CONTRAST IN THE ROOM

Agrippa enters surrounded by wealth, military leaders, political influence, and "great pomp." Paul enters as a prisoner.

- **Paul possesses something the entire room desperately needs: a relationship with Jesus. You can possess everything the world celebrates and still be empty.**

UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY

Paul could never have arranged this audience himself. The circumstances that seemed to restrict Paul's ministry created an opportunity to reach people he may never have reached otherwise.

- **Our circumstances change, but our calling to represent Jesus doesn't.**

FESTUS EXAMINES PAUL

Festus tells the room that Jewish leaders have demanded Paul's death. But after examining Paul, Festus says: "I found that he had not done anything deserving of death."

- **If someone examined our lives the way Festus examined Paul, what would they find?**

CHAOTIC ENDING

Festus doesn't know what charges to write. Paul is innocent but still imprisoned. The Jewish leaders want Paul dead. Agrippa is brought in to help make sense of the case.

- **What if God is doing something meaningful in the middle of what currently feels chaotic?**

THE REALITY OF SIN

- The Jewish leaders allowed their hatred of Paul to grow until they were willing to lie, manipulate, and even plot his murder.
- **Sin will always take us farther than we intended to go. Deal with the sin while it's small. Will we bring it to the light and let Jesus transform us, or keep it in the dark?**

DO OUR LIVES POINT TO JESUS?

- Paul didn't just talk about Jesus—his life showed that he had been changed by Him.
- **The world isn't only listening to what we say about Jesus—they're watching how we live. When I'm under pressure, do people see more of Jesus or more of me?**
- Do we look more like Jesus or the world?

TRUE FREEDOM

- Agrippa has everything our culture says you need: wealth, power, influence, approval of people, and "great pomp."
- We live in the United States (land of the free) but **are we truly free?** Paul walked in with chains but has true freedom.
- **Paul possessed what everyone needs: Jesus.**
- For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life because of me will find it. For what will it benefit someone if he gains the whole world yet loses his life?** (Matthew 16:25–26 CSB)