

Acts Series Part 63

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[0 : 00] Happy by name, but certainly not happy by nature.

Today we will meet an intriguing character called Felix, or Felicity, or if you wish, Happy. Felix was the Roman governor based in Caesarea, to whom Paul had been sent by the Roman commander Claudius Lysias.

You will remember the occasion when there was the disturbance in Jerusalem, and when the Jews had hatched a plot to assassinate Paul, and Claudius Lysias discovers that this is going to take place, and so he very quickly proceeds to send Paul to Caesarea, where the governor was based, and in a sense washes his hands of the matter and allows Felix to take responsibility for determining what to do with Paul.

Well, Felix wastes no time in proceeding to a trial, and within five days Paul's accusers have arrived. We notice there at the end of chapter 23 how Felix had expressed his intention, I will hear your case when your accusers get here.

Of course, Paul had traveled in the dark of night, and so at this point perhaps the Jews weren't even aware of what had happened, and so it would take some time for them to realize the turn of events, and to then, they in turn, to proceed to Caesarea for this trial.

[1 : 38] And then at the beginning of chapter 24, we're told of the timescale, five days later, the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders, some of the members of the Sanhedrin, and a lawyer named Tertullus.

Now we're going to spend some time examining the case for the prosecution as it is presented by the lawyer who is brought for that purpose, Tertullus, and then also spend a little bit of time seeing the manner in which Paul presents his defense against the accusations that are leveled against him.

But we will do that to then lead in to what is our principal interest this evening, and that is this individual who we meet, Governor Felix, and particularly to note the manner in which he responds to the gospel message, what he does with the knowledge that he is able to secure concerning the way, concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But first of all, if we think a little bit about the trial as it is presented to us, we have, first of all, the prosecution making their case. And this is in the hands of the lawyer who is mentioned there, Tertullus.

And Tertullus begins in a display of what one commentator has described, nauseating, flattery, to gain the favor, I suppose, of Felix.

[3 : 17] It would seem this was a common way of beginning a case, be that of the prosecution, or as we'll see with Paul, to a lesser extent, but in his defense, to say nice things about the judge.

And so, again, I suppose, some favor from him. Now, Tertullus does this, as I say, in a quite nauseating way, and not only nauseating, but really quite dishonest.

Much of what he says simply isn't true. He speaks there in verse 2 of this long period of peace that we've enjoyed under you, and how everywhere and in every way Felix's wise government is recognized.

Now, this was far from being the case. Felix was very brutal in the exercise of justice as he saw it. And there were many Jews who had no kind words at all to say about Felix.

But Tertullus, I'm tempted to say as a good lawyer, without wishing to offend anybody, isn't too concerned with the niceties of truth, and flatters Felix in the manner that we've read there as he begins his prosecution, the case for the prosecution against Paul.

[4 : 39] Another item or aspect to note of anecdotal interest is how Felix also promises, sorry, Tertullus promises Felix that he will be very brief.

In order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to heed us briefly. And he, I imagine, seeks to curry favor also by promising brevity.

Now, this is a strategy that's often employed by preachers, but they often, unlike Tertullus, fail to deliver. Tertullus, certainly if what we have is what he said, was true to his word in terms of brevity. As I say, preachers are seldom so faithful to their word in that regard. Now, it is probably the case, in fact, it is almost definitely the case, that what we have here is Luke's summary of the case that Tertullus made, and no doubt it was significantly longer than the verses that we have there.

In actual fact, his words of flattery occupy more space than the actual case that he makes, which is in verses 5 to 8. But no doubt it was significantly longer as he presented it to Felix.

[5 : 57] But we do have here, and we're grateful to Luke, that we have a summary, an executive summary, and in that summary we can identify three principal charges that are leveled against Paul.

First of all, he is accused of stirring up riots. Notice there in verse 5, We have found this man to be a troublemaker. Literally, the word that is used is a pest or a plague.

He's a troublemaker. And as a troublemaker, and here you have the specific charge, he is stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world.

This was the first charge that is leveled against him. And I think Tertullus probably quite wisely highlights this above the others in the order that he presents him, because for the Roman governor this would have been of principal concern.

The subsequent charges that were more religious in nature, perhaps Felix would not have been so interested in. But this charge that Paul supposedly was guilty of stirring up riots across the empire, this would be something that a governor would rightly be concerned about.

[7 : 09] It was, in many ways, the most serious charge that is leveled against Paul. Well, that's the first charge. But then there is a second charge. And the second charge, we read there in that same verse 5, in the second half, he is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.

And it would seem, and certainly, by the way, Paul makes use of the same word, it would seem that the word sect, though it doesn't necessarily imply heresy, within the Jewish religious context, that word could be used not necessarily in a negative way, just to distinguish different groups within Judaism.

But here it would seem it is used in that pejorative sense of a sect that were peddling new ideas, false ideas, heretical ideas.

And certainly, Paul understands that that is what is being suggested, because you'll notice how when he defends himself, he says, I am a follower of the way which they call a sect.

So Paul is not willing to accept that designation. But this is the accusation, that he was a ringleader of this Nazarene sect. Maybe even the use of the word Nazarene is intended to be disparaging.

[8 : 31] You know, can anything good come out of Nazareth? And so here we have this Paul, leader of the Nazarene sect, with strange new ideas, heretical notions that are being introduced, and polluting the true faith.

So this is the second accusation. Possibly of not great interest to Felix. But then there is a third accusation, and we find that in verse 6, where we're told, sorry, it's in verse 5, at the end of, no, it is verse 6.

In verse 6, this Paul, a leader of the Nazarene sect, and then we read in verse 6, and even tried to desecrate the temple. So the third charge is of desecrating the temple, though it is interesting how, as the events have unfolded, this charge has been, in a sense, watered down.

It's been watered down into an attempted crime. When Paul was first accused in Jerusalem, remember, the accusation was a very specific one. You know, that he had brought a Gentile into a part of the temple that Gentiles should not be brought into, and that was punishable by death.

It's a very serious charge that he had done this. Now, it would seem that Tertullus, no doubt as a lawyer, said, well, okay, I'm going to present this case. You know, what's the evidence of desecration?

[9 : 52] And, of course, he discovered that there was no evidence. And so he is obliged, perhaps rather reluctantly, but obliged effectively to water down the charge that is brought to something really of not great consequence, because it says he has tried to desecrate the temple.

That's quite interesting. They're not actually claiming that he did desecrate the temple, but he tried to. Now, we're not going to, but there would be an interesting excursion there into law, and to what

extent you can make illegal attempts at wrongdoing or motivation to wrongdoing. Now, that's a very current legal debate that we won't go down that road. But it is a curious aspect of the accusations here. He tried to desecrate the temple. It's also curious to note how Tertullus is guilty of the same massaging of the truth that, if you recall, we noticed Lysias was guilty of when he sent his letter to Felix. And in the letter to Felix, you know, you'll remember Lysias suggested that he knew that he was a Roman citizen, that Paul was a Roman citizen, and so he protected him, when that was hardly a fair reflection of what had happened. [11:12] Well, here, Tertullus is guilty of something similar. Notice how there in verse 6, he speaks of how Paul was attempting to desecrate the temple, so we seized him.

The implication seeming to be that we seized him in order that he be dealt with by Roman justice. But, of course, they didn't seize him for that purpose. They attempted to lynch him. And it was only the intervention of Lysias that saved Paul from the murderous intentions of the Jews. In any case, this is the prosecution that is leveled against Paul. But then we can move on and notice how Paul defends himself against these charges. With a nonchalant nod of the head or wave of the hand, we don't know, Felix invites Paul to respond.

Then in verse 10, when the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied. And Paul conducts his own defense. Paul also indulges in some flattery, I suppose, of Felix, but he is careful to limit himself to that which is true.

Paul replied, I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation, so I gladly make my defense. He doesn't say anything that isn't true. He presents it in a very favorable manner, but what he says is true.

[12:37] And so he begins in a similar way, but a more honest way, really, to present his defense. But of more concern to us is how he defends himself against these charges.

Well, you remember the first charge was that he was a troublemaker, stirring up riots. How does Paul defend himself? Well, in verse 11 we read, You can easily verify that no more than 12 days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple or stirring up a crowd in the synagogue or anywhere else in the city. And he goes on. His defense really is a simple one. He says, I've only been in Jerusalem for 12 days.

He could have said, in all those 12 days, three days, I was in prison. So I've had nine days. How much stirring up could I do? And what's more, there are no witnesses who could actually make the case that I did stir up anybody in Jerusalem.

And so at that very simple level, Paul defends himself. But he also highlights the purpose of his visit to Jerusalem, which was to worship.

[13:46] I went up to Jerusalem to worship. It is an interesting feature of Paul's brief time in Jerusalem on this occasion that inasmuch as we are told, it would appear that he had not engaged in evangelism of any kind during his time in Jerusalem.

Now that is very contrary to his character almost. Perhaps there was a sense in which he was being respectful of the local leadership of the Jerusalem church.

And so he did limit himself to bringing the gifts that he had gathered from the Gentile churches for the Jerusalem church and to his own private acts of worship, if we can call them or describe them in that way.

There is no talk of him debating or discussing or evangelizing in the synagogues or the temple. When he is arrested, he has opportunity to make his case and to present the gospel.

But this was not something that he had sought to do of his own initiative. So far from being a troublemaker, Paul had kept a very low profile during his time in Jerusalem, or in any case had attempted to do so.

[14:54] So the charge of being a troublemaker, certainly during his time in Jerusalem, simply doesn't hold any water at all. Perhaps Paul rather carefully makes less reference to other cities that he had been in, where his presence had been, in a sense, that which provoked disturbance.

He wasn't guilty of that, but nonetheless, it was because he was there. You know, in places like Thessalonica and other places, disturbances had arisen as a result of his preaching. But Paul perhaps rather carefully doesn't refer to those occasions.

But then he defends himself also against a second accusation. He is accused of leadership of the Nazarene sect. And in response to that accusation, his reply is a yes and no, in a sense. In verses 14 to 16, we have how he responds to that. However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the way, which they call a sect.

He accepts that he is indeed a follower of the way, the name that had been given to the Christians. He says, yes, that's true. I am willing to concede and does so quite readily and happily.

[16:13] But he is at pains to stress that this group, this sect, as they are being called, was no heretical sect, quite the reverse.

And Paul very deliberately and carefully highlights in his defense what we might call his orthodox credentials. Notice how he very deliberately does so.

First of all, he makes the point that I worship the God of our fathers. This is no new religion that I am propagating, no new God that I'm bringing.

No, the God that we worship is the God of our fathers. I worship the same God that those who accuse me claim to worship. The same God. This is nothing new.

But then he goes on. He says, I believe everything that agrees with the law and what is written in the prophets. And he says, just like my accusers. They stand by the law and the prophets.

[17:09] Well, so do I. I believe everything that is found there in the law and the prophets. So, again, he very resolutely defends his orthodoxy.

He goes on and he makes mention of the fact that he shares the same hope in the resurrection held by some of his accusers. We've already seen the division that there was between the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

But the Pharisees, deemed to be the more orthodox of the Jewish leaders, held to this hope of the resurrection. And Paul says, I too hold to this same hope.

And then finally, Paul in his defense speaks of his striving to live a righteous life. Something that the religious Jews would also have claimed to do. Whether they did so or not is another matter, but they would have claimed to do so.

And so Paul says, well, I'm being accused of heresy. And yet, I believe all these things that they also believe. Where is my crime? Just as a point of anecdotal interest, though it could be relevant in what we're going to notice just in a moment, is that it is here alone in all of Paul's writings, or in any case, a record of what he says, Paul speaks of the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

[18:27] And when he speaks of his hope in the resurrection, he speaks not only of a resurrection of the righteous, but also of the wicked. Now, curiously, Paul, in no other occasion, makes that explicit.

There's no question that that is what he believed, but he doesn't explicitly teach that on any other occasion. The Scriptures teach it in many other occasions, but Paul himself does not do so.

It's possible that in a moment when we think of Felix, there was a sense in which Paul was anticipating what he would go on to say to Felix. You can come to your own conclusions on that when we reach that point in a moment.

But as we conclude Paul's defense, there was one final accusation, and that is the accusation of desecration of the temple. And we've already noticed that in actual fact it was a very weak charge that was being leveled, that he tried to desecrate the temple.

Nonetheless, Paul rises to the challenge and presents his defense. And his defense really consists of, first of all, explaining to Felix what he was actually doing in the temple.

[19:31] And we won't go into all the details. We've read the passage, and it's clearly presented there. But he basically says, look, Felix, this is what I was doing. You know, far from desecrating the temple, I was involved in a ceremony of purification.

I was bringing gifts. I was worshipping God. There simply is no substance to this suggestion that I was desecrating the temple. So at that level he defends himself, but more specifically, he defends himself on the basis of what was a legal irregularity that was being committed.

And the legal irregularity was that his original accusers, you remember how it was the Jews from Asia, who had leveled this accusation originally against Paul, of him having brought a Gentile into the temple.

They have disappeared. They are no longer there. No doubt they had been in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost, and presumably they'd returned home. They had no interest in going to Caesarea and wasting time in Caesarea.

So his original accusers are no longer there. Now, it was a point of law that if there was an accusation that had been leveled by those who claimed to be witnesses, well, they would have to be present to serve as witnesses and to confirm their testimony, but they simply weren't there. [20 : 48] And so Paul says, well, this is just a nonsense. How can I be accused of something when those who accuse me are not even present to substantiate what they claim I have done?

So Paul's defense really is very solid. Any reasonable judge could come to no other conclusion than that the accusations were baseless and that Paul should go free.

Of course, Felix is reluctant to grant Paul his liberty. From what we go on to read in the chapter, it's evident that part of that was an attempt to curry favor with the Jews.

The pretext he gives is that he will wait for Lysias to give a full report, the Roman commander who had sent Paul to Caesarea. And so he says, well, we'll see what Lysias has to say.

And we notice there in verse 22, when Lysias the commander comes, he said, I will decide your case. Now that was a very poor suggestion that was being made because Lysias had already made his case in writing in the letter that he wrote to Felix.

[21 : 59] And Lysias had already stated his opinion. Then in verse 29 of chapter 23, I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment.

Lysias had already said what he thought. There was no need for Lysias to come and to verbally state what he had already put in writing. But Felix uses this as a pretext for not granting Paul the liberty that he undoubtedly deserved if justice was to hold its place.

And this brings us on to Felix. We've already met Felix, of course, but it brings us on more particularly to how Felix responds to the gospel or to the way as it is described here in this chapter. And the comments that we want to make, and we will make them briefly, can come under three categories. First of all, we can say of Felix that Felix knows the way. He was, to use the language of the passage, acquainted with the way.

He knows the way. But then we also find in the final part of the chapter, after the trial, when Paul is a prisoner, we find that Felix is challenged to walk in the way.

[23 : 12] But then finally, we will notice, sadly, that he refuses to abandon his own way. First of all, though, Felix was a man who knew the way in some measure.

There in verse 22, then Felix, who was well acquainted with the way, adjourned the proceedings. Now this term that Luke uses is a very intriguing comment, and it really provides us with more questions than answers.

What does he mean by saying that he was well acquainted with the way? The simple answer is we don't know what he means by that. We don't know the source of his knowledge.

Some have suggested, many suggest that his Jewish wife, Drusilla, could have been the source of his information. But it's difficult to know why Drusilla would have had any more knowledge than Felix could have had from other sources.

She may or may not have provided him with some knowledge. We simply don't know. How much did he know? You know, the way that the language is translated, he was well acquainted with the way, does suggest a certain degree of accurate knowledge concerning the gospel, concerning the way.

[24 : 23] But how much he knew, we simply don't know. Was he sympathetic to what he had heard? Or was he hostile? One thing to know something, it's another thing to have an attitude towards it.

We don't know. We simply don't know. We do know that he had a fair grasp of the matter. And we also know that though he was well acquainted with the way, he was not following the way.

And even before we proceed, there is surely a moment there for us to stand back and to reflect. Is that not a very dangerous place to be? And yet, a very common one.

It is one thing to know the gospel, to be acquainted, to be well acquainted with the way, to know the facts concerning Jesus, who he is and what he has done, perhaps in some measure to believe these facts, to be true, to be well acquainted with the way, and yet to refuse to follow in the way, and yet to stand back and to hold back from becoming a follower of Jesus, a disciple of Jesus, one who professes Jesus as Savior and Lord, one who walks the walk of the way.

Felix knows the way. He was well acquainted with the way, but he refuses to walk the walk of the way. Might there be any of us here, perhaps one of you who are with us this evening, who can

identify with Felix in this regard, and I would say be very careful.

[26 : 03] Be very careful that you would be one who is acquainted with the way, and yet who does not walk in the way. But not only did Felix know the way, we also find how he was challenged to walk in the way.

When he meets Paul, he is not walking in the way, but a challenge is laid before him. We read of that in verses 24 and 25. Several days later, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus as Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. Felix was afraid and said, that's enough for now.

You may leave when I find it convenient. I will send for you. We have a fascinating portrayal here of the governor and his wife calling for Paul that they might hear more about what he has to say. And in order for us to better appreciate what Paul does say to Felix and his wife, it will be helpful to have a little background to the couple.

[27 : 10] Mention is made here of Drusilla. Now, Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa. We've already met Herod Agrippa in the book of Acts, and we were told of a very horrible death that he died.

He was no friend of the gospel. Well, Drusilla was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I. She is reputed to have been a stunningly beautiful young woman. She was also, as we learn a little bit about her family tree or her immediate family, she was a sister of King Agrippa II and a sister also of Bernice, who is mentioned in the following chapter.

Notice there in chapter 25 in verse 13. This is where Paul is obliged to face another trial and Festus has replaced Felix.

And in the context of that trial, we read then in verse 13, a few days later, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Now, King Agrippa and Bernice were brother and sister of Drusilla.

You read verse 13 and you kind of imagine that it's a couple, Agrippa and Bernice, his wife. But no, they're brother and sister now. There were rumors that abounded as to the nature of their relationship.

[28 : 25] And many imagine, whether with foundation or not, that there was an incestuous relationship. But that was simply rumors that were circulating, may or may not have been true.

But Agrippa and Bernice were brother and sister of Drusilla. Now, Drusilla was married when she was 16. But having already been married and being married, she was seduced by Felix, the governor that we are interested in here.

And it is reported that with the aid of a Cypriot magician, a man named Atamos, Drusilla was persuaded to become Felix's wife, actually his third wife.

So, this couple are a couple who have had a very colorful past, shall we say, to put it in the most generous fashion. And it's helpful to just have that background as we move on to consider the message that Paul brings to such a couple, the challenge that he presents to them that they would follow the way.

Now, the overarching theme of Paul's message to Felix and Drusilla is faith in Christ Jesus. Yes. Verse 24, he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.

[29 : 45] Of course, this would have been true of any discourse by Paul. It would have included a presentation of the person of Jesus Christ, who he was and what he had done and what is involved in depositing your faith in this man, Christ Jesus.

So, this was at the heart of his message. But as well as this overarching theme, there is a development of his theme in a manner that is particularly and peculiarly appropriate to his celebrity audience.

What does he major on as he develops his theme? Well, we're told there in verse 25, that's Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.

His three-point sermon, as it were, righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come. And of course, as we think about it, each of these particularly appropriate and challenging and damning to those who are listening to him as concerns righteousness or justice, which would be another way of translating that word.

Well, Felix was notorious for his brutal injustice. And Paul is fearless, a prisoner at the mercy of Felix, yet he is fearless in pointing the finger at Felix and saying, this is important to God,

righteousness, justice.

[31 : 03] But you, and you know it well, are an unjust, unrighteous man. But he moves on and speaks of self-control. Well, the sexual proclivities of Felix and Drusilla we've already spoken about.

They knew very little of self-control. They knew very little of living their lives in a manner that corresponded with God's purpose for relationships and for sexual activity.

And so Paul highlights this very particular sin to those who listen to him. Self-control and the importance of it in the Christian life for those who would walk the way.

But then he speaks of one other element. He speaks of the judgment to come. You see, having identified their sin, having brought a measure of conviction, as we will see, he then reminds them that it is no small matter to be unrighteous, to be unjust, to ignore the need for self-control, to live your life as you please.

It's no small matter. Why? Because there is a judgment to come. There is a judgment to come. And so there is this sober reminder to Felix and Drusilla that while they may escape judgment in this life, the power that they enjoy, the status that they occupy, may free them from having to give account in this life, but they will not escape the final judgment.

[32 : 31] And as we just go back a moment to what we were saying earlier, possibly there is then that connection in identifying the significance of Paul previously referring to the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

And so it all comes together and Paul says, you know, you may escape this life seemingly without having to give account for all that you do.

And you may die rich and yet there will come a day when you will face the judge and the righteous and the wicked will have to face the judge and you will not escape that judgment.

And so Felix and Drusilla are challenged. They're challenged to abandon their life of sin and rebellion against God and to follow the way.

They're challenged to follow the one who invites them to a new life, who offers them forgiveness of sins and a fresh start. This challenge is laid before them. What is the response?

[33 : 33] Well, we're told. We're told there in verse 25, Felix was afraid. Felix was afraid. In some measure, the message did hit home. His conscience was in a measure disturbed.

There was in a measure conviction of sin in his life as he hears and as it is painted for him by Paul in very vivid terms.

Perhaps the prospect of judgment was a very fearful one for him. And so we're told Felix was afraid. But does he rise to the challenge?

To walk in the way? Well, by no means. He is now intimately acquainted with the way. How acquainted he had been before, we can't know for sure.

But now he certainly was very well acquainted. You know, Paul had presented it in very eloquent terms, I'm sure. We're told of several occasions when they were able to meet.

[34 : 29] But even on the basis of this first occasion, he would have been well acquainted with the way. he'd been brought to a measure of conviction, a measure of understanding of his need of forgiveness.

But what does he do? What does he do when we're told? We're told so clearly he dismisses Paul. He postpones any response for a more convenient time.

That's enough for now. You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you. Does that not sound also very familiar?

How many of us, perhaps, in our own lives can look back to a time when we were like Felix?

Challenged by the gospel, brought to a measure of conviction, brought to a measure of understanding that this was something that we had to deal with.

This was one whom we could not ignore. This Jesus was one that we had to do business with. We were persuaded that we should do something, and yet, like Felix, that's enough for now.

[35 : 37] I shall wait for a more convenient time. I think many of us can identify with that attitude in our own past, but perhaps more soberly, would there be anybody here tonight who can identify with Felix even now?

You have a knowledge of the way. You know something of what it is. To be challenged by the gospel, you know something of conviction of sin. When you consider eternity, there is a measure of fear in your heart, and yet, you would wait for a more convenient time.

You would wait and postpone any decision. You would postpone the challenge that is laid before you to embrace Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. What a foolish and what a dangerous thing to do.

What a foolish man Felix was. What a foolish woman Drusilla was. God grant that there be not such here this evening. Do not postpone as you are challenged to follow in the way, to follow Jesus Christ, to put your trust in Him and profess your faith in Him.

Well, Felix was acquainted with the way. He was challenged to follow in the way, but he, as is very evident already, refuses to abandon his own way.

[36 : 56] That is, sealed as it were, that that was indeed the case by the manner in which the chapter concludes. When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

The contrast is sobering. The governor, a prisoner of his own passions and of his own convenience, fails to grasp the freedom offered him by the prisoner who is spiritually free.

And as we draw this to a close and just identify two closing applications, I would say this. First of all, when we think of the message that Paul brought to Felix, it was a Christ-centered message as our proclamation of the gospel must be.

Faith in Jesus Christ. But it was also brutally direct and disturbing. His message is not audience-friendly. Like Elijah of old, he was a disturber of Israel, or in this case of Rome.

What about us? As we present the gospel, let it be, of course, Christ-centered, presenting the good news concerning Jesus Christ. But that God would give us the wisdom to be disturbers in Israel, to say things as they are, to identify the very real sins and the very real guilt that people must deal with.

[38 : 26] But there is, of course, also an application not only to those of us who have the privilege of announcing the message, but also the solemn warning that Felix represents that we've just touched on a moment ago. Be very careful with knowledge that is not applied.

Be careful about an invitation to repent that is left unattended. Careful with suppressing or seeking to suppress the effect of the Word on your conscience and waiting for a more convenient season.

As the Word rightly reminds us and solemnly reminds us, now is the day of salvation. Tomorrow could be way too late. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, Father, we do thank you for your Word.

We thank you for all that it brings to us. We thank you that we are of those who are acquainted with the way, that in your grace you have made known to us the good news concerning Jesus Christ.

We pray that we would be of those who walk in the way. Deliver us from the folly of postponing, dealing with these matters. Deliver us from the folly of waiting for a more convenient time and then find that eternity will surprise us having never found that convenient moment.

[39 : 46] So we pray that by your Spirit you would deal with us all at the point of our need and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.