

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Acts Chapter 24 — Paul Before Felix

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Acts Chapter 24 brings Paul before:

Governor Felix.

The setting has changed.

Paul is no longer standing before:

A mob.

The Sanhedrin.

Roman soldiers in Jerusalem.

He is now in Caesarea facing a formal accusation before a Roman governor.

His opponents arrive with:

The high priest Ananias.

Several elders.

A professional lawyer named Tertullus.

Their case against Paul contains serious accusations.

They call him:

A troublemaker.

They accuse him of:

Stirring riots.

Leading the Nazarene sect.

Attempting to desecrate the temple.

These are not minor charges.

They are designed to make Paul appear:

Politically dangerous.

Religiously disruptive.

Criminally irresponsible.

But when Paul answers:

He does not rely on flattery.

He does not become angry.

He does not attack his accusers personally.

Instead:

He presents facts.

He says:

The accusations cannot be proved.

He had gone to Jerusalem:

To worship.

He had not been:

Arguing in the temple.

Stirring crowds.

Organizing riots.

Instead:

He openly confesses that he follows:

“The Way.”

He says:

“I believe everything that is in the Law and the Prophets.”

Then Paul returns to one of the central doctrines of Acts:

Resurrection.

He declares that there will be a resurrection of:

The righteous.

And:

The wicked.

Because of this future accountability, Paul says:

“I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”

Paul then explains why he had really come to Jerusalem.

Not:

To cause trouble.

But:

To bring gifts for the poor.

And:

To present offerings.

He challenges his accusers to produce actual evidence.

Felix postpones the case.

Paul remains in custody, but he receives some freedom.

Then something remarkable happens.

Felix and his wife Drusilla personally summon Paul.

Paul is now given an opportunity to explain:

Faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul does not soften his message because he is speaking to a governor.

He speaks about:

Righteousness.

Self-control.

Coming judgment.

Felix becomes afraid.

His conscience is disturbed.

But instead of repenting:

He postpones.

He tells Paul:

“That’s enough for now!”

Then comes one of the saddest statements in the chapter:

“When I find it convenient, I will send for you.”

Felix wants:

A more convenient time.

But Scripture never records that such a time came.

At the same time:

Felix hopes Paul will offer him money.

So the governor is:

Convicted.

Curious.

Corrupt.

He hears Paul repeatedly.

But he does not respond in saving faith.

Two years pass.

Paul remains in custody.

Felix eventually leaves office and is replaced by Porcius Festus.

Yet before leaving:

Felix leaves Paul imprisoned to gain favor with the Jewish leaders.

Acts 24 therefore contrasts:

Paul and Felix.

Paul has:

A clear conscience.

Felix has:

A troubled conscience.

Paul values:

Truth.

Felix values:

Convenience.

Paul refuses:

Corruption.

Felix hopes for:

A bribe.

Paul speaks of:

Coming judgment.

Felix postpones his response.

The chapter therefore warns us:

Conviction is not conversion.

Hearing the gospel repeatedly is not the same as obeying it.

A convenient time to repent may never come.

And:

A clear conscience before God is more valuable than political power without righteousness.

The central truth of Acts 24 is:

Paul faithfully defends the truth, proclaims resurrection and judgment, maintains a clear conscience before God and people, and boldly presents faith in Jesus Christ to Felix, while Felix tragically demonstrates the danger of delaying repentance for a more convenient time.

I. PAUL'S ACCUSERS ARRIVE

Acts 24:1

“Five days later, the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They presented their case against Paul before the governor.”

Paul's opponents organize carefully.

They bring:

Religious authority.

Political influence.

Professional legal representation.

Cross References

Acts 23:2

Ananias had previously ordered Paul to be struck while Paul stood before the council.

Acts 23:30

Claudius Lysias had ordered Paul's accusers to present their case before Governor Felix.

Acts 25:2

Jewish leaders would later continue pressing serious charges against Paul before Festus.

Spiritual Principle

Organized opposition can appear powerful, but accusation still requires evidence.

II. TERTULLUS FLATTERS FELIX

Acts 24:2

“When Paul was called in, Tertullus began his accusation: ‘Most excellent Felix, under your leadership we have enjoyed much peace, and your reforms have benefited this nation.’”

Tertullus begins with praise.

His opening is designed to gain Felix’s favor.

Cross References

Luke 1:3

Formal honorific language could be used when addressing officials of high position.

Acts 23:26

Claudius Lysias had formally addressed Felix as “His Excellency.”

Acts 26:25

Paul later respectfully addressed another Roman official while still speaking truth.

Spiritual Principle

Respect is appropriate, but flattery becomes dangerous when it is used to manipulate judgment.

III. “WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL”

Acts 24:3

“Everywhere and always, we are deeply grateful.”

Tertullus continues the flattering introduction.

Cross References

Acts 24:2

His praise of Felix forms part of the opening legal strategy.

1 Timothy 2:1

Christians are called to pray appropriately for rulers and authorities.

Acts 26:3

Paul later acknowledged Agrippa’s familiarity with Jewish matters without resorting to exaggerated flattery.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Respect speaks truthfully; flattery exaggerates praise in order to gain advantage.

IV. TERTULLUS ASKS FOR A HEARING

Acts 24:4

“But, not to take too much of your time, I beg you to listen briefly.”

The formal accusation now begins.

Cross References

Acts 26:3

Paul later asked Agrippa to listen patiently to his defense.

Acts 24:2

Tertullus has already prepared the governor with flattering language.

Acts 2:14

Speakers throughout Acts frequently asked audiences to listen carefully before presenting important testimony.

Spiritual Principle

Important claims should be heard carefully before judgment is made.

V. PAUL IS CALLED A TROUBLEMAKER

Acts 24:5

“We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.”

Three accusations appear.

A Trouble-Maker

Paul is portrayed as socially dangerous.

A Riot-Starter

He is portrayed as politically dangerous.

A Sect Leader

He is portrayed as religiously dangerous.

Cross References

Acts 17:6

Paul and his companions had previously been accused of turning the world upside down.

Acts 6:13

Stephen had also faced distorted accusations concerning Judaism and the temple.

Acts 28:22

Christianity was still spoken of by opponents as a sect.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When opponents cannot defeat the message, they may attempt to discredit the messenger.

VI. ACCUSED OF DESECRATING THE TEMPLE

Acts 24:6

“He even tried to desecrate the temple, so we seized him.”

This repeats the accusation from Acts 21.

Cross References

Acts 21:28

Paul had been accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple and defiling the holy place.

Acts 21:29

Luke clarified that the accusation was based on an assumption concerning Trophimus.

Acts 21:30

The accusation quickly resulted in mob violence.

Spiritual Principle

A serious accusation does not become true merely because it is repeated.

VII. LYSIAS INTERVENED

Acts 24:7

“But Lysias the commander intervened and took him from us by force.”

Tertullus describes Roman intervention negatively.

Yet Lysias had actually rescued Paul from being killed.

Cross References

Acts 21:32

Roman soldiers stopped the crowd from beating Paul.

Acts 21:33

The commander took Paul into custody.

Acts 23:27

Lysias later wrote that Paul had been seized and was about to be killed before Roman intervention.

Spiritual Principle

People may describe the same event differently depending upon their interests and motives.

VIII. FELIX IS ASKED TO INVESTIGATE

Acts 24:8

“And ordered his accusers to come before you. By examining him yourself, you will be able to learn the truth of these charges.”

Tertullus invites Felix to determine the matter.

Cross References

Acts 23:30

Lysias had indeed instructed Paul’s accusers to appear before Felix.

Acts 25:6

Paul would later again appear before Roman authority to answer accusations.

Acts 22:30

The Roman commander had previously attempted to discover the exact charge against Paul.

Spiritual Principle

Claims should be tested rather than automatically accepted.

IX. THE ACCUSERS AGREE

Acts 24:9

“The Jews joined in the accusation, confirming that these things were true.”

A group agrees.

But agreement does not equal proof.

Cross References

Acts 24:1

The Jewish leadership had come together specifically to prosecute Paul.

Matthew 26:59

Religious leaders had once sought testimony against Jesus in order to put Him to death.

Psalms 27:12

David prayed for protection against false witnesses who breathed out violence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Many voices repeating the same accusation do not make an unsupported accusation true.

X. PAUL BEGINS HIS DEFENSE

Acts 24:10

“When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied, ‘I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, so I gladly make my defense.’”

Notice the difference between Paul and Tertullus.

Paul is respectful.

But restrained.

He does not manipulate Felix through extravagant praise.

Cross References

Acts 26:1

Paul later calmly gave another defense before Agrippa.

Acts 25:16

Roman procedure recognized a defendant’s right to answer charges.

1 Peter 3:15

Believers are called to be ready to give an answer with gentleness and respect.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Truth does not require flattery to defend itself.

XI. PAUL HAD COME TO WORSHIP

Acts 24:11

“You can easily verify that it was no more than twelve days ago that I went up to Jerusalem to worship.”

Paul begins presenting verifiable facts.

Cross References

Acts 21:17

Paul had arrived in Jerusalem and been welcomed by believers.

Acts 21:26

Paul had participated in purification rites connected with worship.

Acts 20:16

He had intentionally traveled toward Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

A good defense distinguishes verifiable facts from emotional accusation.

XII. PAUL DID NOT START A RIOT

Acts 24:12

“My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere in the city.”

Paul directly denies the political accusation.

Cross References

Acts 21:27

It was Paul’s opponents who stirred up the crowd in Jerusalem.

Acts 24:18

Paul later explains that he was ceremonially clean and not surrounded by a crowd.

Acts 25:8

Paul repeatedly denied committing crimes against law, temple, or Caesar.

Spiritual Principle

The believer should be willing to distinguish boldly between accusation and fact.

XIII. THE CHARGES CANNOT BE PROVED

Acts 24:13

“They cannot prove the charges they now bring against me.”

Paul challenges the evidence.

Cross References

Acts 25:7

Paul’s accusers later brought serious charges they could not prove.

Acts 24:19

Paul points out that the original accusers were not even present.

Matthew 26:60

Even those seeking false testimony against Jesus struggled to establish a consistent case.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“An Accusation Without Evidence Is Still Only an Accusation.”

XIV. PAUL OPENLY CONFESSES “THE WAY”

Acts 24:14

“However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in the Law and the Prophets.”

Paul denies the crimes.

But he does not deny Christ.

Cross References

Acts 24:5

His opponents had labeled Christianity a sect.

Acts 28:22

Christianity continued to be described negatively by some Jewish opponents.

Luke 24:44

Jesus taught that the Law, Prophets, and Psalms ultimately pointed toward God's redemptive purpose fulfilled in Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A Christian defense should deny what is false without denying what is true.

Paul does not say:

I am not one of them.

He says:

I follow:

The Way.

XV. THE RESURRECTION OF RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

Acts 24:15

“I have the same hope in God as these men themselves, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

Paul again returns to resurrection.

Cross References

Daniel 12:2

Daniel foretold that those sleeping in the dust would awaken, some to everlasting life and others to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:29

Jesus taught that the dead will rise, some to life and others to judgment.

Acts 23:6

Paul had already declared that he was on trial because of resurrection hope.

Spiritual Principle

Resurrection means every human life is moving toward eternal accountability.

XVI. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD AND PEOPLE

Acts 24:16

“Because of this, I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”

Why?

Because:

Resurrection is coming.

Judgment is coming.

God sees.

Cross References

Acts 23:1

Paul had already testified that he lived before God with a clear conscience.

1 Timothy 1:19

Believers are commanded to hold faith together with a good conscience.

Hebrews 13:18

Christian servants desired to live honorably with clear consciences.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“A Belief in Future Judgment Should Produce Present Integrity.”

XVII. PAUL CAME TO HELP THE POOR

Acts 24:17

“After several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring gifts for the poor and to present offerings.”

This destroys the picture of Paul as a troublemaker.

He came:

To help.

Cross References

Romans 15:25

Paul traveled toward Jerusalem to serve needy believers there.

1 Corinthians 16:1

Paul organized a collection for God's people.

2 Corinthians 8:4

Gentile believers eagerly participated in helping suffering Christians.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel that changes doctrine also produces practical generosity.

XVIII. PAUL WAS CEREMONIALLY CLEAN

Acts 24:18

“While I was doing this, some Jews from Asia found me in the temple, ceremonially clean, without any crowd or disturbance.”

Paul again gives the actual circumstances.

Cross References

Acts 21:27

Jews from Asia were the ones who initiated the accusation.

Acts 21:26

Paul had entered the temple while participating in purification.

Numbers 6:13

The Mosaic law included ceremonial procedures connected with vows.

Spiritual Principle

Facts may reveal that the accused person was doing almost the opposite of what the accusation claimed.

XIX. THE ORIGINAL ACCUSERS ARE ABSENT

Acts 24:19

“They ought to be here before you to bring charges if they have anything against me.”

This is a powerful legal point.

The people who started the trouble are not present.

Cross References

Acts 25:16

Roman procedure recognized that an accused person should face his accusers.

Deuteronomy 19:15

Biblical justice required adequate testimony and proper witnesses.

Acts 23:30

Paul’s accusers had been instructed to present their case formally.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Biblical justice requires witnesses, evidence, and accountability—not rumor.

XX. PAUL CHALLENGES THOSE PRESENT

Acts 24:20

“Or let these men here state what wrongdoing they found in me when I stood before the council.”

Paul puts the burden of proof where it belongs.

Cross References

Acts 23:1

Paul had stood directly before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 23:9

Some council members had even declared that they found nothing wrong with him.

Acts 22:30

Paul’s appearance before the council had been arranged to establish the real charges.

Spiritual Principle

Truth does not fear legitimate examination.

XXI. THE REAL ISSUE IS RESURRECTION

Acts 24:21

“Except for this one thing I shouted: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’”

Again:

Resurrection.

Cross References

Acts 23:6

Paul had openly declared his hope in the resurrection before the council.

Acts 26:6

Paul later explained that his trial concerned the hope promised by God.

Acts 28:20

He would later say he was bound because of the hope of Israel.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Paul was willing to stand accused for resurrection truth because Christianity without resurrection is Christianity without its victory.

XXII. FELIX POSTPONES THE CASE

Acts 24:22

“Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. He said, ‘When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.’”

Felix knows enough to understand that the situation is more complicated than Tertullus claimed.

Cross References

Acts 9:2

Christianity had long been known as “the Way.”

Acts 24:14

Paul openly identifies himself with the Way.

Acts 23:26

Lysias had provided Felix with a written summary of the case.

Spiritual Principle

Knowledge of Christianity does not automatically produce commitment to Christ.

Felix knew about:

The Way.

But knowing about the Way is not the same as walking in it.

XXIII. PAUL RECEIVES SOME FREEDOM

Acts 24:23

“He ordered the centurion to guard Paul but to give him some freedom, allowing his friends to care for his needs.”

Paul remains a prisoner.

Yet:

His circumstances are eased.

Cross References

Acts 27:3

Roman officials later permitted Paul’s friends to care for him during travel.

Acts 28:16

Paul later received a form of guarded freedom in Rome.

Philippians 4:10

Believers often supported Paul practically during his ministry.

Spiritual Principle

God can provide relief even before He provides release.

XXIV. PAUL PREACHES CHRIST TO FELIX

Acts 24:24

“Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.”

What an opportunity.

The prisoner becomes:

The preacher.

The governor becomes:

The audience.

Cross References

Acts 25:13

Paul would later receive another opportunity to speak before political royalty and authority.

Acts 26:3

His defense before Agrippa would similarly become a gospel opportunity.

Romans 3:22

God’s righteousness is received through faith in Jesus Christ by all who believe.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Never Assume the Person Holding the Keys Is the One With the Greatest Freedom.”

Felix controls Paul’s cell.

But Paul possesses:

The gospel.

XXV. RIGHTEOUSNESS, SELF-CONTROL, AND JUDGMENT

Acts 24:25

“As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became afraid and said, ‘That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.’”

Paul does not give Felix a comfortable sermon.

He talks about:

Righteousness

God's righteous standard.

Self-Control

Human responsibility regarding desire and behavior.

Coming Judgment

Future accountability before God.

Cross References

2 Timothy 4:2

Preachers are commanded to proclaim the Word faithfully whether the timing seems convenient or not.

Galatians 5:23

Self-control is part of the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 17:31

Paul had already proclaimed that God has appointed a day to judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Felix Became Afraid

His conscience responds.

But:

Fear is not repentance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Conviction Is Not Conversion Until Conviction Leads to Repentance and Faith.”

XXVI. FELIX HOPES FOR A BRIBE

Acts 24:26

“At the same time, Felix was hoping Paul would offer him money, so he sent for him often and talked with him.”

This reveals Felix's heart.

He hears:

Righteousness.

Yet hopes for:

A bribe.

He hears:

Self-control.

Yet remains controlled by:

Greed.

He hears:

Judgment.

Yet delays response.

Cross References

Exodus 23:8

God condemned bribes because they blind judgment and corrupt justice.

Acts 8:20

Peter strongly condemned the attempt to connect money with spiritual privilege.

Acts 25:9

Political leaders in Acts sometimes shaped decisions around personal advantage.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A person can repeatedly hear truth while secretly hoping to profit from the preacher.

XXVII. TWO YEARS PASS

Acts 24:27

“After two years, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. But because Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor, he left Paul in prison.”

Two years.

Paul waits.

Felix leaves.

Paul remains.

Cross References

Acts 25:1

Festus soon takes office and inherits Paul's unresolved case.

Acts 25:14

Paul's imprisonment becomes an important matter discussed under the new governor.

Acts 26:32

Later officials acknowledge Paul could have been released had he not appealed to Caesar.

Spiritual Principle

Delayed justice does not mean abandoned purpose.

Paul remains imprisoned.

But:

Christ had already said:

Rome.

XXVIII. PAUL AND TERTULLUS — TWO WAYS OF SPEAKING

Tertullus relies heavily on:

Flattery.

Accusation.

Exaggeration.

Paul relies upon:

Facts.

Evidence.

Truth.

Conscience.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Truth does not need manipulation to make its case.

XXIX. PAUL DENIES THE CRIME BUT CONFESSES THE FAITH

Paul says:

I did not start riots.

I did not desecrate the temple.

But:

“I admit that I worship... as a follower of the Way.”

Spiritual Principle

Never escape a false accusation by becoming ashamed of a true Christian identity.

XXX. CHRISTIANITY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Paul says:

“I believe everything that is in the Law and the Prophets.”

Paul does not see Christianity as the rejection of biblical revelation.

He sees Christ as:

Its fulfillment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gospel does not discard the biblical story; it reveals where that story was always pointing.

XXXI. RESURRECTION OF BOTH RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

Acts 24:15 must not be reduced to resurrection only for believers.

Paul says:

Both.

Righteous

Raised to life.

Wicked

Raised for judgment.

Spiritual Principle

Death does not erase accountability.

XXXII. WHY CONSCIENCE MATTERS

Paul connects resurrection with conscience.

Because:

He knows he will stand before God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Live Today in Light of the Day You Will Stand Before God.”

XXXIII. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul does not claim he never sinned.

His own testimony proves otherwise.

He persecuted Christians.

But now:

He seeks to live openly before God.

Spiritual Principle

A clear conscience rests not on pretending we never fail but on walking honestly before God in repentance, faith, and obedience.

XXXIV. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES GENEROSITY

Paul had come:

To bring gifts to the poor.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A gospel that changes the heart should eventually change the hand.

True faith gives.

Serves.

Helps.

XXXV. THE MISSING WITNESSES

Paul identifies a basic problem.

The people who supposedly caught him in wrongdoing:

Are absent.

Spiritual Principle

Fair judgment requires more than secondhand accusation.

XXXVI. FELIX KNEW ABOUT “THE WAY”

Knowledge did not save Felix.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“You Can Know About Christianity Without Knowing Christ.”

A person can know:

Doctrine.

Church language.

Christian history.

Preachers.

Bible terminology.

And still not repent.

XXXVII. THE PRISONER PREACHES TO THE GOVERNOR

Felix summons Paul.

But spiritually:

Paul has something Felix needs.

Spiritual Principle

Circumstances do not determine who has the most important message.

The prisoner can speak truth to the ruler.

XXXVIII. PAUL PREACHES RIGHTEOUSNESS

Paul does not merely say:

God loves you.

He speaks about:

Righteousness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gospel cannot be understood correctly without understanding God's righteous standard.

Grace matters because:

Sin is real.

Guilt is real.

Judgment is real.

XXXIX. PAUL PREACHES SELF-CONTROL

This would have been personal.

Paul does not keep the gospel abstract.

Spiritual Principle

Genuine Christian truth confronts how we actually live.

XL. PAUL PREACHES COMING JUDGMENT

The governor judges Paul.

But Paul reminds the governor:

One day:

God will judge Felix.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Every Earthly Judge Will One Day Stand Before the Heavenly Judge.”

XLI. FELIX TREMBLES

Truth reaches his conscience.

But Felix Does Not Repent

Fear is present.

Submission is absent.

Spiritual Principle

Emotional reaction to a sermon is not proof of spiritual conversion.

A person can:

Tremble.

Cry.

Feel guilty.

Feel convicted.

And still refuse to repent.

XLII. “THAT’S ENOUGH FOR NOW”

Felix ends the conversation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A person can silence the preacher without silencing the truth.

The truth remains.

Judgment remains.

God remains.

XLIII. THE DANGER OF A CONVENIENT TIME

Felix says:

“When I find it convenient...”

That is one of the most dangerous sentences in Scripture.

Spiritual Principle

Repentance postponed can become repentance never made.

XLIV. THERE MAY NEVER BE A BETTER TIME

Felix apparently expected:

A more convenient moment.

But Scripture does not record that it came.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Best Time to Obey God Is When God Is Speaking to Your Heart.”

XLV. FELIX HEARD PAUL OFTEN

Felix repeatedly talked with Paul.

This means:

Repeated exposure.

Repeated opportunity.

Repeated truth.

Yet:

No recorded conversion.

Spiritual Principle

Frequent exposure to the gospel can harden rather than help if truth is repeatedly resisted.

XLVI. CONVICTION CAN FADE

The first time:

Felix became afraid.

Later:

He keeps talking with Paul.

But his motive includes:

Money.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The truth that terrifies you today may become familiar tomorrow if you continually refuse to obey it.

XLVII. GREED AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Felix listens to a prisoner preach against unrighteousness while secretly hoping for:

A bribe.

Spiritual Principle

Sin can remain active even while a person is listening to a sermon condemning that very sin.

XLVIII. POLITICAL CONVENIENCE OVER JUSTICE

Felix leaves Paul imprisoned:

To please others.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When pleasing people becomes more important than doing what is right, justice becomes negotiable.

XLIX. TWO YEARS OF WAITING

Paul waits for:

Two years.

Was the mission over?

No.

Was God absent?

No.

Spiritual Principle

Waiting is sometimes part of the assignment.

L. GOD'S PROMISE STILL STANDS

Jesus had already said:

Paul would testify in Rome.

Felix cannot cancel that.

Festus cannot cancel that.

The Jewish leaders cannot cancel that.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Delay changes the schedule we expected, not the sovereignty of God.

LI. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAUL AND FELIX

Paul

Clear conscience.

Truth.

Faith.

Courage.

Integrity.

Felix

Fear.

Delay.

Greed.

Political convenience.

Spiritual Principle

A prisoner with Christ is spiritually freer than a governor enslaved to sin.

LII. THE GOSPEL BEFORE POWER

Paul does not alter the gospel for powerful people.

He Preaches:

Faith in Christ.

Righteousness.

Self-control.

Judgment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The powerful need the same gospel as everyone else.

LIIL. THE THREE GREAT SUBJECTS FELIX NEEDED

Paul's sermon was perfectly aimed.

Righteousness

What is right before God?

Self-Control

Who rules your desires?

Judgment

What will happen when you answer to God?

Spiritual Principle

Faithful preaching addresses the truth people need, not merely the message they would prefer.

LIV. WHAT ACTS 24 TEACHES ABOUT EVANGELISM

Evangelism is not merely:

Inviting people to happiness.

It involves:

Christ.

Faith.

Righteousness.

Repentance.

Judgment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The good news is most clearly understood when people understand what Christ saves them from and what He calls them to.

LV. WHAT ACTS 24 TEACHES ABOUT LEGAL DEFENSE

Paul uses:

Dates.

Facts.

Witnesses.

Evidence.

Procedure.

Spiritual Principle

Christians can defend themselves carefully and factually without hatred or revenge.

LVI. WHAT ACTS 24 TEACHES ABOUT PATIENCE

Paul's case does not end quickly.

Two Years

Yet:

He remains faithful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not measure God's faithfulness by how quickly He resolves the situation.

LVII. WHAT ACTS 24 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

Justice requires:

Evidence.

Witnesses.

Truth.

Impartiality.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical justice cannot be built on rumor, pressure, or political convenience.

LVIII. WHAT ACTS 24 TEACHES ABOUT CONSCIENCE

Two consciences appear.

Paul

Clear.

Felix

Afraid.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Political authority cannot give peace to a guilty conscience.

Only reconciliation with God can address guilt at its deepest level.

LIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 24

1. Truth Does Not Need Flattery

Principle:

Speak respectfully but honestly.

2. Accusations Require Evidence

Principle:

Claims should be proved rather than merely repeated.

3. Christians Should Maintain Clear Consciences

Principle:

Live before both God and people with integrity.

4. Resurrection Means Accountability

Principle:

Both righteous and wicked will be raised.

5. Powerful People Need the Gospel

Principle:

Felix needed faith in Christ just as surely as anyone else.

6. Conviction Must Lead to Response

Principle:

Fear without repentance does not save.

7. Do Not Delay Obedience

Principle:

The convenient time may never come.

LX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who came to accuse Paul before Felix?

The high priest Ananias, several elders, and a lawyer named Tertullus came to Caesarea to present the case.

Question 2

What accusations were made against Paul?

He was accused of being a troublemaker, stirring riots, leading the Nazarene sect, and attempting to desecrate the temple.

Question 3

How did Paul defend himself?

Paul presented verifiable facts and challenged his accusers to prove their allegations.

Question 4

What did Paul openly admit?

He admitted that he followed the Way and worshiped the God of his ancestors, believing what was written in the Law and the Prophets.

Question 5

What did Paul believe about resurrection?

He believed there would be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Question 6

Why did Paul strive to maintain a clear conscience?

Because he lived in the expectation of resurrection and accountability before God.

Question 7

Why had Paul originally gone to Jerusalem?

He went to bring financial help for the poor and to present offerings.

Question 8

What happened after Felix heard Paul's defense?

Felix postponed the decision and kept Paul under guard with some personal freedom.

Question 9

What did Paul preach to Felix and Drusilla?

He spoke about faith in Christ Jesus, righteousness, self-control, and coming judgment.

Question 10

How did Felix respond?

Felix became afraid but postponed further consideration, saying he would call Paul when he found a convenient time.

Question 11

What corrupt motive did Felix have?

He hoped Paul would offer him money, so he continued summoning Paul for conversations.

Question 12

How long did Paul remain imprisoned under Felix?

Two years passed before Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus, and Felix left Paul imprisoned to gain favor with the Jewish leaders.

LXI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Acts 24 asks serious questions.

Am I Living With a Clear Conscience?

Paul was.

Do I Judge People by Evidence or Accusation?

Felix had to determine the difference.

Am I Ashamed to Be Identified With Christ?

Paul openly confessed the Way.

Do I Believe in Resurrection and Judgment?

Paul did.

Does Future Judgment Affect How I Live Today?

It should.

Am I Willing to Speak Truth to Powerful People?

Paul was.

Does the subject of righteousness make me uncomfortable?

Felix was confronted by it.

Who Controls My Desires?

Self-control matters.

Am I Delaying obedience to God?

Felix did.

Am I waiting for a more convenient time to repent?

That is spiritually dangerous.

Has repeated exposure to truth made me responsive or merely familiar?

Felix heard Paul often.

Can I trust God through long delays?

Paul waited two years.

LXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“A Clear Conscience Is Worth More Than a Comfortable Reputation”

Paul could not control:

What Tertullus said.

What the elders believed.

What Felix decided.

But:

He could control how he lived before God.

Principle

You cannot always stop false accusations, but you can live so that your conscience does not agree with them.

LXIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Gospel Must Be Preached Even When the Audience Is Powerful”

Felix was:

Governor.

Paul was:

Prisoner.

Yet spiritually:

Felix was the one who needed rescue.

Principle

Never confuse earthly rank with spiritual security.

LXIV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Conviction Is a Door, Not the Destination”

Felix trembled.

That was significant.

But:

He stopped there.

Principle

Godly conviction should lead to repentance and faith, not merely emotional discomfort.

LXV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Wait for a Convenient Time to Obey God”

Felix wanted:

Later.

But Scripture Gives No Record of Later Repentance

Principle

When God confronts the heart with truth, delay is not neutrality—it is another decision.

LXVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Repeated Hearing Does Not Equal Saving Faith”

Felix heard Paul:

Often.

Yet:

His greed remained.

His political compromise remained.

Principle

Exposure to truth cannot substitute for surrender to truth.

LXVII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Delay Is Not Defeat”

Paul remains in prison:

Two years.

But:

Rome remains ahead.

Principle

God’s promises do not expire because circumstances move more slowly than we expected.

LXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Acts Chapter 24 places two men before us.

One is:

A prisoner.

The other:

A governor.

Humanly speaking:

Felix has the advantage.

He has:

Position.

Authority.

Freedom.

Influence.

Paul has:

Chains.

Restrictions.

Accusations.

Delay.

Yet spiritually:

Paul is the free man.

Paul has:

A clear conscience.

Faith in Christ.

Resurrection hope.

Purpose.

Truth.

Felix has:

Fear.

Greed.

Political pressure.

Spiritual hesitation.

The prisoner speaks about:

Freedom from guilt.

The governor responds:

“That’s enough for now.”

That may be one of the saddest responses in Acts.

Not:

I reject everything.

Not:

I do not believe you.

But:

Not now.

Later.

When convenient.

That is dangerous.

There may always be:

Another meeting.

Another sermon.

Another Sunday.

Another opportunity.

Another conversation.

But:

There may not.

The call of God demands response.

Felix trembled.

Yet trembling did not save him.

Conviction must become:

Repentance.

Faith.

Submission.

Acts 24 also teaches us how to respond to false accusations.

Paul does not:

Panic.

Lie.

Retaliate.

Flatter.

Instead:

He calmly states facts.

He identifies missing witnesses.

He asks for evidence.

He confesses his Christian faith.

He maintains:

A clear conscience.

That is a powerful model.

When falsely accused:

Tell the truth.

When misunderstood:

Tell the truth.

When questioned:

Tell the truth.

When brought before authority:

Tell the truth.

And never hide:

Jesus Christ.

Then:

Two years pass.

Paul waits.

This may have felt like lost time.

But it was not outside God's purpose.

Christ had already said:

Rome.

The delay could not erase the destination.

Acts 24 therefore calls us to:

Live with integrity.

Believe in resurrection.

Remember judgment.

Help the needy.

Speak truth respectfully.

Reject flattery.

Reject bribery.

Reject political compromise.

Preach Christ clearly.

Respond when God convicts.

And never assume that tomorrow is guaranteed.

The words of Felix remain a warning:

“When I find it convenient...”

The gospel calls us instead to say:

Today.

Today I will listen.

Today I will repent.

Today I will believe.

Today I will obey.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Acts Chapter 24.

Thank You for Paul’s example of integrity and courage.

Help us live with clear consciences before You and before people.

Protect us from false accusation.

But even more:

Protect us from giving truthful reason for accusation through sinful living.

Help us speak honestly.

Keep us from manipulation.

Keep us from flattery.

Keep us from greed.

Keep us from political compromise.

Thank You for the hope of resurrection.

Help us remember that every life moves toward accountability before You.

Let that truth shape:

Our thoughts.

Our words.

Our decisions.

Our relationships.

Our priorities.

Give us courage to speak about:

Righteousness.

Self-control.

Coming judgment.

And faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank You that the gospel is not only a warning.

It is good news.

Jesus died.

Jesus rose.

Jesus saves.

Help us respond when You convict our hearts.

Keep us from becoming like Felix.

Do not let us say:

Later.

Not now.

When convenient.

Give us hearts ready to obey You today.

When Your Word exposes sin:

Help us repent.

When Your Spirit convicts:

Help us listen.

When Christ calls:

Help us follow.

Give us patience during seasons of delay.

When answers take years rather than days:

Keep us faithful.

Remind us that Your promises remain sure.

May we live in such a way that when we stand before people or before You:

Our conscience is clear.

Our faith is strong.

Our hope is in Christ.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

**“As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became afraid and said, ‘That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.’”
— Acts 24:25**

Central Truth

Paul faithfully defends the truth with a clear conscience and boldly proclaims faith in Christ, resurrection, righteousness, self-control, and coming judgment, while Felix demonstrates the tragic danger of experiencing conviction yet postponing repentance for a more convenient time.

Acts 24 in One Sentence

Paul answers serious but unproven accusations before Governor Felix by affirming his faith in the Scriptures, resurrection hope, and clear conscience, then boldly preaches faith in Christ, righteousness, self-control, and coming judgment to Felix, whose fearful but delayed response shows that repeated conviction without repentance can leave a person unchanged even while the purposes of God continue through Paul’s imprisonment.