

## THE PRACHER AND THE POLITICIAN

### (THE FELIX SYNDROME)

#### (ACTS 24:24-27)

**INTRO:** Two men meet to resolve issues. They are as different as day and night. One is **immoral** the other **moral**, one is at best, an **idolater**, the other a **Christian**, One is in **charge** the other in **chains**. One is a **politician** the other is a **preacher**. One is seeking to **please Caesar**, the other lives to please Christ. One is **looking out for # 1**, the other, looking out for **the other lives who need Jesus Christ**.

I wish to focus on 4 verses which involve at least 4 chapters, however we will limit our words to the material in these 4 verses

#### 1) WITH GREAT POMP FELIX ARRIVES WITH DRUSILLA

- a) **The place is Herod's Palace in Caesarea.** The walls of this palace have witnessed many bloody scenes. It was here that **Herod passed the sentence of death** upon his **own 2 sons**. **Many other Jews were brutalized** in this place and the **screams of believers** have **echoed often**, only to be **suddenly silenced**.
- b) **Today, these walls are about to hear a sermon like very few ears have heard.** Let use our mind's eye to get the picture. We see the **front gates swing open**, and **in walks** a man named **Felix, the Governor** of Judea. He is wearing a royal red robe, and he can be best characterized by the words **"cruel" and "covetous."**
  - i) He was born a slave but through luck and the help of his brother Pallas who knew people in high places he eventually became Governor of Judea.
  - ii) Tacitus, the impartial Roman historian, tells us **Felix was "a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave"**
- c) **Drusilla walks in behind her husband.** She comes from a wicked **bloodline**: daughter of **Herod Agrippa 1**, who put James to death, her **great grandfather** attempted to kill baby Jesus by **killing all the male infants under 2**. Drusilla, is **his third wife**, formerly married to a king, she was convinced by Felix to become his wife. They well represent the Rome of that day. She was reported to be **the "most beautiful woman in the empire,"** so as she walks into the room, **all eyes are on her.**

#### 2) UNDER CAREFUL GUARD PAUL ENTERS THE COURTROOM

- a) **The guard is primarily for his own wellbeing.**
- b) **We see a man stooped from beatings, whippings and stonings.** His face shows a hard life and looks old for his age. Chains that bind him rattle as he moves across the floor.
- c) **But we see neither sadness, fear, nor disappointment.** This is what he has given his life for **(II Tim 1:12)**- the opportunity to proclaim the good news.
  - i) **Paul knew from the beginning how dedicated Christ's followers were(Stephen)**
  - ii) **He also was told what it would cost to be one of them** (Acts 9: 16; 20:23; 21:11)
- d) **The irony of it all:** Paul stands in chains before Felix who appears to be free. However, since Jesus said, **"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed"**-John 8:36, we know who was really free here. This man who will later spend much time in prison was **"free indeed,"** while the politician, liar, adulterer, favor-giving, bribe-taking Felix is being held hostage by Satan! Believe it! Perhaps he is reminded of that at this meeting.
- e) **Paul is standing before the one who could possibly set him free from chains.** Yet he **didn't beg for his life**. He **didn't even mince words**. In fact it was not even about him! It **was about what Jesus could do for Felix the Governor!** Truly!
  - i) If Paul would **just be "politically correct"** and **water the message down** he might live.
  - ii) Perhaps Paul should at least slip the Governor a few dollars and it would go easier.

iii) But he made no deal!

f) **ILLUST:** Raising The Red Flag

### 3) THE PREACHER TAKES THE FLOOR

a) He raised the red flag on this occasion. We **have these points:**

- i) He spoke about **Faith** in Jesus, **Righteousness**, **Self-Control**, and **Judgment Day!**  
(1) 1858 C.H. Spurgeon spoke on this calling it an **“appropriate sermon.”** [this may have little to do with any of us, although it has something to do with all of us. But think of this, Paul is seeing himself in the mirror. He had lacked and needed all the things he is speaking to Felix and Drusilla about!! In his old life Paul had everything necessary for life here, but not life hereafter.] So did we, or so do we!  
(2) *“The lax morals of Felix and Drusilla help to explain the topics on which Paul spoke to them.”* (Stott)

**(3) In personal evangelism it is tempting to attempt to narrow the gap between God and the sinner. Don't do it. Let God be God.**

- ii) Here we see the **power of words** and the necessity of being honest with them!  
(1) Every person sins, sin separates us from God, sin hurts God, we can't fix it.  
(2) We are lost!!!  
(3) In the presence of a Politician, the Preacher did NOT exercise political correctness.

iii) **ILLUST:** The Power Of Words

b) **This Is A Faith Felix Desperately Needs**

- i) This faith In Jesus and is the basis of all other things:  
(1) It is not simply knowing about Jesus or even believing he lived or was real  
(2) This implies *“putting one's trust in Jesus”* and that is a humbling experience.  
ii) Faith like this would make it **impossible** for Felix to continue like he was.

c) **This Is Righteousness He Does Not Possess**

- i) The unrighteous person need God cf. Isa. 64:6  
(1) Righteousness is owned and operated by God, however- **ILLUST:** Sign On Truck  
(2) When we have Jesus, we have righteousness- **I Cor. 1:30**  
ii) Without a submissive attitude, neither Felix, Drusilla nor one of us will make it.

d) **This is Self-Control Felix Did Not Practice** (please remember that we have just a brief outline of what each top was. What must Paul have said, for their good?)

- i) The Governor took bribes, was a people pleaser, had 3 wives, bad reputation.  
ii) We are told he hoped for Paul to spring with some money!  
iii) This man was corrupt, would lie, murder, steal, lived for orgies, luxury.  
iv) Self-control was a foreign concept.  
(1) Paul probably said, *“Governor, Sir, you are an adulterer, a murderer and the Bible says you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”*  
(2) Then he might have looked at Drusilla and pointed out how she sold out what it means to be a young lady. She gave up her modesty, decency and purity.

**(3) God is concerned about lifestyles!!!**

v) Ask God to help with your self-control.

vi) Felix must have a lump in his throat, **“I called this man here to judge him, now he is in the judge's seat.”** **“I'm not feeling well.”**

e) **This is Judgment that He Must Face. We all will!**-II Cor. 5:10

- i) It is important for Felix to understand this. He may have a false view, Government job, needs all covered, could easily feel untouchable.  
ii) But listen, when Paul got to *“judgment to come,”* Felix *“was frightened”*

iii) Sadly, his next words were “Go away for now, when I find time I will call you.”

**CONCLUSION:** There are real and pressing dangers of putting off getting right with God. In the case of Governor Felix, he died a miserable man a few years later. For you:

- 1) **You Lose Today.** This is not only about tomorrow. People have said, “I wish I had started golfing earlier, or playing an instrument... or whatever.” When an 86 year old woman comes to Jesus. She is saved completely! But will miss so many blessings of Jesus and His people because of death that is promised.
- 2) **You Are Not Promised Tomorrow.** This is the only day we have. This is the time to make a decision for eternity. Here in the presence of others who can testify of the beauty found in Christ and His fellowship on earth.
- 3) **Jesus Might Return At Any Moment.** Not at all a scare tactic, we don't know when Jesus will return. When he does it will be followed by judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous- John 5:25-29

## ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS LESSON

### RAISING THE RED FLAG

Court case in England, a family traveled down a wrong road that was unfinished, and had an accident. The prosecution said the road was clearly marked with a bright red flag, but their defendant said no it wasn't. He claimed that if they would go retrieve the flag they would see. They did, and it was pale pink, from being out in the weather so long.

Too many pulpits today are waving a flag alright, but it's so weathered and watered down it doesn't really get the right warning across! It's a pale pink flag, weak and sissified, without commitment and ineffective!

### GLAD TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

“[Pollyanna](#).” The story goes something like this: Orphaned missionary kid with a heart of gold moves to a small town that is essentially ruled by her austere aunt. Pollyanna (played by Hayley Mills), with precocious positivity and determined gladness, changes her aunt – and the town – for the better. Along the way, there are turn-of-the-century hijinks, some tragedy, a happily ever after or two, and tears all around. It's the sort of mushy live-action fare that defined mid-century Disney, and I adore it.

There's this scene where Pollyanna comes upon the town reverend rehearsing a sermon out in a meadow. On the street, the reverend is a nice guy, but in the pulpit, he's a hellfire-and-brimstone screamer with trademark phrases like “[DEATH COMES UNEXPECTEDLY](#)”

So Pollyanna saunters out to see the rev and casually brings up her late missionary father's love of “*the happy texts*”:

*Reverend:* The happy texts?

*Pollyanna:* Yes. Like, um, ‘Shout for joy,’ or, ‘Be glad in the Lord.’ You know, like that... There are eight hundred happy texts, did you know that?

*Reverend:* No, I didn't know that.

*Pollyanna:* And do you know, my father said that if God took the trouble to tell us eight hundred times to be glad and rejoice, He must have wanted us to do it.

## **The Power of Words**

In a recent column in *The Washington Post*, Michael Gerson makes reference to "the moral vocabulary of a previous era." He refers to phrases such as "a consciousness of sin" and "a real determination to reach holiness." Then he observes: "When said in public, terms such as 'sin' and 'holiness' have the power to shock, like the choicer curse words once did."

Reading that is a reminder to me of how much power is inherent in the words of our faith, words that we too often cast aside in our hunger for relevance and contemporaneity. Hard words such as *sin*, *judgment*, *submission*. Healing words such as *redemption*, *grace*, *salvation*.

I'm not suggesting we litter our speech with complex theological jargon, tossed out without explanation. However, I am reminded the words of Scripture carry within them a power that goes beyond my feeble communication skills—and, sorry, yours as well.

As we preach, let's trust in the power of those rich biblical words, the ideas they represent, and the God who inspired them

### **SIGN ON TRUCK**

"*Owned and operated by....*" Never forget that Righteousness is a product of God- Rom 1:16f