

Acts 24:22-27 (NIV)

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

23 He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

24 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.

25 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.”

26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

27 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.

Felix was brought under conviction when Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. Well he should, for his marriage to Drusilla was his third and he had to break up another marriage to secure her. His regime was marked by injustices that contrasted with the righteousness of God. And he was a man grossly lacking in self-control.

Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 422.

44-24-02-Conviction vs. Convenience

Gospel, preaching, guilt, fearfulness, self-gratification

Acts 24:22-27

When the Holy Spirit brings conviction, He often uses those He fills.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture Reading)

–Jesus *says something* in Acts. His resurrection declared it; Pentecost empowered it; and His Church is to embody it. His statement is: “**I’m not done yet!**” Hell’s host tried stopping the Incarnation. But now, the Holy Spirit has spread *little incarnations of Christ* all over the globe. –Devotion becomes declaration when the Holy Spirit fills us. **Rom 5:5** says that “God poured out **his love** into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” He did this in Jesus and wants to do the same in us, because “God is **light**” and “God is **love**”—His “**light**” *cares with love*; His “**love**” *shines with truth’s light*. This is why Jesus said in **John 16:7-8**, “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to **sin** and **righteousness** and **judgment**.” *God’s light & love indwell us* by the Holy Spirit, so **HOM.idea**. Now let’s look at...

- I. The Culprit Who Held Paul Captive— v.22-23**, Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case.” He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs. (Sounds like a fairly nice procurator... But no...)
- A. Secular accounts say he was an unjust and greedy Roman official:
1. “Felix... well acquainted with the Way,” knew Paul had been accused falsely, yet for 2 years he never sent for “Lysias” and never tried to “decide” Paul’s “case.” (He had reasons for keeping Paul captive – **v.27**, 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.)
 2. He also had ulterior motives for permitting Paul’s “friends to take care of his needs”– **v.26**, At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.
- B. Those same secular accounts described Felix’s *immoral lust*. (He dropped his 1st wife to marry “Drusilla,” whom he convinced to leave her husband, then later replaced her with yet another wife.)

TRANS: Felix was *corrupt*, but the one he kept “in prison” was *filled by*

the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus sent to “convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.” And when the Holy Spirit brings conviction, He often uses those He fills. So, Felix, the culprit who held Paul captive, suddenly became...

II. The Culprit Whom Paul Held Captive— v.24, 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**.

A. Drusilla was a co-culprit, having left her legal husband for Felix.

1. [She was a granddaughter of Herod the Great and daughter of Agrippa I, the “Herod” who persecuted the church and later received divine judgment, as described in Acts 12:22-23, They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.]
2. How “Drusilla” reacted to Paul’s message “about faith in Christ” is not recorded here, but it might have affected her as it did Felix, if she recalled her own wayward history and that of her family.

B. Our “faith in Christ” leads to “eternal life” in God’s Kingdom, which Paul later described as “**righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**”

1. The “**righteousness**” is a life following Jesus; the “**peace**” is peace with God rather than “judgment”; the “**joy**” is experiencing a new, abundant life, set free from the “**sin**” that can never satisfy.
2. But entering that Kingdom means to repent from “doing your own thing” and to surrender to Jesus as Savior and Lord! So...

C. The Spirit brings conviction— v.25a, As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid.” (But Felix didn’t let his human fear become godly fear— v.25b, [he] said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.”)

D. It’s inconvenient for people like Felix to repent and turn to Christ, when convicted of “sin and righteousness and judgment.” (Jesus tells why in John 16:9-11 by explaining what Spirit conviction entails):

1. “in regard to **sin**, because men do not believe in me;” (Unbelief resists the idea that God sent His Son to save us from “sin” and to give us a life of “self-control” against “sin” [a lifestyle Felix did not want to adopt.])
2. “in regard to **righteousness**, because I am going to the Father...” (Unbelief can’t accept that Jesus, after earthly human life, could return to God unstained by immorality [a practice Felix did not wish to give up.])
3. “in regard to **judgment**, because the prince of this world now stands

condemned.” (Unbelief doesn’t see that Satan—whose lies promote human wrongs and injustices—was judged at the Cross, along with all who obey those lies. [Felix still saw himself as autonomous!])

CONCLUSION:

–When the Holy Spirit brings conviction, He often uses those He fills, just as He used Paul to offer Felix a choice between conviction and convenience. Because the Holy Spirit convicts the world of “sin and righteousness and judgment,” Paul spoke on the same areas, telling Felix of “righteousness, self-control [in matters of sin] and the judgment to come.”

–Final “judgment” is never convenient! But the caring love of God shines with the convicting light of God to bring hope, not condemnation. That conviction offers “peace” with God, if sinners will repent and be reborn into God’s “kingdom” of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”

–Never forget: Jesus isn’t done yet! He’s still seeking the lost, offering them new life in His Kingdom. But now, He does it through us, as we make ourselves available to be filled with and used by the Holy Spirit.

–“But what if we say something people aren’t ready to hear?” Maybe they’ll say: “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I’ll send for you.” OR, maybe someday we’ll meet them in Heaven and hear them say, “I’m so grateful you told me the truth ‘about faith in Christ Jesus.’ I’ll be forever thankful!” And we’ll be thankful too that we let Jesus have His way, and that we let the Holy Spirit do His work in and through us.