

## Procrastination the great robber.

**Acts 24:25** And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Our subject procrastination the great robber.

**Here we will see 3 people in our text all have a lesson for us.** Felix and Drusilla, sitting side by side upon the judgment seat. **Paul**, the prisoner, bound in chains, now fearlessly explains the truth of the Gospel to Drusilla and Felix. Felix the judge is ruthless, and corrupt and could very easily order Paul's death. Also, He could easily see the situation as a way to get favour with the Jews. So, Paul is in a very dangerous situation. His life is truly in the balance. But Paul Loves the Lord more than even His own life, He must please God not these two who are there to Judge Him. So begins to unfold the Gospel with clarity, Prompted by the Holy Spirit He selects a hard part of it, Speaking about Righteousness to two of the most unrighteous people in all Cesseria. Speaking about Temperance to two that have no shame in openly showing a complete lack of temperance. Then showing them clearly that there is a Judgement to come. Paul must have given a vivid description of the second coming of the Messiah to judge the unrighteous and the sensual. *2Thes 1:8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,*

Paul is the prisoner in chains, he is at a huge disadvantage accused of sedition. How easy it would have been to feel despondent and full of self-pity. Rather we see Paul is unafraid in this dangerous situation. The Gospel has filled Paul's heart, *"for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"* What is amazing is that it was not Just Paul wanting to see Felix and Drusilla come to the Lord. And then later Festus and Agrippa **Acts 26:28-29** *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. [29] And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.* It was the Lord Speaking through the Apostle Paul. Can you the great love and mercy the Lord has for The Lost. For those so undeserving. The Lord who bears away our sins. *1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

Paul is so compelled to speak for the Lord. So desirous to please the Lord who had done so much for Him. **Love must compel us as well**, the writers of old let us know our responsibility so clearly. **It is for me to fit the arrow to the string and send it home—to unsheathe the sword.** What Courage Paul had. What courage we need to have. May God grant us this boldness—that we may reason, and present the pure Gospel, the whole Gospel.

**Paul never preached the kind of Gospel that is so popular today.** The Seeker friendly Gospel which makes the church experience as comfortable, inviting, and non-threatening as possible.

## Procrastination the great robber.

They hardly ever mention sin, hell, or repentance. Avoid preaching Jesus Christ as the only way to heaven this could offend someone! **No this is not the bible way.** The words Paul spoke were inspired by the Holy Spirit and made Felix and Drusilla very, very uncomfortable. Felix was terrified and trembled. The man-made way of reaching the lost says, 'we don't want to scare away and frighten any that are seeking God.' **But the Bible says,** "there is no one who understands, **no one who seeks God**" (Romans 3:11). Man won't seek God, because man is dead in Sin, and does not recognise any need to seek God. The whole preaching of the Gospel message is foolishness to those who are perishing. But the wisdom of God to those being saved. 1Cor.1:8 A man-made Gospel no matter how attractive, no matter how excellent the show is, doesn't draw people to Christ. Ultimately it is only As **the FATHER DRAWS**, and **the Spirit awakens** the heart to believe the Gospel, as for us, we ought to be clearly preaching biblical truths to the consciences of our hearers. Not providing entertainment or putting on a show.

Paul the Apostle was a preacher of the whole truth, we would do well to follow Him, We do well to follow a biblical pattern. *1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

**Next person in our text is Felix.** Who is this, Felix? What is He a picture of? Felix and His brother (Pallas) were formerly slaves, now they are freed men and have become favourites of Claudius Caesar. We know very little about their early life, or original name, as it was common for slaves to inherit the name of the one who freed them. Soon **Antonius Felix** was promoted to the office of governor. Being a favourite of the emperor and having so much power Felix thought he could do whatever he wanted to and get away with it.

It's said he had been in power some 5 to 6 years at the time of this encounter with Paul. The testimony he had was not good It was said, '*He wielded his kingly authority with the spirit of a slave, in all cruelty and lust.*' He kept Paul in Bonds and would call Him from time to time Expecting and hoping to receive a bribe. Even When he left office, or rather we should note that he was disgraced and put out of His public office and sent back to Rome, He kept Paul in Bonds for two years when he knew he was innocent as a favour to the Jews, when He knew one word from his lips would set Paul free. His crimes were many, He enticed a married woman Drusilla to leave her husband for him. He had employed assassins to murder the high-priest Jonathan.

**But all this was not His main crime.** There was something much more serious that He did that would affect him forever. More on that later. We look at his wife now

**Drusilla's background.** Drusilla. Third and youngest daughter of Herod (We all know of Herods terrible death how he was struck down of the Lord and eaten of worms)

Herod had betrothed her to Epiphanes, son of the king of Commagene. This marriage did not take place, as Epiphanes refused to undergo the rite of circumcision. Hastings NT Drusilla's brother, Agrippa II, then arranged for her to marry the king of Emesa, (today this city is renamed to Homs and is in Western

## Procrastination the great robber.

Syria). This King agreed to follow the Jewish ways and they were married. Soon after this, Felix, a gentile governor of Judea, was consumed by the great beauty of young Drusilla. He managed to persuade her to break the Jewish law and leave her husband to marry him. Some say she had been persuaded by one Simon (? Simon Magus) to desert her first husband, Azizus king of Emesa, for Felix.

**Here are 2 people who do not deserve Gods favour and grace.** Their hearts were so far from God. But God rich in mercy gave them an opportunity to hear the apostle Paul's proclamation of the gospel. God who says, *"I will be merciful to thy unrighteousness and thy sins, and thy iniquity will I remember no more."*

Understand that it takes more than just hearing the Gospel to experience the wonderful results. They both heard and Felix trembled, **but none believed.** How different it would have been if they yielded and did not put off God's Grace. If they had repented and believed the Gospel. But like so many today they put it off for another time. There are many different reasons and excuses why people put off the Gospel message.

**The worldly people think,** Oh I would never like to be a Christian. They are can't understand when they see Christians turn their back on worldly practices and ways, which are the only source of happiness to their lives. The Worldly people think, it must be so hard for Christians to give up these pleasures, they think that the Christian still secretly longs to do these things they so freely do. But they don't know the secret. They don't know anything about Christ making us new creations. They don't know That the believer has discovered pleasures so much better than anything the world can ever offer.... *"I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean; and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."* These are the promises of the new covenant in Christ Jesus. God says **I will, and you shall.** There is no if or but in the whole promise.

**They feel sorry for us because our whole Sunday just taken up with church,** they don't see that going to church refreshes the soul. How we bathe our weary souls in the streams of that river which maketh glad the city of God; how by waiting upon God, our strength is renewed.

**They say Having to read the Bible all the time!** They don't see that the Bread of God strengthens us, that His word is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet..

It's just too much for them, they say, my pleasures are much, much better. They only see the Christian as troubled, but they don't see the Christians supports. They see all sorts of burdens which press them down, but they don't see the everlasting arms underneath the believer supporting them. They see only the here and now but can't imagine Eternity. **They don't know the promises.** *"Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will*

## Procrastination the great robber.

*strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness;” “my grace is sufficient for thee.”*

**It’s easy to look at this couple and say what a terrible couple.** They didn’t deserve to hear the Gospel; they don’t deserve grace. **But really, we are all terrible.** The depravity of the human heart is just like this. If we think we are not as terrible as they were.

**Consider the young person,** arrogant, not interested in Jesus Christ, doesn’t care at all that He suffered and died. Just indifferent to what He did for them. Turns their back on Him and just carries on their life along the broad way, the way that leads to destruction.

**Consider the old person, who says I owe nothing to Jesus Christ,** I’ve worked hard all my life, what I have my house, my car, my security, I’ve worked for it. But no acknowledgement that God has given them health, that the very breath they have is from Him.

**There is none righteous no not one.** We are all born into sin and have desperately and all have wicked and deprived hearts. It’s easy to see this in Felix, even the worldly people saw it and called Felix a bad man. But it’s not easy to see it in ourselves. If we do see, and do realise, and if we do tremble like Felix then, be glad for the Holy Spirit has shown you; the only right response now is to repent and believe the Gospel.

**Do you know there are people who claim to be Christians.** They say I have believed the Gospel. I’ve said a sinner’s prayer. But the truth is Its very very hard to see any evidence of the fruit of the spirit in them. Their lives are no different from how they used to live before they were converted. They can’t say before I was a believer I behaved like this and that, but now I behave and live in a way which brings glory to the Father. Rather they say, I’m not like that Felix or I’m not like Drusilla. I go to church. Yes, you may Go to church, but **do you Love Him?** Do you Obey His commands. You may go to church, but **do you know Him?** Have you been given a heart to know Him? *“This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”* **Have you been reconciled to Christ?** we must be reconciled; only then is his anger is turned away from us, he cannot receive us; till we are justified by faith, and washed clean in His blood, we cannot have peace with God; we cannot rejoice in Christ Jesus till we have been made new in Him. Either we are a new man in Christ or not; there is no in-between.

**Now Felix and Drusilla heard Paul.** We all need to hear. He was to be judged by them, but now Paul was the judge, reasoning of Righteousness and of Judgement. “He reasoned of righteousness.” Possibly he reminded Felix of the right of the widow and the orphan. he demonstrated that kings and magistrates are established to maintain the rights of the people, and not to indulge their own fancy. Felix knew all he cared about was Himself. He knew he had oppressed the poor and defenceless.

## Procrastination the great robber.

Then Temperance or self-control is spoken of, Perhaps Felix was reminded that He took a married woman to be his wife, it was said that he was the King who had 3 queens. Perhaps He knew He was unfaithful. Oh, some think, and say people don't tolerate that today, but what about so many couples just living together out of wedlock openly unembarrassed at defying Gods standards.

Paul Reminds Him of the Judgement to come. Oh, how different this is from the seeker friendly gospel that makes even the sinner feel comfortable. But Paul is bold, and Paul speaks inspired by the Holy Spirit. Saying what you are doing you will be required to give and answer for. It is a blessed thing when our conscience is awakened by the Holy Spirit speaks loudly to us condemning our sin.

**The true Gospel must show us our great need for redemption**, how guilty we are, that we will be judged, it brings us face to face with our own sinfulness, and face to face with God. But then there is mercy and grace offered that all our sin and filth can be washed away. But can we see our sinfulness? do we realise that we are guilty and need our sin washed away.

Paul's message was very disturbing and convicting to Felix It filled Felix with fear. **We must remember everything we have ever done wrong is noticed by God.** *Hebrews 4:13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

**Nothing in all creation is hidden from Him to who we must give account.** There is not one person who can even hide their thoughts from God, for nothing that we do remains a secret. The way we conduct our business, the way we treat our wife and family, What we do in secret. God sees and knows. *Psalms 90:8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* What will you tell God? will you be so foolish to say you have no proof, I'm not so bad. No, I think not you will tremble; everything is open and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

**Felix's great mistake.** Felix a sinner terrified, but not converted; a sinner who wants to be saved, **but delays his conversion:** The Holy Spirit is working in His heart. *John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* People are still reprovved and convicted of their sin today but suppose they put it off for a later time like Felix did. What a serious mistake. We too can make that serious mistake

Felix says, 'When I have a convenient season, I will send for thee.' Hoping conviction would go away. And also, his wicked heart thinking, well Paul might give me some money if I call him back later. But putting off hearing Paul changed nothing. Judgement was still coming. He would have to give an answer to God for everything!

Paul's clear words caused Him to tremble. Should we not also tremble, in fear and respect, when we hear that we too will stand before the Living God to give an answer for everything we have ever done.

## Procrastination the great robber.

Oh, how different it could have been if they yielded to Paul's words. But really they were not Paul's words but God's words. They were so close to finding peace with God. So close to being washed clean of all their sin. So close to all their sin being removed as far as the west is from the east. *Psalms 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

If only they found the new life they were hoping for. **But procrastination is the great robber** – Felix and Drusilla never came under conviction again and trembled. They never thought it convenient to listen to such preaching again. If only they understood that today is the day of salvation, that if we hear the voice of the Lord, we must not harden our hearts. See how hard a heart can be, how hard Felix despised God's goodness and mercy. It is a terrible shock to discover we ourselves are just the same, rebels against God, despisers of His goodness, wilful and stubborn rejecters of His mercy.

Felix said I will consider; I will turn to the Lord in the future when I am ready. **How could he think the Holy Spirit would keep knocking on the door of His heart when he had refused the Lord for so long and so many times.**

**I will turn to the Lord in the future. Fool how do you know you have a future.** How do you know that your very life will not be demanded of you this night. Do you not realise that death advances every day, it comes unannounced without messenger or warning. It respects no one, rich or poor, young or old. \*Illustration that death and life are like 2 parallel roads, side by side that at any moment young or old we can step over, many think death is only at the end of a long road and they say ill turn to the lord before my end. But at any moment you are only 1 breath away from eternity.

**No Instead of Felix saying** "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." **He should have said; Stay Paul, Stay,** for the Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of my heart. Stay Paul, I see my great need to be forgiven of my terrible sin. Paul although your words trouble my conscience and make me tremble, don't stop Paul until My salvation is sure. Until I bow my heart and my knee. But how sad this was not the case. His heart was so full of earthly things, so full of hope for money. So full of the love of money. He couldn't think of heavenly things.

To feel your sin and guilt like they did, but dismiss it and not repent and turn to God. So sad, so terrible. The opportunity was now lost forever. If only they didn't put it off how different things would have been.

Felix was soon dismissed in disgrace of His office. His son and Drusilla went to Pompeii where the history books indicate they met a terrible end in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius the volcano which engulfed the city. A terrible end. **But the real terror would go on for eternity.** Eternal separation from God, eternal punishment. It's been roughly 1900 years now that Felix and Drusilla have been in torment and there is no end, how tragic they didn't listen.

## Procrastination the great robber.

Oh, when we feel our sin, when our sin makes us tremble, when we realise we have sinned against the living God. When we hear the knocking at our heart, Its God grace calling us! His mercy offered. **Believe the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, turn to the Lord and you will be saved.** If Felix being so lost was to repent, do you think God could have turned His life around, and given Him new life in Christ Jesus?

**What a warning to us.** How many like Him say no I'm in the middle of my career just let me get this promotion and I will consider the Gospel at a more convenient time. They say I've got to earn a living. They say, "We must live," yet they forget that they must die!

Or I'm at university I have a lot on my plate, I'll consider this at a later date. Oh, sadly for Felix his cold and wicked heart dominated his thoughts. The Love of money had blinded him from seeing and hearing the truth. Perhaps he was even angered that Paul didn't get the hint! Or got it and refused to give him any. It's not always money, it can be but getting ahead, getting recognised, any matter of goals that consume and become the main goal of your existence.

*Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.* Countless have missed the free gift of pardon from every sin, and missed new life in Christ Jesus. **Even Festus who replaced Felix.** *Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* There are no almost Christians, either you are or you are not.

*Hebrews 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

**"TODAY"** - A Priceless Opportunity. Yesterday has gone forever. Tomorrow may never arrive. Today is a part of time which is fleeting. If something needs to be done urgently, wisdom whispers, "DO IT NOW."

**"IF YE HEAR. HIS VOICE"** – Grace opens our ears to hear. Normally the Human heart does not hear counts the Gospel as foolish. Wisdom suggests in you hear, "LISTEN."

**"HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART"** - only two responses are possible. Do nothing and stay LOST. Or respond to the grace, let His love melt your hard heart and open the door to make His entrance possible. Wisdom urges, "Surrender."

**Sadly, Felix failed in all 3 of these points.** He didn't take the opportunity of Today, but put it off for tomorrow. He heard but he didn't listen. He actually did harden His heart refusing to bend his knee every time he heard Paul. The result was he became harder and harder and was eternally lost. *Zephaniah 2:2 amp [The time for repentance is speeding by like chaff whirled before the wind!] Therefore consider, before God's decree brings forth [the curse upon you], before the time [to repent] is gone like the drifting chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord comes upon you--yes, before the day of the wrath of the Lord comes upon you!*

## **Procrastination the great robber.**

**Oh dear friend, It may be this is your only visitation,** The only time left to hear and surrender. It may be your only acceptable time. It may be the last day of my visitation. Let us see it as precious. Let us not say tomorrow, rather this day this moment even now.

**Let the preacher** say from now on I will preach the glad tidings, I will not hold back, I will not just bring words that are only pleasant I will preach the whole truth. Even if dignitaries visit my church, I will preach salvation clearly. For they too need salvation. I will preach with Holy Fervour and Zeal.

**Let the one who loves mammon say,** I will overturn the alter I've erected to the love of money and prosperity and erect another of love to the eternal Lord.

**Let the prodigal say,** Enough bitterness, enough hate, I will kindle a fire of divine love in my heart.

**Let the worldling say,** The one who loves the world, say no more friendship with worldly ways, for I would not be at enmity with God. I turn from worldly ways, I divorce them, all those unhappy passions that war against my soul, despicable attachments; crooked tendencies; ungodly emotions of sexual desire. **I desire a new heart,** I desire to have new and pure desires, I desire to be made new in Christ Jesus. I desire to have a foretaste of Glory while my feet walk this dark and wicked world. I desire to walk with the Lord.

Whenever the Holy Spirit convicts our lives, whatever area it may be. We would be wise to act immediately. But especially with regard our eternal salvation. If you hear His voice today do not harden your heart and refuse Him.