

1-2-22

**Acts 24:22-27.**

New Year's resolutions anyone?

How many remember the Heinz ketchup commercials in the late 80's? (Play video) Good things come to those who wait.

Now ketchup bottles are made of plastic that you squeeze, no more waiting!

What are some things we like to wait to do, put doing it off as long as we can? (Pay taxes, clean the basement, do laundry, kids to grow up, get old)

Convenient in the Greek is Kairos, (Care-oo) meaning, fitting, proper, better opportunity, more suitable time.

There are somethings that can and should be put off to a more suitable, fitting time, while other things should be taken care of immediately.

Paul is in the presence of Felix the Roman governor and being accused by Ananias the high priest, religious Jews and Tertullus. They are accusing Paul of being a plague, creator of dissension among the Jewish people and profaning the temple. In verses **10-21**, Paul pleads his case, stating that these accusations are not truth, and there is no proof otherwise. He is guilty of being part of the Way (Christians), preaching life after death, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. This brings us to verses **22-27**.

**Read verses 22-24.**

In our text, Felix the Roman governor of that area had a private meeting with Paul. Perhaps he was intrigued by these Christians and was truly searching for answers. Many scholars believe Felix met with him privately only in hopes of extracting a bribe. ***"Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him." (v.26)***

Not one to be corrupted by a bribe to get a free pass from prison, Paul did what he always did when he had the chance: he preached the Gospel with Felix and his wife.

The scripture says that Paul, **(v.25)**

- **Spoke about faith in Jesus Christ.**
- **Reasoned about Righteousness and self-control.**

Like most Roman leaders, Felix and his wife were wicked and enslaved to sin, so Paul got right to the nub of the matter of the sin in their lives. They desperately needed salvation from their sin through Jesus Christ.

- **Reasoned with them about the judgement to come.**

***Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,"***

Every one of us will die, then we'll have to face our Maker. And anyone who has not received God's gift of salvation provided through His Son, Jesus, will be judged by God and cast into the lake of fire.

Paul shared all of this, and whatever Felix's initial motivations were, it made a profound impression upon Felix. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, tells us that Felix **"trembled"** (in the KJV) with fear.

Felix didn't turn to the Lord and become a believer that day. He should have done it when the Lord was working in his heart. He should have responded when the Holy Spirit had brought him to the place of conviction and fear and shame before a holy God. I can imagine Paul waiting for Felix's response, thinking to himself, "Come to Christ now before it is everlastingly too late. Felix, what are you waiting for?"

But Felix **DIDN'T** trust the Lord that day, and there's no evidence he ever did. He said to Paul, "**Go away for now; I will call for you at a more convenient time.**" But you know what? -It's never convenient to trust the Lord. Satan will always give you an excuse to put off your most important spiritual decisions. Today in the pit of hades, awaiting his day of judgment before the holy Judge, Felix is wishing he had responded to God when he had a chance.

The writer of Hebrews asked this question **"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him," Hebrews 2:3**

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

The great dangers to the souls of mankind are procrastination and neglect of the truths God reveals to you in His Word. Our great task is to challenge people with a question, the same question Paul must have asked Felix. That question is this: "What are you waiting for?"

#### I. SOME HAVE SAID, "I WILL START LIVING FOR GOD SOMEDAY."

- Some have been saved, but they haven't given everything over to the Lord in your life. They're holding back in some area that they know God wants them to surrender. Or they've just not gotten around to getting serious for God.
- They are happy as simply a believer when Jesus calls them to the strong demands of discipleship. Disciples of Jesus are those who have dedicated themselves to God totally. Jesus is the Lord and Master and King in their lives.
- That's what God wants for every single one of us, and SOME know that, but they have just been putting it off. Let me ask you a question: "What are you waiting for?"
- Remember the decisiveness of Joshua? When he came to the River Jordon, he boldly declared, "You folks have a decision to make. You've either got to serve the Lord or the gods of the world. You do what you want. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**"(Joshua 24:15) That's what you need to say today.
- We sing that song, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." (page That first verse has to do with being saved - "I have decided to follow Jesus; No turning back. No turning back." But the rest of the song: Though none go with me, still I will follow (3x), No turning back, no turning back. / My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus; No turning back (3x), No turning back. / The world behind me, the cross before me (3x), No turning back, no turning back.
- God is calling EACH of us to commitment, faithfulness, and holiness. What are you waiting for?

## II. SOME HAVE SAID, "I'M GOING TO GIVE UP THIS OR THAT SIN...SOMEDAY."

- Do you know what sin does to your relationship with God? If we have active sin in our lives and it isn't dealt with, it stunts our spiritual growth. *Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God..." 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says "Quench not the Spirit."*
- Whenever we sin, we both grieve and quench the Holy Spirit in our lives. Now if God has pinpointed a sin in your life to deal with, what are you waiting for?
- What sin could possibly be more important than loving God with all your heart?
- Jesus said, **"If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)**
- **If we really love the Lord the way we sing about in church, how can we willingly disobey the Lord? How can we nurture, excuse, and hold onto sin in our life?**
- Oh listen, let's clear the sins out of our life today! **1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**
- Confess, forsake our sin, and get victory from the Lord today! THAT'S what we need to do, so what are you waiting for?

## III. SOME HAVE SAID, "I'M GOING TO START GIVING ...SOMEDAY."

***Malachi 3:10, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" ESV***

***2 Corinthians 9:6-8, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."***

- There are some things I realized about giving away of our finances. Many of us hate to let go of our cash unless it's something that benefits us. Our finances are all gifts from God, so He is asking me to share with Him what he already gave me. God will purpose what He wants me to give, I am responsible to give it. I need to give it to Him from a heart of grace, gratitude, thankful for what He has done for me. God doesn't need my money! He wants my whole heart.
- **God's primary purpose for generous giving is not to get the money out of my pockets, it's to get the idols out of my heart. (WOW! That's good!)**
- We must put our **faith into action**, give what He purposes in our hearts and watch what He does.

**Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."**

- So, what are you waiting for?

## IV. SOME HAVE SAID, "I'M GOING TO START READING MY BIBLE, PRAY AND SPEND TIME WITH GOD."

- As believers, Christians, when we don't read our bibles, pray, and seek God's face daily our day isn't what it should be. How would you feel at that end of a day if you hadn't eaten or drank

anything? It's the same, we will find ourselves spiritually hungry and weak in the time of temptation.

***Job 23:12, "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food."***

- Our lives are consumed with so many things, and many of those things are of less importance than our spiritual walk with God. We need to make it a priority. How? Get up earlier and spend some time in your bible. Talk to Him all day long. Center your thoughts on His ways so when those traps happen, we are ready. (hold up daily bread devotions)
- So, what are you waiting for?

**V. SOME HAVE SAID, "I'M GOING TO PLACE MY FAITH IN JESUS...ONE OF THESE DAYS."**

- **Read Acts 24:25-27.**
- Felix heard the gospel, chose to ignore it, convincing himself that he would consider it at a more convenient time. But we read that his flesh took over, his desire for money drowned out the truth he was hearing.
- ***"...he sent for him more often and conversed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix.."* (v.26-27)**
- Felix kept meeting with Paul, each time hearing more about Jesus and His saving grace and all the while hoping to get a bribe.
- KNOW this, you need to have your sins forgiven and be saved from God's judgment. You cannot save yourself or even do one thing to earn your salvation. Know that salvation is received only by faith in Jesus Christ. And that Paul said, ***"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Rom. 10:13)**
- You've heard the Gospel and have been encouraged to come to Jesus in repentance and faith as your only hope of salvation-not through good works, or religion, or baptism, or a church or denomination.
- Salvation cannot be earned through ANY amount of human works or effort or through any church or religious rite or activity because ***Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast."***
- Now, you know all that. So, what are you waiting for?
- Jesus said in ***Matthew 11:28 - "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."***
- Jesus has given the invitation. He stands with open arms to receive every repentant, trusting sinner. So, what are you waiting for?

Illus. - The story is told of the steamship Central American which sprang a leak in mid-ocean on a voyage from New York to San Francisco. A vessel, seeing her signal of distress, bore down towards her. Seeing her danger to be imminent, the captain of the rescue ship spoke to the Central American, asking, "What's the problem?"

"We're in bad repair, and going down; lie by till morning," came the reply.

"Let me take your passengers NOW," said the rescue ship captain.

Well, it was night, and the captain of the Central American feared transferring passengers in the dark, lest some might be lost in the confusion, so thinking that they could keep afloat several hours longer, the captain of the Central American replied, "Lie by till morning."

Again, the rescue captain insisted, "You had better let me take them NOW."

But the Central American captain replied again, "Lie by till morning."

About an hour-and-a-half later, her lights were missed, and the ship sank to the bottom of the ocean, all on board perishing in a watery grave because [SAY SLOWLY:] it was thought they could be saved at another time!

Listen, while salvation is offered to you now, let me urge you to obey the promptings of God's Spirit NOW, or you may be like Felix who procrastinated, thinking he could be saved another day, but that day never came.

### **Conclusion**

What are you waiting for? Come to Christ TODAY.

What are you waiting for wavering Christian? Commit yourself again and anew to whole-hearted commitment NOW.

What are you waiting for disobedient believer? Delay no longer to be baptized in obedience to Christ's command! If there's unconfessed and unforsaken sin in your life, then turn from it TODAY.

What are you waiting for, Christian, about the matter of giving and tithing? Test the Lord, starting this month and see if God will not bless you above measure.

What are you waiting for to reestablish a daily quiet time to hear from and worship God? It will keep you strong and close to the Lord.