

Acts 24:1-27 Paul: I will not be Silent

Statistics tell us that most Christians rarely share their faith – and that 95% of believers have never led anyone to Christ.

A) Those are startling statistics considering that we have been placed in the world to be Witnesses for the Lord – Salt & Light – Ambassadors.

B) So why don't we share more often? -

1) Reasons: – Got shut down – opposition intimidated

C) Tired of indifference – tired of saying the same thing over and over. - No response

D) Closed door with family or with a person.

I think we have all dealt with situations like that – and guess what, so did the apostle Paul.

A) But here is what we see about Paul – He would not be silent when it came to sharing Christ.

B) Paul understood that it wasn't his job to convert anyone – it was simply his job to GET THE WORD OUT –

1) Paul believed in the Power of the gospel.

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

Today we are going to work our way Through Acts 24 and see how Paul navigated his way thru opposition, indifference and Closed doors!

A) Review: Remember last week - we saw in Ch 23 Paul go to Jerusalem and just like it was prophesied By Agabus – Paul was bound – delivered to the Gentiles.

B)Survived two riots and two assassination attempts

C)The chapter ended with Paul being **secretly taken** out of the city by 470 Roman soldiers and taken to Caesarea to stand before Gov Felix.

Acts 24:1

Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator {LAWYER} named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

Note: Felix was the Governor – he was born a slave – and he married his way into Power.

A)The Gal that sleeps her way up the ladder at the company – well Felix married his way into Power.

B)First wife – was the grand daughter of Anthony and Cleopatra – that is what started his political career - 2nd wife we don't know about

C)But his third wife HE lured away from her husband at the age of 16 – she was the daughter of king Herod Agrippa the 1ST

1)So Felix Married his way to the top.

S0 Felix is the Gov. and Tertullus who's name means triple hardened is selected to bring the case against Paul - Tertullus as we will see was a Flatter.

2 And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity {Not true no peace – horrible leader who will lose his job before the end of the chapter. Prosperity speaks of reforms – make the crooked things straight. Felix didn't make anything straight – he was crooked} through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, {No

foresight} 3 we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

So Tertullus is laying it on thick here – he has been called a sycophant – one who praises others for self gain.

A)Tertullus is going to bring several false accusations against Paul.

Read V. 4-9

A **personal charge** (“he is A PLAGUE - trouble maker or a pest.)

A **political charge** (guilty of sedition and leading an illegal religion),

The political charge was much more serious, because no Roman official wanted to be guilty of permitting illegal activities that would upset the “Pax Romana” (Roman Peace).

So this immediately got the attention of the governor.

A **doctrinal charge** (profaning the temple). Ch.21 v.29 Supposed Trophimus

So those were the charges against Paul – How is he going to respond?

A)Is Paul going to back down – No Paul was absolutely surrendered to Jesus and His mission – Paul would not be silent.

READ V.10-19

B)It was required by Roman law that the accusers face the accused at the trial, or else the charges would be dropped.

1)Paul said the Jews from Asia who accuse me of Sedition – they should be

here

V20 Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, 21 unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"

Now I detect a bit of holy sarcasm in Paul's closing statement?

We might paraphrase it, *"If I have done anything evil, it is probably this: I reminded the Jewish council rather loudly - of our great Jewish doctrine of the Resurrection."*

C) So in the midst of strong opposition – Paul shares the message –

1) Believing - Power in the message of the gospel. For that reason he was not going to be intimidated.

2) **Gospel is like a lion – let it out of its cage.**

But maybe you have no problem sharing Jesus with Pp that oppose him or oppose you.

A) Maybe where you struggle is with – those who are just indifferent – put it off – say – not ready – don't want to hear it – good for you

B) Paul dealt with that as well. WITH Felix

1) Get the message out even when nothing seems to change.

22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." 23 So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

Felix is like I don't want to deal with this now – Puts Paul back in Prison.

Ch.23:35 Herod's Praetorium

A)Visitors – Jail in those days was much different from today - No cafeteria or bowling alleys/cable tv

B)To survive your friends would bring food and warm clothes for the winter

C)So Paul was given had limited freedom in the palace, jail - Paul's friends were permitted to minister to him

Now v. 27 tells us that Paul ended up imprisoned here in Caesarea for 2yrs.

A)When I first read that my first reaction was what a waste. – 2yrs

B)Paul is the greatest Church planter of all time. – He could have planted a church a month in that two year time.

1)Lord why did you keep him locked up so long?

C)Two results - Paul was chained to a soldier.

(The guards were changed every six hours, a perfect captive congregation!)

D)Philippians tells us that Paul made the most of that situation as well.

Philippians 1:12,13

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard.”

But that wasn't the only thing Paul did during those two years – HE ALSO WROTE !

A)He wrote: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

B) Incredible gifts TO THE CHURCH – HALLMARKS OF THE NT.

C) Now Paul could have sunk into depression mode – he could have assumed well I guess God is thru with me. – Guess I am not going to Rome

1) Jesus promised – I will just sit here and wait.

D) Paul saw every situation as an opportunity to Share about Jesus!

E) SO during this time he wrote verses like

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

What a great perspective: I am in prison but I am still God's workmanship

His work of art.

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

Ephesians 6:10

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

Took on incredible meaning for Paul in that moment.

Philippians 1:6

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 1:21

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Philippians 3:7-8, 10-11

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.....10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 4:6-7

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:11

“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”

Philippians 4:19-20

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:15-20

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things

we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.”

Guys that is absolutely glorious – Thank you Paul for taking a closed door and seeing it as an open door. – Share Jesus in a new way!

A) We are blessed because Paul did that – 2,000 yrs later we are still benefiting from his faithfulness to his calling – toughest circumstances.

B) Past two weeks I have been to the hospital – some where five times – five different pp. – One death – several tough surgeries

C) Every time – I have found a member of this body – shinning for Jesus in the midst of great difficulty – cleaning to the Lord and His word.

1) That is what I am talking about.

I rarely like to share stories from my own life – unless they portray me in a poor light– I really don't like preachers who make themselves out to be heros

A) But I want to share an illustration from my life to make this point – one more time.

B) Before I moved to Oregon – to Pastor I started the CC Youth Pastors conference. -

1) Conference for Youth guys from all over – AWESOME – I loved it

2) Loved seeing youth guys blessed.

C) I moved to Oregon and CCCM took it over – I was gone 5 yrs and

when I came back – I was asked if I wanted to **RUN THE CONF AGAIN.**

D) For three years under the umbrella of CCCM we hosted the conference.

1) A awesome time – I looked forward to it every year – made some great relationships.

Well after the third year there was some new leadership at CCCM dealing with Youth and I was told – that they wanted the CCCM guys to do it.

A) I was also told that I was too old – {even before gray in my beard}

B) And that as a Senior pastor I should concentrate on my responsibilities here and let the Youth guys run with it.

C) Now I would be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed – I was bummed.

1) I could have easily said – they are right – I don't have a voice with young people anymore – I am old.

D) I could of just let it go! – But I couldn't so here is what I did. I continued to make myself available to some of those guys I met.

E) Said – Email me – call me anytime – continued to reach out

1) God continued to use me in the life of many of those youth guys

2) Many of them are Senior Pastors now and I am still involved in their lives

Lesson: When you can't do what you WANT TO DO – Do what you CAN DO!

Back to Felix – Rd. V.24 -27

Here we see the answer to the question – I don't know what to say:

A)V.25 Paul gave them three compelling reasons why they should repent and believe on Jesus Christ.

B)V.25 He reasoned with them about righteousness, self control and Judgment.

C)The first: righteousness had to **do with yesterday's sin.**

In 1973, Dr. Karl Menninger, one of the world's leading psychiatrists, published a startling book, *Whatever Became of Sin?*

He pointed out that the very word *sin* has gradually dropped out of our vocabulary, **“the word, along with the notion.”**

D)True today : We talk about mistakes, weaknesses, inherited tendencies, faults, and even errors; but we do not face up to the fact of sin.

American writer & poet- Phyllis McGinley, said Sarcastically **“People are no longer sinful “They are only immature or underprivileged or frightened or, more particularly, sick.”**

But a holy God says “ We have ALL – sinned and fallen short of his glory.

A)A Holy God demands righteousness; that's the bad news.

B)There are none who are righteous. No one measures up to God's standard of Righteousness

C)The Pharisees measured themselves by themselves – wrong standard

D)Jesus is the only standard – Scale – his righteousness and ours –no comparison – We FALL SHORT!

1) That is the BAD NEWS we are all doomed!

Yet the good news is that this same holy God *provides* His own righteousness to those who trust Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:23-26

23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, 26 for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.” NLT

We can never be saved by our own righteousness OR good works.

A) We can be saved only through Christ's righteousness made available by His finished work of salvation on the cross.

B) the question is have you trusted christ for salvation and surrendered your heart to him.

1) If not you are still separated from God by Sin

C) So first Paul reasoned with them about righteousness

Second he reasoned with them about Self Control in other words *we must do something about today's temptations.*

A) Man can control almost everything but himself.

B) Here were Felix and Drusilla, prime illustrations of lack of self-control.

C) She divorced her husband to become Felix's third wife, and though

Jewish, she lived as though God had never given the Ten Commandments at Sinai.

D) Felix was an **unscrupulous official who did not hesitate to lie, or even to murder, in order to get rid of his enemies and promote himself.**

1) Self-control was something neither of them knew much about.

But it is the life of the Resurrected Jesus living in us that gives us SELF CONTROL –

A) The **more we are surrendered to Him – the more His power is manifested in our lives.**

B) His life in us Gives us the Power to Resist temptation

1) We no longer have to be controlled by our fleshly passions.

C) One fruit of the Spirit is SELF CONTROL.

Paul's third point was the clincher: he reasoned with them concerning the judgment to come." *We must do something about tomorrow's judgment.*

Perhaps Paul told Felix and Drusilla what he told the Greek philosophers (*Acts 17:31*):

A) God has "*appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness*" by the Lord Jesus Christ.

B) NOTE WELL: Jesus Christ is either your Savior or your Judge.

C) **there is a Judgment coming** – and unless Jesus becomes your Savior he will be your judge but he doesn't want to be your judge –

1) **He desires that none would perish**

D) So Paul reasoned with them about Righteousness, self control and the Judgment to come.

Notice the response of Felix: V. 25 says Felix was afraid - This literally means, "Felix became terrified."

B) Note: Felix was enlightened intellectually concerning the facts about Jesus

1) AND He was stirred emotionally about Jesus.

C) It is not enough for a person to be enlightened in the mind and know the facts about Christ,

D) And is not enough for a person to have an emotional response to a church service or to some message of the truth.

C) You must willingly respond to the facts concerning Jesus AND to the conviction of the Heart.

1) You need to willingly repent of sin and trust your heart to Christ as Savior in order to be saved.

FELIX DID NEITHER! What did Felix do?

He procrastinated!

"When I have a convenient time, I will call for you

"Procrastination is the thief of time".

Really "Procrastination is also the thief of souls."

The most "convenient season" for a lost sinner to be saved is *right now.*

2 Corinthians 6:2 "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation".

Tomorrow is promised to no man! Prov 27:1

CRITICAL OBSERVATION: The governor's mind was enlightened (**Acts 24:22**), his emotions were stirred (**Acts 24:25**), but his will would not yield.

He tried to gain the world, but, as far as we know, he lost his soul. He procrastinated himself into hell.

A story is told a story about a meeting in hell.

Satan called his four leading demons together and commanded them to think up a new lie that would trap more souls.

First demon said. **"I'll go to earth and tell people there is no God."**

"That will never work,". "People can look around them and see that there is a God."

Second demon "I'll go and tell them **there is no heaven!**"

But Satan rejected that idea. "Everybody knows there is life after death and they want to go to heaven."

Third demon **"Let's tell them there is no hell!"**

"No, conscience tells them their sins will be judged," said the devil. "We need a better lie than that."

Quietly, the fourth demon spoke. "I think I've solved your problem," he said. "I'll go to earth and tell everybody *there is no hurry.*"

That is the lie – people are falling for today – No hurry –

A)Pp who are reluctant to trust Christ – Waiting for a more “convenient season

B)Too much fun right now.

C)Same reason – Christians live in Compromise – Jesus is really not

coming back soon .

APPLICATION: The best time to trust Jesus Christ is—*now!*

Best time to be completely surrendered is now

APPLICATION: The best time to tell others the Good News of the Gospel is—*now!*

TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION!