

Acts 24:1–27 — When Truth Stands Calm in a Corrupt Court

Paul was now in Caesarea under Roman protection. The Jewish leadership came down from Jerusalem—Ananias the high priest, several elders, and a professional spokesman named Tertullus—to press charges before Felix the governor.

A Smooth Tongue and Serious Accusations

Tertullus opened with flattery so thick it was hard to stomach. Then he charged Paul with three things: that he was a public menace, a stirrer of riots, and a ringleader of “the sect of the Nazarenes.” He added a fourth claim—that Paul tried to profane the temple.

These accusations were designed to alarm Rome. The empire would tolerate many religions, but it would not tolerate sedition. If Felix believed Paul was inciting rebellion, Paul’s life could be forfeit.

But the case had a fatal weakness: the real eyewitnesses—the Jews from Asia who started the mob—were not there. They were the ones who should have testified. Instead, the prosecution leaned on general claims, crowd anger, and political pressure.

Paul’s Clear, Measured Defense

When Felix motioned for Paul to speak, Paul answered with calm clarity. He pointed out that he had been in Jerusalem only a short time, and he had not been found disputing, inciting crowds, or stirring trouble—neither in the temple nor in the synagogues nor in the city.

Then Paul stated what he would gladly “confess”:

“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.”

Paul did not deny that he belonged to “the Way.” He denied that it was lawless, rebellious, or anti-Jewish in the sense his accusers implied. He still worshiped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—now with the light of fulfillment that God has given in Jesus.

Paul added that he held to a truth many of his accusers also claimed to believe:

“I have hope in God...that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”

Because Paul believed life does not end at the grave—and because he knew every person will answer to God—he said:

“This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”

That is the heartbeat of integrity: not perfection, but a life lived honestly before God, quickly corrected when wrong, and guarded from secret hypocrisy.

Paul also explained why he had returned to Jerusalem:

“Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation...”

He wasn't there to provoke a riot. He was there to worship, to serve, and to bring help. And he made the most obvious courtroom point of all: the people who started this whole disturbance were absent.

Felix: Informed, Convicted, and Still Resistant

Felix already had some knowledge of "the Way," so he postponed the case, saying he would wait for Lysias the commander. He granted Paul some liberty and allowed friends to visit him.

Later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and summoned Paul to hear about faith in Christ. Paul did not flatter Felix. He preached to him. The text says Paul reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come—and Felix trembled.

That's what happens when the gospel is applied, not merely discussed. Felix was not dealing with an idea. He was confronting the living God.

But Felix answered with the sentence that has ruined countless souls:

"Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

He delayed. He postponed. He pushed conviction into "later." Yet Scripture shows no evidence that "later" ever came for him. He also hoped Paul would offer him money. For two years he kept calling Paul in—listening, talking, probing—while holding him bound. Then Felix was replaced by Festus, and Felix, wanting to please the Jews, left Paul imprisoned.

It is possible to be emotionally stirred and still unconverted. Felix trembled, but he would not yield.

Practical Application

1. Don't confuse accusations with reality

Paul was called a troublemaker while he was actually living with a clear conscience. If you live for Christ, people may mislabel you. Stay steady. God knows what is true.

2. A clean conscience is not automatic—it is cultivated

Paul said, "I myself always strive." That means daily choices: honesty, repentance, reconciliation, and refusing the quiet compromises that harden the soul.

3. The gospel confronts, not flatters

Paul spoke to Felix about righteousness, self-control, and judgment. Love tells the truth. Real faith is not a soothing religious accessory—it is surrender to Jesus Christ.

4. Delayed obedience is spiritual danger

Felix is the picture of postponed surrender. Every time you say "not now" to God, you train your heart to resist. What feels like caution can become a habit of unbelief.

A Challenge for Believers

Ask yourself: where have you been tempted to “keep it convenient” with God?

Convenient Christianity avoids hard repentance, avoids difficult obedience, avoids uncomfortable truth. But Paul’s life shows another way: a conscience guarded before God, a witness that stays calm under pressure, and courage that speaks truth even when it costs.

This week, take one concrete step toward a conscience “without offense”—make the call, confess the sin, set the boundary, forgive the wrong, tell the truth.

Invitation to Non-Believers

Felix trembled, but trembling is not salvation.

Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross. The resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. That means you cannot treat Him as a topic to consider whenever it becomes convenient. He is Lord now.

If you know God is speaking to you, don’t push Him away. Turn to Jesus today. Confess your sin honestly. Ask Him to forgive you. Entrust your life to Him—fully, personally, and sincerely. The “convenient time” is a lie. Today is the day to come to Christ.