

The Peril Of Inconvenience

Acts 24:24-27 KJV And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [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. [26] He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. [27] But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

I. INTRODUCTION -- CONVENIENCE

-We live in an age that thrives on convenience. The high demand for convenience is largely due to the fact that we live under the tyranny of the urgent and the rapid hustle and bustle of life.

-Convenience is defined as a fitness or suitability for performing an action or fulfilling a requirement; something (as an appliance, device, or service) conducive to comfort or ease; and

lastly as the freedom from discomfort; Something to create ease.

Hesiod -- The man who procrastinates struggles with ruin.

Young -- Tomorrow is the day when idlers work, and fools reform, and mortal men lay hold on heaven. Procrastination is the thief of time; year after year it steals, till all are fled, and to the mercies of a moment leaves the vast concerns of an eternal state. At thirty, a man suspects himself a fool; knows it at forty, and reforms his plan; at fifty chides his infamous delay, pushes his prudent purpose to resolve; and in all the height of thought, resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

-If today has slain its thousands, then tomorrow has slain its ten thousands. *A fatal mistake, this thing of not today, maybe tomorrow.* Felix could simply tremble at the weighty words of the message that Paul fearlessly declared.

-He trembled and said tomorrow, when God speaking through the voice of the great Apostle, said, Today.

2 Corinthians 6:2 KJV (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

-Many will say in that day, “Lord, Lord, we accomplished things in your Name.” But they will not be saved because they were victims of tomorrow. It was always:

- Tomorrow, I will pray.
- Tomorrow, I will fast.
- Tomorrow, I will find a talent to devote to God.
- Tomorrow, I will allow God to use my life in the way that he wants.
- Tomorrow, when I am older and more mature, I will find time for God.
- Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow.

-We hear sermons that convict us toward prayer, toward a burden for others, for a hunger for God, and a desire for spiritual maturity. . . . but it is always the call of the convenient and the difficulty of inconvenience that renders all that we hear to be ineffective and useless. A lot of great spiritual attainments have been lost and silenced when we call for the convenient season.

-I believe that many honestly intend to change, to do better, but the inconvenience of change causes us to say:

- When we have a new set of circumstances. . .
- When our finances are finally straight. . .
- When I get out of school. . .
- When school gets started. . .
- When we finally have all of God that we need. . .
- When I get a little older. . .
- When I get a little more spiritual. . .

-Always looking forward. Caught up in the dilemma of delay. Trapped in the lounge of looking for a better tomorrow, a more convenient time, a better opportunity.

-Men who live in the confines of tomorrow always tremble when conviction strikes at their heart they have no power to respond.

-Men who live in the hopes of tomorrow often have their sun set while it is still day.

- Tomorrow has the capability to silence the voice of God.
- Tomorrow has the capability to shrugging off the call of the preacher.
- Tomorrow reduces men to worms.

-The great dilemma for spiritual progress to have to overcome is usually procrastination and compromise.

- The five foolish virgins.
- The guests who refused the feast because of worldly commitments.
- The people the Lord called but first they wanted to fix things in their world.

Genesis 19:15-18 KJV And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. [16] **And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.** [17] And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be

consumed. [18] And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

II. THE LIFE OF FELIX

-Our text simply states that Felix merely trembled, he did not repent. Felix was a victim of tomorrow.

A. Who Was Felix?

-Felix was the governor of Judea during the days of Roman authority. He was born Antonius Cladius, a Greek subject, was made a free man by Claudius, the emperor from A.D. 41 to 54, and given the surname of Felix.

-When one will investigate the writings of Tacitus, a historian, almost as respected as Josephus, much light is shed on this man.

-It is the musings of Tacitus that scars the forehead of Felix. Born a slave and then elevated to the status of a king. But there was something of a slave-like mentality that Felix never escaped. His kingly crown only disguised a slave's mind. His robes simply covered the heart of a slave. He ascended in society but plummeted in his character.

- He was a slave to his own pride that exalted him to be higher than God.
- He was a slave to his own cruelty and sparked a civil war.
- He was a slave to violence and created roving bands of assassins to work for him.
- Rescued from slavery but still in chains.
- Susceptible to the flattery of every man and every whim.
- He was a slave to his own lust and lured Drusilla away from her first marriage.
- A slave to the evil appetites that remained hidden within but not harnessed without.
- He was a slave to the trappings of this world and he loved self greatly.

B. Drusilla, The Jewess

-Felix resorted to the sorcery of a magician to assist him in seducing Drusilla away from her first husband the king of Emeza (Josephus, *Antiquities* XX).

-Their immoral relationship parroted that of Herod and Herodias. Herod silenced his preacher while Felix and Drusilla kept their preacher locked away in the dungeon.

-Felix never again reopened the case of Paul and he played with the Apostle and kept him locked up

-It is quite amazing when you trace through history to discover what men do with the voice of a preacher. The very voice trying to save them was the voice that was destroyed.

- Judas kissed his preacher and then betrayed him.
- Pilate washed his hands of his preacher and then let the crowd crucify him.
- Pharoah scoffed at his preacher and it cost him the life of his oldest son.

-Consider Drusilla. She apparently inherited her traits about how to treat preachers.

- Her father Herod Agrippa had James put to death.
- Her great-uncle, Herod Antipas, had John the Baptist beheaded on the wish of his wife.
- Her great grandfather, Herod the Great, was in power at the time of the birth of Jesus, and was responsible for the death of the children in the effort to eliminate the Messiah.

-One may hide from the eyes of a preacher. One can revolt against the words of the preacher. One can even kill the preacher. . . . but they cannot do away with the anointing that motivates the preacher.

-Hey preacher!!! . . . Come to me when we have a more convenient season. . . . I have many obligations now and all are so much more important than what God is calling for!

-With the passage of time what had been inconvenient is now very convenient. . . . the only problem with that is that much water is under the bridge and a thousand and one opportunities have now obscured that fresh call of conviction that came years ago. . . .

-Now the tables have been turned. . . . When it is convenient for you, it will be inconvenient for God. . . . We do not come to God on our own terms but on His!

C. The Danger Of Delay

A German farmer settled in Guatemala and became very prosperous. After a while he decided he would go back to visit his family in

Germany. So he saved his money and got on a ship.

After a few days at sea he noticed he had an infection in his toe and realized that a small tropical flea was under the nail and had laid its eggs. This caused him terrible itching and inflammation. The cure was to take a needle and bore through the nail and remove it.

The German farmer decided to do that. So he got a needle and sat down. Then he thought, "My uncle and his family in Hamburg have never seen one of these tropical flees." So he decided to leave it under the nail and after he had shown them he would remove it.

By the time he reached Hamburg his toe was swollen and his foot was hurting terribly. He showed it to his Uncle Otto who looked and said, "Aw, the whole family would like to see this." So he left it in until all the family could see it. But the difficulty was that the infection got out of control and got into the blood and he died of sepsis. (Adapted from *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, Charles Swindoll, p. 471)

-If you want to commit spiritual suicide, which might even lead to physical death, let something smolder in your heart and in your mind. Nurse it.

Coddle it. Reason with it. Justify it. . . . but most of all look for a convenient season to deal with it. . .

-The vast majority of the time the things that God wants to do with us and in us will come at the most inconvenient times of life.

-Procrastination is the mother of failure. A high charge, a noble calling, a holy resolution visits us. It stands at the door and knocks. But we reason, this is going to wreck my schedule, this will disturb my comfort, this will be a great hindrance to my selfishness.

-So we courteously dismiss the convicting pull of the Spirit. . . When I have a more convenient season. . . . But before the season ever makes it we will walk a path that has on prayer, we will navigate valleys that are void of repentance, and we will entertain wretched thoughts that will ruin our soul. . . dying at the tragic hand of inconvenience! Inconvenience says “Don’t disturb me!”

-The fruit of wasted opportunity will haunt us until the very end of time:

- Lost opportunities can never be returned.

- Lost opportunities will be tied with much regret.
- Lost opportunities will one day come to light what we might have been.

III. FELIX IS CONFRONTED

-Felix could only tremble at truth. When he called Paul into the courts for a defense, Felix did not anticipate that he would get so much more.

-Paul would preach holiness, self-control, and the coming judgment.

A. A Message of Holiness

-But there is a difficulty that arises when one preaches holiness. Since Felix and Drusilla were living in adultery, the Spirit confronted them.

-The state of right living is of great importance in the life of every man, whether king or pauper. Paul proposed to Felix that every man had a responsibility to a moral law in relationship with others around him.

-God's holiness also has a right to man's worship. It is not a question of man's inclination to worship it is his directive to worship. He was created for

worship. Worship is not a matter of pomp, circumstance, or of whims, and fancy, but worship is God's honor.

-Felix could not stand with head held high at the conviction of Spirit. His throne could elevate him above men but it could not elevate him above God.

-The message of holiness and separation will always demand that we live a life on a higher plain. Holiness will also confront sin and when it is not dealt with. . . . suddenly repentance and a change of heart is not convenient. . . It is inconvenient and the greater peril of soul destruction is set in motion by inconvenience.

- It is not convenient for me to let go of this relationship right now.
- It is not convenient for me to let go of this vice right now.
- It is not convenient for me to pray through this attitude right now.
- It is not convenient for me to. . . . and I hear the words. . . just give me some time. . . when it is more convenient. . .

B. A Message of Self-Control

-The second topic that Paul began to preach of was that of temperance. In the margin of the Bible one often finds self-control.

-Again we have to look at life and understand that the very presence of Drusilla by the side of Felix was proof of how he had failed in this particular virtue. Still a slave to his passions.

-Our modern use of this word falls far below the meaning of the word that Paul employed. The Greek word is EGKRATEIA, which is applicable to restraining from sensual pleasures. Paul reasoned Felix concerning his earthly actions.

- Temperance is far more than just self-control.
- It is the virtue of self-restraint, self-command, and much added discipline.
- Temperance is the holding of the reins of the conduct in the hand of the will.

-There is not enough earthly power or will power in the heart of a man to maintain a true state of temperance. This can only come from the man who walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Romans 8). It was the absence of this particular virtue that introduced man to the downward spiral of sin in the Garden of Eden.

-The development of temperance does not occur on the whims of an “attitude adjustment” or a “positive mental attitude.”

-Much of our self-control will only come to us when we immerse ourselves in prayer and in the pursuit of a relationship with the Word of God.

1. Know Thyself

-The first command of temperance is “Know Thyself.” Much of the failure of man comes because he fails to recognize the limitations and shortcomings of the flesh.

-Man has the ability to introduce a space shuttle from the earth’s atmosphere into the realms of space, he may transplant a heart to replace a diseased one, he can manufacture massive weapons of defense, he can make huge scientific discoveries, he can travel by air, land, and sea *but he may not and will not save himself.*

-A man must remember that in view of all of his accomplishments that are recognized in Pulitzer prizes and Nobels awards and even championship trophies that he will never reach a state that he may save himself.

Romans 7:18 KJV For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

2. Control Thyself

-The second command of temperance is “Control Thyself.”

A man once asked his pastor what was the meaning of “dying unto sin.” The old sage replied that it was a symbolical statement that he was to behave like a dead man in the presence of that which moves or excites the flesh to sin. This is the great desire of self-control, to render men incapable of responding to the wicked wiles of the devil.

3. Deny Thyself

-The third command of temperance is “Deny Thyself.” “Know Thyself,” “Control Thyself,” are all of great imminence, in fact, they are of great importance.

-However, the greatest and most brilliant cry of temperance is “Deny Thyself.”

-The will cannot wait to be attacked. The will can never wait to show that it is the master in the days of turbulence it can never master the fierce blasts of passion in a mode of vigilance. The will has to go on the offensive.

-Spiritual warfare is unrelenting and it never takes a vacation. It never rests. It is constant and on going and the sooner this is discovered the greater we are able to withstand the attacks of the devil.

-Before the attack ever comes, while all is still peaceful within the soul, when the tempter is not in sight, while all is calm, the will must exercise itself to self-denial. The way to resist indulgence in the unlawful things of the flesh is to accustom the powers and faculties to obedience in giving up even things that are lawful.

-Felix resisted the decision. He determined to wait for a more convenient season. He was trapped and lost in the peril of inconvenience.

- One may dabble with drinking but there will be a day to pay the piper.
- One can flirt with their marriage vows but there will come a day that a line is crossed.

- One can continue to follow in the path of sinful habits but there will be a day that those habits completely master and imprison you.
- One can pick mentally day-in and day-out with great biblical truths but a day will come when human reason and carnal thinking will remove every bit of the confidence you have in God and the church.
- One can entertain predators on the Internet but there will come a day that a price will be demanded for such selfishness and sin.
- One can battle with laziness but there will one day be an exacting price that is required.
- One can host self-rationalization and self-justification until the day will come that bitterness will eat away every thing that might have been accomplished for the Kingdom of God.
- One can get up in the rush of simply pursuing life but the days are being consumed and what is inconvenient now will be hungered for later.

C. A Message of Judgment

-Paul preached a message of holiness, a message of self-control, but now he grapples with the real crux of the matter, the final judgment.

-It was the most chilling of all. The subject of the judgment should bring every man to a place of self-evaluation.

-Every appearance of the Lord is associated with judgment. It was by his mere presence, during the earthly ministry, that His presence had a way of dividing men and separating them.

-In the presence of Jesus, all the facades of the role-playing were stripped away. In the presence of Jesus, the character of men stood revealed.

-According to the Gospel of John (1:4-10), God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world and yet the earthly appearance would result in a judgment at a future point. This is the judgment that light is come into darkness yet men loved darkness more than light. He judged the world by His simple presence. The same pattern still holds true even now.

-Just as the goodness of Peter, James, and John was revealed by His presence, so was the evil of

the chief priests and scribes when Jesus stood in their presence.

-Paul engaged Felix with the concept that the judgment is a certain thing. Judgment is not some misty idea to occur in some cosmic world in the future, judgment is as sure as death and taxes.

-The righteous judgment of God may even reverse some elements of human judgment that occurred in the courts of our day. He will make manifest the counsels of the heart and life-long secrets will be revealed.

III. CONCLUSION -- THE FINAL EFFECT

-The effect of the sermon of Paul proved it had found its mark. We may wonder about Drusilla and question. But there is no doubt about Felix.

-How he felt is locked within the verse of Scripture. The weather-beaten missionary of the Cross did not falter nor fail in his anointing.

-Felix heard the unearthly words that echoed through his spirit on that day. He had his imagination kindled by the fire of the Spirit, for he saw the judgment in its ghostly grandeur. Locked in the words of Scripture, the only thing that Felix

did—he trembled. . . and died at the peril of his own inconvenience.

Acts 24:26 KJV He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

-Carefully note those words of Felix. . . “He hoped.” This is a crime. He hoped for the lesser things. . . for money, for a better tomorrow, for opportunity, for a host of resources, a new church, a new surrounding, a new life. . . . Two years would pass and the process of change for him would be forever lost.

-See, with the passing of time, motives mixed up and muddled. . . . but for now, for right this moment, the opportunity is here for you to embrace the inconvenient and beckoning hand of God to a whole new world.