

Felix Under the Preaching of the Word of God

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Psalter 60:1-3
Scripture: Acts 24:22-27
Text: Acts 24:24-25
Psalter 317
Psalter 265:1,2
Psalter 420:1,2

Dear congregation, there is nothing so uncertain in this world as our life and nothing so certain as our death. It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. It is said in our modern day that eighty-five percent of the things which run through our mind in regard to plans and goals never materialize. Yet you and I spend a great deal of time thinking, planning, worrying, about those things, most of which never transpire. There is one thing, however, that shall transpire for every one of us. Death can call for us while we are still young; it can come when we are older. But it is reality, my friends, that death is near and inescapable.

We must be prepared to die. We must not imitate the rich fool who said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater.... And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." On the contrary, we must live temperately, soberly, preparedly. We must seek grace to be prepared to meet God. We must not allow ourselves rest without a right foundation for meeting Him.

Death always comes sooner than we think. The day is coming soon when we will sit under our last sermon, receive our last invitation, hear our last warning. After that it shall be forever too late to seek the Lord. Today I desire to show you the solemn reality of this truth clearly spelled out in the tragic history of Felix. Our text is Acts 24:24-25:

“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. 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.”

With God’s help, we wish to consider:

Felix Under the Preaching of the Word of God

1. Hearing the Word
2. Trembling Before that Word
3. Rejecting that Word

Acts 24 records another phase of the life of the apostle Paul, the world’s most famous missionary. The missionary Paul could rightly claim that he had labored more abundantly than any apostle. His life and heart were bound up with the gospel message of death in Adam and life in Christ which he felt called to bring. Paul yearned with an unquenchable passion to proclaim to sinners, young and old, “There is only one Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Paul was willing to count all loss and dung that he might win Christ and be found in Him. To spread the truth was his calling, his burden, his life.

Many times Paul’s calling was tested, especially when his life was threatened, but he had to press on at all costs. Though frequently stoned, beaten with stripes, and suffering shipwreck, he wrote to the Corinthians, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” Necessity was laid upon him.

In the context of Acts 24 Paul faced a new trial—*house imprisonment*. For two years he was forbidden to publicly proclaim the Word of God. What a trial this was for the apostle! During his lifetime he had brought God’s Word before Agrippa, the Sanhedrin, Sergius Paulus, Festus, even the Emperor Nero himself, but was deprived unjustly of proclaiming that precious Word in the congregations to souls whom he longed to see saved and built up

in the most holy faith. Paul had to learn no doubt, in those hard two years that the Lord could carry on His work without him. But still there must have been a longing in his heart to proclaim God's Word.

Suddenly, however, Paul unexpectedly received a remarkable invitation to lead a church service in the palace of the Roman governor for the governor and his wife, Felix and Drusilla. "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."

To understand how special this invitation was, we have to know something about Felix and Drusilla. Felix was a very corrupt man who had astonished nearly the whole world in his time by acquiring a high position in Roman government through bribery, despite his lack of education. Once in power Felix astonished many with his brutal injustice, cruel murders, and impure life. Several times Felix almost lost his position as governor, but repeatedly managed to maintain his position through payoffs. All the while Felix remained a slave of the devil and of sin.

Drusilla was Felix's third wife. At the time of the history in Acts 24 Felix was in his sixties. Drusilla was a young girl of seventeen. She was a daughter of Agrippa I, a sister of Agrippa II, and a grandchild of Herod the Great. This young woman had also lived wickedly. She was engaged as a very young teenager to Antiochus Epiphanes, a prince of another country. The marriage did not take place because he refused to be circumcised, which was a sign of being converted to the Jewish religion. Thus this young girl had some feeling for religion in an outward way, but did not live godly herself. Later on, when she was sixteen years old, she married Azizus, the King of the Amesenes, a territory in northern Syria. Josephus tells us that she was a remarkably beautiful young woman and Felix desired to have her. With the help of Simon the Sorcerer, Felix influenced her to desert her husband in order to marry him. Thus the elderly Felix and his young bride Drusilla entered into an unlawful marriage to the further ruination of their lives.

Soon after they were married they took a trip. Today we would call it a honeymoon. They spoke together on this trip about the apostle Paul who was imprisoned under Felix's domain. Drusilla's grandfather Herod had greatly desired to hear John the Baptist. Something of that curiosity, that spirit of inquisitiveness, was in Drusilla as well. Felix too was a bit curious as to what this man who was preaching the name of Jesus Christ would have to say. Thus Felix and Drusilla determined to hear a sermon from Paul's own mouth.

Upon their return from their honeymoon, they invited Paul to appear before them. Paul accepted their invitation. Even though he knew their motive was impure, that their way of life was wicked, and that this could bring him in great danger, he desired to preach. Paul accepted an invitation to preach in front of a woman whose father had killed the apostle James; whose great uncle, Herod Antipas, had killed John the Baptist; whose great grandfather, Herod the Great, had murdered all the babes of Bethlehem. He agreed to preach in that palace, formerly owned by Herod, where so many had been murdered. It was a saying of that day that there was not a stone of that building which had not been splattered with blood.

Paul went with unflinching courage, unwearied zeal, and unquenchable hope. He thought, "Perhaps Felix and Drusilla, despite their motives, will be savingly wrought upon by God." No doubt when he meditated of Felix, he thought to himself, "Felix too is a man, and does not the gospel say, 'Glory to God...and on earth peace, good will toward *men*'?" *Men* are pricked in heart by the gospel. Moreover, Felix was a Roman, and Paul felt a special burden for preaching also to the Romans. Perhaps this heathen was also lying under the seal of election. Moreover, Felix was a governor and had not Paul, at the time he was converted, received as a calling through the mouth of Ananias, "Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and *kings*?" Oh, Paul thought, "Maybe this king shall now bow in the dust of self-abasement before the Lord; maybe

the Lord will use His Word to dethrone the self-enthroned Felix.” But above all, I think Paul reasoned, “Felix is a deeply fallen sinner just like I am, like I was, and like I remain in myself. If it was possible for the Lord to stop me on the way to Damascus as a persecutor, is it not possible for the Lord to stop Felix?” It was this in particular that motivated Paul with an unquenchable hope.

You and I are always figuring. We have our expectations of whom we think is going to be converted and of whom we think is not going to be converted. My friends, that is all senseless. The Lord is able to convert the hardest of hearts. If the Lord converts us, then we will feel something of a burden for souls and of an unquenchable hope. Wherever the Word comes, there is the possibility that it may be the hour in which God may work savingly in the hardest heart and the most unlikely human choice. Do you understand now why Paul couldn’t decline this dangerous invitation?

This affords us two applications: First, perhaps there are those among us who fear God will never work in their hearts. You view yourself as an unlikely choice. Oh, my dear friend, God delights to choose the unlikely! Contrary to Eve’s expectation, He chose Abel and not Cain. He chose Israel, a small nation, and not the world powers. There is hope for those who feel they are unworthy, unlikely choices.

Secondly, do you and I possess such an evangelistic heart as the apostle Paul? Would we be willing to bring the gospel to those who might endanger our lives?

With holy boldness Paul “reasoned” with them. He had three points to his sermon—righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. He used each of these points like a barb to pierce the hearts of Felix and Drusilla. He had one great goal: that the Lord might bless His Word to the saving conviction of this ungodly couple.

“He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.” Paul’s first point was *righteousness*—a point most appropriate for Felix who was called to be a righteous judge. Can you not almost hear Paul reasoning

with Felix about righteousness in this way: “God is righteous, Felix. He is the just One. He created us righteous and holy. He demands that we too be righteous despite our deep fall in Adam. We have lost that original righteousness. We have plunged ourselves into sin. It is not Adam’s fault, but our fault that we reveal daily our unrighteous natures. Look at your hands, Felix. Are they not full of bribery? Look at your feet, Felix. Are they not quick to shed blood? Look at your heart, Felix. Is it not full of injustice? Look at your life, Felix. Is it not filled with cruelty? Felix, you must become righteous before God. That is impossible with man but it is possible with God. There is a way of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ who has paid the full price of sin on behalf of needy sinners such as we are, though He Himself was fully righteous. He did this, Felix, in order to satisfy God’s justice as a substitute for unrighteous sinners, so that they might know His righteousness. Felix, there is a way of salvation for unrighteous, cruel, bribing sinners such as you, who are not motivated by principles of righteousness, but who guide their lives by principles of unrighteousness. Felix, how do you stand before the righteousness of God?”

His second point was *temperance*. Temperance means *self-control; freedom from that which defiles; personal purity*. Temperance means to *have one’s passions under control*. Now the sword became even more pointed. “Felix, are you not an adulterer, an unchaste, unclean person? Is not that young woman beside you an adulteress? Are you not living in shameless lust in an unbiblical marriage? Felix, how shall you meet a pure and holy God when you are impure and unholy?”

Thirdly, he preached of *judgment to come*. I can see in my mind’s eye Paul coming to the climax of his sermon, reasoning from righteousness and temperance to judgment. “Felix, you are guilty with regard to righteousness and temperance. But you are also guilty with regard to judgment to come. That judgment shall be *inevitable*. The Judge stands at the door. It shall be a *personal* judgment. Every sin shall be accounted for. Nothing shall be hidden

from the omniscient eye of God. All the books of our lives shall be opened. And it is an *eternal* judgment. Of that judgment there is no return. We shall enter everlasting joy or everlasting torment, the glory of heaven or the tragedy of hell. Felix, you are a judge, but this Judge does not operate as you do. This Judge takes no bribes on the great day of days. This Judge offers no parole. This Judge is straightforward. He is just in His justice. The sentence He pronounces is strictly executed. Felix, how shall you stand before a holy and righteous God? Your future, Felix, if you do not repent, shall be everlasting condemnation. Hell is a place, Felix, where its inhabitants are ever being consumed and yet never fully consumed, ever dying but never dead, ever burning but never burned up. Hell is a place where there is no communion, no friendship—yes, nothing but the wrath of God poured out without mixture. Felix, how shall you stand? Felix, you need the Lord Jesus Christ as your only hope.”

Dear friends, we are called to reason similarly with ourselves, each other, and our neighbor. Though you and I may not have been as notoriously wicked as Felix, the same principles hold true. How can we pass the tests of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come without His Son? We need the Lord Jesus Christ as the only answer for our sins; otherwise everyone of us will perish in hell, condemned eternally with no relief. By nature we don't want to hear this solemn warning. We don't want to face the solemn reality that hell and condemnation will be our portion if we are not brought under saving conviction, if we are not driven unto the Lord Jesus Christ to find in Him everything we need. My friends, I yearn to reason with you too of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come: How shall you stand before God without His dear Son? You can't meet Him without the blood of Christ. How can you live on unprepared? How can you travel to a certain eternity without seeking the application of the blood of Christ? Common sense tells us that we are fools when we don't seek the Lord. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give

thee light.” Don’t delay. Make haste for your life’s sake. You need to be born again. You need a living, real, personal relationship with the almighty God in the face of His dear Son.

Felix and Drusilla heard the Word of God. Drusilla responded indifferently. We don’t read one word of what happened to Drusilla. We fear that this young woman had nearly seared her conscience already at seventeen years of age. She remained unmoved and unashamed under Paul’s searching sermon. Oh, what a solemn thing! Paul powerfully used the two-edged sword of law and gospel, but Drusilla was moved neither by the threatenings of the law nor by the sweet tenors of the gospel. She sat as a stone. Law nor gospel produced any guilt.

My friends, we could not ask for a greater punishment in this world than to be abandoned to the hardness of our own hearts. Oh, what a dreadful thing to be left over to ourselves! Then the Lord says of us, “I will strive no more with this sinner forever!”

It was different with Felix. Felix, our text says, not only *heard*, but *trembled*. The Greek word for “trembled” corresponds to the Hebrew word used in Daniel about Belshazzar when his knees smote together out of fear. Felix trembled so much that it became visible physically. How severe it was we don’t know, but we do know that he received an open conscience. He felt that everything Paul said was true. He *was* unrighteous; he *was* intemperate; he was *not* ready to meet God. He *was* traveling to eternity unprepared for the judgment to come.

As Felix sat on his throne chair, it was as if he saw God’s white throne displayed, as if he were standing before the Lord of hosts as holy Judge. It was as if the books were opened as Paul was preaching; Felix saw that every page of his life was stained with guilt. It became true for him: “I, who am accustomed to self-indulgence and to pleasure, shall soon become the victim of a worm that dies not and of a fire that is not quenched. I, who have treated so many others unjustly, shall soon be justly judged to eternal torment.”

Felix trembled. He was terrified. His knees smote together. His conscience spoke, "Thou art the man." Despite political power, he could not shield his soul from being filled with fear.

Felix trembled. He was placed before eternity, before the great Judge of the heavens and the earth. It was as if Paul brought his whole life into the open, exposing his lustful indulgences, briberies, frauds, and cruelties. To some degree Felix could say, "Truly, here is a man that told me all things that ever I did" (cf. John 4:29a). He was standing with an open conscience before an open Judge and an open eternity. He was standing on the border of eternal well and eternal woe. His conscience was speaking, "Felix, Felix, repent, repent! Are you not only treasuring and heaping up wrath against the day of wrath?"

On the borders of eternity, Felix had one more opportunity to bow before the Lord! There that poor, elderly man sat with an open conscience, restless, shifting his position on his throne, hardly able to remain sitting because it was all so true. Temperance, righteousness, judgment to come—each of Paul's three sermon points condemned him. The Lord gave him one more opportunity to beg for mercy. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by one more time, testifying as it were: "Oh, Felix, will you not cry out like Bartimaeus, 'Son of David, have mercy on me'? Felix, will you not give up the battle? Felix, will you not bow before the Lord while you still have opportunity? Felix, bow and confess! You are already old. It could be the last time you have to hear the Word of God. Bow, Felix, bow!"

Oh, boys and girls, if we had been there would not we also have urged him to bow? "Felix," we would say, "don't ruin for yourself the rest of your life and all of eternity. Here you are placed before a very solemn opportunity where the Lord Himself in the person of Paul invites you to repent."

My friends, you and I are in the same position. Whether we are boys or girls, teenagers, young men or women, parents or grandparents, the Holy Spirit calls to us through the Word, "Bow, sinner. Repent, before it is

forever too late.” Under the preaching of the Word of God, we are brought to the borders of everlasting well and everlasting woe. The Word of God reasons also with us of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. What shall you answer today? What have you answered all your lifetime? What shall Felix answer? With an open conscience, shifting uncomfortably upon his throne, Felix spoke most tragically: “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” He rejected the Word and the invitation of the living God. That solemn rejection we will consider after we sing first from Psalter 265, stanzas 1 and 2.

Paul preached; Felix trembled. Paul was at the judgment bar; Felix, on the judgment seat. But in their consciences the positions were reversed. Paul was the free man; Felix, the prisoner. The prisoner became the judge; the prince on the throne became the criminal. The ruler of the country trembled before a tent-maker. That’s the power of the Word of God.

My friends, that Word comes to you with power also. I thank God that we do not have many Drusillas. I hope there are none. I hope we still have an open conscience. But it is critical what we do with that open conscience. When we hear the Word of God, do we reject it? Do we respond like Felix?

Felix’s solemn rejection of Paul’s word has at least four important lessons to teach us. The first is this: If the Word is not an applied Word for us by grace, it is a rejected Word. It is one or the other. The Word can never leave us “in-between.” We never leave God’s house as we have come because the Word of God always does something. We can never remain neutral under the Word. The Word either hardens us or humbles us.

Dear friend, every time you stifle your conscience, you stifle convictions; every time you neglect an opportunity, you are left in a worse and more hopeless condition than you were in before the Word came to you in the house of God. That is a serious thing; the Lord is not to be mocked. When the Lord speaks His Word, He is coming with a

heaven-sent invitation addressed to you to repent and turn to Him before it is forever too late. The Lord wants us, as the Puritans would say, to make “use” of the convictions of our conscience by turning those convictions into petitions. But when we pluck from our breasts the very convictions we feel, push away the Word of God, and say, “I cannot be converted,” or, “I will not be converted,” and leave church to return to the world, then we give ourselves over to further hardening. It is a tragic thing to disregard God’s holy, sincere invitations to turn to Him for mercy. “He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” That’s the future of Felix and such of his mentality.

The second important lesson we have to learn from Felix’s rejection is the grave danger of delay with regard to our never-dying souls. Felix said as it were, “Go thy way; I will call for you again, Paul.” But he never called again. It was probably the last time that Felix heard the Word of God.

Moreover, Felix was not only sending Paul away by saying, “Go thy way,” but in essence was sending away Him who sent Paul, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was but the ambassador of the Lord of lords. In essence, Felix was saying, “Go away, Lord. When I have a convenient season, I will call for Thee.” But the Lord cut off that way, saying as it were: “Felix, you have cut off My Word. I will cut off My Word from you.” When we reject God’s Word repeatedly, my friends, should we be surprised that the Lord finally rejects us? When we repeatedly stand before an open door in which the Lord invites us to bow and repent, be not surprised when the Lord finally closes the door of His invitations if we constantly use excuses of inability or unwillingness. We shall not be able to postpone the great day of God’s visitation. In that day all our excuses will be as nothing before the sight of a holy and righteous God. We think we are doing nothing, but are mistaken. Rejecting the Word of God is saying “no” to the Lord, and there will come a day when the Lord will say “no” to you if you keep saying “no” to Him year in, year out. His pa-

tience is not to be mocked. There comes an end. The danger of delay is very great. Felix was saying “farewell” to God. He was deliberately destroying himself. Felix was choosing the easy way out for flesh and blood for the moment, but it was ultimately the choice we all make by nature, namely, the choice of hell and condemnation.

All the while Felix was deceiving himself, too. He said as it were, “Tomorrow I will seek. I will respond when I have a convenient season.” Martin Luther said, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” There are two words that have slain numerous souls—the word “yesterday” and the word “tomorrow.” *The word “yesterday” has slain its thousands.* There are thousands who say, “Why should I seek the Lord? I have sinned too much in my past. All my ‘yesterdays’ testify against me. I have done nothing worthy of God’s merciful attention.” Such reasoning sounds pious, but is straight from hell. The Lord invites you *today*: “Sinner, repent.” Anything you use of your past life to assert, “The Lord cannot have mercy on me,” is simply wrong and is only a technique to avoid a real search for God. The Lord says, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin,” and what have you done in any one of your “yesterdays” to get beyond the words, “all sin”? My friends, ultimately it is not your “yesterdays” that keep you from the Lord, but your *unwillingness* today to lose your life and bow before Him.

But whereas yesterday has slain its thousands, *the word “tomorrow” has slain its tens of thousands.* “Tomorrow I will seek Him.” Maybe this very day you will leave this house of prayer saying, “Yes, I need to be converted, and I will begin seeking Him tomorrow.” Tomorrow is too late! Tomorrow’s faith is today’s unbelief. “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.” “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” You never read once in Scripture about seeking the Lord tomorrow. Seek Him today. Seek Him this very hour. Ask Him for grace to show you that you are no different from Felix. Though the notoriety of your sins may be less, the essence of your sin is the same.

Pray to Him today, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me. I need to be born again."

You can't afford to delay anymore, my friends. You think you can afford time for lawful entertainment, for friendships, for legitimate reading. You find time for all kinds of lawful things, do you not? But will you let pass by the one thing you really need? How are you spending your time? You need more than outward impressions. You need to bow. It is not enough to come to church and hear a sermon that warns you admonishingly. You need the essence of true religion. Do not rest until you know the Lord savingly, until you lose your own life and find it in Him, until you may know the Spirit-worked marks and steps of grace. We need these things! We will miss the whole purpose of our life if we go to eternity without them.

There is a third lesson we must glean from Felix's rejection: *the danger of resting in common convictions*. Felix pacified his conscience for the time being with his impressions. He rested in his common convictions, in his slavish fear of God, in his speaking conscience, but was missing the essential, born-again, childlike fear of God. That's a great danger. Herod rejoiced, Felix trembled, Orpah and Esau wept, Ahab mourned, Saul confessed, Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, the five foolish virgins all waited for the bridegroom, but they all went to hell. They were resting in their common convictions, resting in slavish fear.

What is the difference between slavish fear and childlike fear? Slavish fear has its roots in the covenant of works; childlike fear, in the covenant of grace. Slavish fear is provoked by the consequences of sin; childlike fear, by the God-dishonoring character of sin. Slavish fear is motivated by legalistic servitude, looking for reward; childlike fear is motivated by voluntary obedience, looking for grace. In slavish fear, the enmity of our heart is not broken; in childlike fear, this enmity is broken. In slavish fear we have hard thoughts of God; in childlike fear we have high thoughts of God. Slavish fear hates punishment; childlike fear hates sin. Slavish fear seeks

for self-preservation and self-honor; childlike fear seeks the preservation of the Lord's attributes and honor. Slavish fear produces a convinced sinner; childlike fear, a truly convicted, converted sinner. Slavish fear looks for relief; childlike fear looks for welfare above relief.

Slavish fear is of a temporary character. "It is," as John Warburton said, "religion in fits and starts. It comes and goes." Childlike fear is more steady; it abides more deeply; it grows more profoundly in the soil of the heart. Slavish fear ultimately returns to the world. It clings to sin and is choked by the world. Childlike fear cannot return to the world; it parts from sin, and longs to be with God. Slavish fear never truly humbles the sinner as an unworthy sinner; childlike fear humbles the sinner as the chiefest of transgressors. Slavish fear leaves the eye closed to Christ; childlike fear has its eye fixed upon Christ.

Slavish fear has its own glory as its ultimate goal; it desires only a quieted conscience, peace and rest. Childlike fear aims for the glory of God; true rest in God is its lofty goal. Slavish fear ends in damnation; childlike fear ends in salvation. Which kind of fear do we possess, my friends, slavish or childlike?

The last lesson we wish to consider from Felix's tragic rejection of the Word is that the end of a life of sin shall be terrible. Felix and Drusilla had one son. Drusilla and that son died three years after hearing Paul preach, when a volcano erupted, destroying two large cities. Felix was spared but soon became insane. Josephus tells us that he whose name, "Felix," in Greek means "happy," became terribly unhappy. Some years later Felix committed suicide in the mountains of Italy. It was a tragic end to a tragic life, but it was a life that had rejected a golden opportunity.

Oh my friends, value the opportunities that you receive to hear the Word of God, but do not rest in those opportunities alone. You need Spirit-worked application. Shall you end well, you must be brought into personal, saving communion with the Lord in this life. Delay not. Call upon Him while He is yet to be found. Seek Him while He is yet near. Soon it will be too late to call upon the Lord.

The story is told of an agnostic who said to his friends gathered around his deathbed, "Now I know there is a God, a God before whom I shall appear, a God whom I have tried to deny my whole life. But now it is too late, for I see Him coming, not as a God of mercy, but as a God of judgment, holiness, and wrath."

Dear congregation, the Lord says, "I have called and ye have refused. I have stretched out My hands and no man has regarded." Will that take place again today? Will this very message come back in eternity, and will you see yourself again sitting here on this particular day under this particular message and realize that you have passed by a golden opportunity just like Felix? Shall this very sermon add to your condemnation? Shall you say, "There I was, sitting in that particular bench, in that particular seat, and I heard the invitation that God said also to me, 'Turn, turn, for why will ye die?' But I pushed it away; I rejected the Word of God and I said, 'Lord, tomorrow; go Thy way, and I will call for Thee when a convenient season comes.'"

Oh my friends, our natural hearts never have a convenient season! Seek bowing grace before it is forever too late. Pray for grace to pray against yourself. Take this serious admonition, lay it before the Lord and pray, "Lord, conquer my heart against my will. I cannot go on without Thee. Let me not be a Felix, but let me be a crying, begging Bartimaeus."

Finally, dear children of God, what a blessing that when you said, "Go away," the Lord became too strong for you. How shall you ever fathom the power of God, His Word, and His grace? None of us is inherently better than Felix, but God makes a difference where there is no difference. "Thou art, O God, our boast, the glory of our power; Thy sovereign grace is e'er our fortress and our tower."

Let us all plead that He may make that difference for us. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many...will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

"Prepare to meet thy God." "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live." AMEN.