

# Paul's Reasoning & Felix's Response

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Preacher: Rev. Paul Murray

[ 0 : 00 ] Singing to his praise in Psalm 96. Psalm 96, I'm reading together from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due.

Come ye into his courts, and bring an offering with you. In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord adore. Likewise, let all the earth throughout tremble his face before.

Among the heathens, say, God reigns. The world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving. He shall judge the people righteously. Let heavens be glad before the Lord, and let the earth rejoice.

Let seas and all that is therein cry out and make a noise. Let fields rejoice, and everything that springeth of the earth, then woods and every tree shall sing with gladness and with mirth.

Before the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth, comes he. He'll judge the world with righteousness, the people faithfully. Psalm 96, verses 8 to 13, singing to God's praise.

[ 1 : 08 ] Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due.

And he in good forms of bringing an offering with you.

In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord adore.

Think what he says, God's death does he Be paid from good They need from drugs The people righteously Let heavens be glad Before the heart

And let the earth rejoice Let Jesus all not stand Cry unto the Lord And make thy voice That he'll rejoice On everything That's great yet on the earth Then who shall heavenly Think shall sing With love And love With her Before the Lord, because He comes to trust the earth and see,

[ 4 : 19 ] He'll judge the world with righteousness, and be perfect for me.

Let us stand and call for the name of God. Gracious and ever-blessed God, we gather together in Thy presence this Lord's Day I knew, thankful that this is our portion and that this is our desire, to be in that place where the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is lifted up, to give the glory to the Lord as we were singing together, that is due unto His name.

We gather then, Lord, seeking high dues of the One who is our Maker, the One who is high and exalted, the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, and yet who dwells with those who are contrite in heart, those who are humble.

We seek Thee, Lord, today, laying hold of that promise that if we draw near to God, that God will draw near to us. We come confessing our sins and our shortcomings.

We come confessing that we are not what we ought to be, that indeed we are not what we desire to be, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

[ 5 : 58 ] Lord, we pray that we might know true remorse for our sin, but that we might also know true repentance from our sin, as we turn from that which is sinful to that which is good.

Teach us, Lord, the perfect way of Thy precepts divine, and then, Lord, we will seek to walk in them and incline our hearts towards them.

We pray that as we confess our sin, that we might know the assurance that for those who truly confess their sin, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness.

Cleanse us, Lord, and we will be cleansed indeed. The psalmist could say to Thou with hyssop, sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so. Yea, wash Thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow.

And, Lord, there is indeed nothing that we see in this life which is whiter than snow. And yet the promise to Thy people is that they will be so cleansed from their sin that their cleanliness will even be superior to that of snow.

[ 7 : 19 ] And so, Lord, we thank Thee that the blood of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, cleanses from all sin. We pray for the young here. We give thanks for them.

We pray that they might remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Bless them in the school. Bless them at home. Help them to honour Father and Mother, those who care for them.

Help them to honour and to respect their teachers. To give themselves to their learning. That they might grow up to be capable and wise men and women.

And particularly that they might grow up to fear the Lord. And to dedicate themselves not to the foolish and vain ambitions of this world, but rather to that great goal of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.

We are mindful, Lord, that the future of our society, of our nation, of our island, and indeed of our church is dependent upon, largely upon the shaping of this young generation.

[ 8 : 26 ] And so we do pray for them. And we ask Thy blessing to be upon them. Bless them as they go to their Sabbath school classes as well. Bless their teachers, draw near to them.

And grant that their learning might be for their eternal good and for their present sanctification. We pray for the old and the middle aged belonging to the congregation and community.

Bless those who are suffering due to sickness of body, sickness of mind. Bless those who mourn, draw near to them, console them and comfort them in the midst of their grief and sorrow.

We give them to put on the garment of praise today for the spirit of heaviness. We pray for our leaders in our country, our King and Royal Family, our Prime Minister and First Minister, and all who serve us as MPs and MSPs and local councillors too.

Remember us particularly, Lord, as an island. We have many temporal needs. We have many spiritual needs. And we pray that the gospel might go forth with power week by week, that the preaching of the word might be blessed to the salvation and the edification of souls.

[ 9 : 41 ] We ask the Lord to be mindful particularly of this congregation. Bless their elders and deacons, the members, the adherents, their interim moderator.

Provide one for them who would be an under-shepherd! of the sheep and who would faithfully pastor them and declare the unsearchable riches of Christ to them.

Lord, go before us now and be gracious to us. Pour out thy Spirit upon us. Give us ears to hear. And when we hear the voice of Almighty God speaking to us, grant that we would not harden our hearts, but that we would give ourselves to the truth, that we would humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he might exalt us.

And so, Lord, go before us, we pray, and forgive us mercifully for all sin. For Christ's sake. Amen. Well, boys and girls, just if I could have your attention for a couple of minutes.

One of the things that you can't but have noticed today is how windy it is. It's really windy out there and it's not very nice with the wind and the rain together.

[ 10 : 54 ] But I wonder if any of you saw the wind today as you came in. I would assume that probably you didn't see the wind. You knew the wind was there.

You could feel it on your face. You could see the grass blowing maybe of those bushes outside the house. You could maybe feel it against the car. When you walked into the church, you could feel the wind, but I doubt if anybody saw it.

In fact, I don't think anybody here has ever seen the wind. I've never seen the wind. But just because we haven't seen it, it doesn't mean that it isn't there. I think that it would be a silly little boy or girl who would say today, well, I haven't seen the wind, so there is no wind.

No, we know that there is wind because we can see what it does, we can see its effects, and we can feel it upon ourselves. And you know, boys and girls, I don't know if you've ever heard anybody say this in your own school, but sometimes people say that there is no God, and they say there can't be a God because I've never seen God, and you've never been, you've never seen God, so there can't be a God.

But you know, I think that that's silly in the same way as saying that there isn't any wind because we haven't seen the wind, it's silly. We know that there is wind, scientists will tell us that there is wind.

[ 12 : 12 ] You can see with your own eyes, you can feel that there is wind. And so it is with belief in God. It's not belief in a fairy tale, it is belief in somebody who is there.

We see it and we know that there is a God because he made this world. This world couldn't come into being just by itself. We see him working in our midst, we see him moving in our midst, we can feel his presence at times when we pray to him, when we draw near to him in worship.

And so, I think it's foolish to say that there is no God because we can't see God. There are many things that we can't see. Wind is just one of them. But many other things scientists will tell us that we can't see but they are there.

Different portions and so on. And so you remember that if somebody says to you, well, you can't see God so there is no God. You say to them, well, by that same logic you're saying that if you can't see the wind, there is no wind.

that the Lord would bless these thoughts to you. Let us again sing to God's praise then in Psalm 119 and from verse 57.

[ 13 : 22 ] Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favor free. According to thy gracious word be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways and did my life well try.

And to thy testimonies pure my feet then turned I. I did not stay nor linger long as those that slothful are. But hastily thy laws to keep myself I did prepare.

Now that word slothful boys and girls means lazy. Bands of ill or evil men me robbed yet I thy precepts did not slight. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise even for thy judgments right.

I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey. O Lord thy mercy fills the earth teach me thy laws I pray. Psalm 119 verse 57 to 64 to God's praise thou my sure portion art alone which I did choose O Lord.

[ 14 : 33 ] devalued Worship, O Lord, I have resolved, thou said, that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart, thy hidden feet, thy gifts untethered be.

According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former wish, a given I, thy well-time.

Until thy destined home issued, my feet let burn it high.

[ 16 : 11 ] I did not see nor linger on, as was the thoughtful hand.

But yet, dearly, I lost to thee, my love I did with him.

And so within me, all yet I, thy peace and faithful side.

I rise at midnight, ye doers, even for thy judgment's right.

I am companion to all those who fear and fear of faith.

[ 17 : 36 ] O Lord, thy hand, she fills the air. It means I lost, I bring.

Let us now read God's word as we find it in the book of Acts. Acts and chapter 24. We're reading the whole chapter together.

And after five days, Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tartalus, who informed the governor against Paul.

And when he was called forth, Tartalus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

Notwithstanding that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow.

[ 18 : 56 ] And a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world. And a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Who also have gone about to profane the temple.

Whom we took and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us. And with great violence took him away out of our hands.

Commanding his accusers to come unto thee. By examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, For as much as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerful the answer for myself.

Because that thou mayest understand that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, Neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues nor in the city.

[ 20 : 00 ] Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, So worship I the God of my fathers, Believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, To have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings, Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, Neither with multitude nor with tumult, Who ought to have been before thee, And object if they had ought or anything against me.

Or else let these same hear say, If they have found any evil doing in me while I stood before the council, Except it be for this one voice, That I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

And when Felix heard these things, Having more perfect knowledge of that way, He deferred them, And said, When Lucius the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

[ 21 : 23 ] And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, And to let him have liberty, And that he should forbid none of his acquaintance To minister or come unto him. 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.

He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, That he might loosen. Wherefore he sent for him the oftener, And communed with him. But after two years, Portius Festus came into Felix's room, And Felix, Willing to show the Jews a pleasure, Left Paul bound.

Amen. The Lord will bless his own word to us, And to his name be all the praise, And all the glory. Let us sing again, This time in Psalm 40. Psalm 40, Reading from the beginning of the Psalm I waited for the Lord my God, And patiently did bear.

At length to me he did incline my voice, And cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit, And from the miry clay, And on a rock he set my feet, Establishing my way.

[ 22 : 50 ] He put a new song in my mouth, O God, To magnify. Many shall see it, And shall fear, And on the Lord rely. O blessed is the man Whose trust upon the Lord relies, Respecting not the proud, Nor such as turn aside to lies.

O Lord my God, Full many are the wonders thou hast done, Thy gracious thoughts to us Were far above all thoughts are gone. In order none can reckon them To thee if them declare, And speak of them I would, They more than can be numbered are.

Psalm 40, verses 1-5, To God's praise, I waited for the Lord my God, And patiently did bear. I waited for the Lord my God, And patiently did bear, I waited for the Lord my God, And patiently did bear, I waited for the Lord my God, And night my night, The voice of God to hear.

He took me from the fearful day. And from the mighty plain.

And from the rock is there by Thee. It's now the ship I win.

[ 24 : 44 ] He put a new song in my heart.

And from the rock I may cry. Then ye shall see it and shall fear.

At God the Lord relive. O blessed is the man who does.

Upon the Lord relive. Resent ye not the power of such.

A turn of cyber lies. O Lord my God.

[ 26 : 04 ] O mania. The wonders thou hast done.

Thy gift is born to us. For God. Our powerful thoughts are gone.

In order thou thou dread. Dear God.! Dear God. To thee, if them declare, and speak your name, my old dear Lord, that God be number not.

Well, now with a view to God's blessing if you would turn back with me to the portion of Scripture which we read together in the book of Acts in chapter 24, and taking our text from verse 25.

Then his response to it.

[ 27 : 58 ] Felix, historians tell us, was the governor of Judea from around AD 52 to AD 59, so around 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion.

He was a man who came from humble origins. He was a slave when he was younger. Himself and his brother were slaves in the household of the mother of Caesar.

And they found favor with Caesar's mother. And then, particularly, Felix's brother became a servant and almost a right-hand man of Caesar.

And it was through his influence that Felix then rose to power. We don't find that in the Bible, but there is much written about Roman history. And all that we read of Roman history, it corroborates what we have here in the Scripture.

So he rose to power and he became a governor. A governor of Judea, a pretty difficult place to be a governor because of the historic rebellions and revolts against the Roman government.

[ 29 : 08 ] But here he was, a powerful man, and he married a woman called Drusilla. Now, Drusilla was a Jew, and she was one of the heralds.

So her brother was Herod Agrippa, who famously said to Paul, almost though persuadably to be a Christian. Her grandfather was the herald who was reigning when Jesus was born.

He was the one who slayed the innocents and tried to put Jesus to death. Her uncle was the herald who had John the Baptist beheaded and who mocked Jesus near the end of his life.

And then her father was the herald of whom we read in Acts chapter 12, who had James beheaded, Peter imprisoned, and who then, because of his pride and accepting a divine title for himself, he basically fell dead.

And so she was from a Jewish family, but she certainly wasn't from a Christian family. But we know that although Felix didn't have a background in the Jewish religion, and would have known very little about the Christian religion, that she knew a fair bit about not only Judaism, but about Christianity.

[ 30 : 35 ] And we're told quite clearly that she had explained these things to him. She had explained to him what this way was.

We're told that he had a more perfect knowledge of that way. He had a more perfect knowledge of that way. And it seems to us that that came from Drusilla.

Drusilla, who probably, like our uncle Herod, wanted to hear more. Wanted to hear more about this way, more about Christianity, more about Jesus. And now they have the Apostle Paul imprisoned.

And they have basically a preacher in their home under lock and key. And they use the influence that they have, and the power that they have, to hear him.

And that's what they call him to do, to speak about these things. Now, what I want us to consider, really, is the way that Paul reasoned with them, and then the way that they themselves responded.

[ 31 : 46 ] Paul was under lock and key because he was awaiting trial. There's no need, really, to go into that in any detail. But while the trial was delayed, we're told that after certain days, verse 24, when Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Now, the faith in Christ is probably the overarching theme. There are some who say that, firstly, he spoke about the faith in Christ, and then he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

That may very well be the case. It may very well be that he spoke generally about the person and work of Jesus Christ, about the salvation that is available through him, therefore being justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It's possible that he spoke about Christ and the gospel generally, first of all, and then that he came to reason about these other things, temperance, righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

But I think it's more likely that the faith in Christ is just the overarching theme, and it is within the context of the faith of Christ that we have to understand the way that he reasoned with them, about righteousness, about temperance, about judgment to come, all in the context of the gospel, all in the context of the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 14 ] Before we come to consider these particular righteousness, temperance, judgment to come, it is interesting that he reasoned with them about these things.

It's maybe not the way that people often talk about Christianity. They sometimes talk about Christianity as a derogatory thing, almost like a fairy tale type of thing, as we were saying to the children, a mystical thing, a thing that isn't based on evidence, that isn't based on intelligence.

And yet, what we find when we read the scripture from beginning to end is that we are dealing with facts, we are dealing with faith, yes, but we are dealing with faith in the context of reason, in the context of history, in the context of what God has done, in the context of what God has said.

And so Paul reasons with them. He speaks to their intellect, to their mind, to the understanding. He doesn't try to bypass the mind. And she says, forget about the intellect, forget about knowledge, we'll just go straight to the heart and deal with that, like some preachers do today.

No. He goes to the mind, he wants to inform the mind. He wants the mind to be transformed. And it's important for us to understand that he did this reasonably.

[ 34 : 28 ] There was a famous Dutch theologian, Heaven Bavie, who wrote a short systematic theology, and he called it our reasonable faith.

Because the faith is reasonable, that is, it stands to reason. It is not irrational. It may be at times suprarational, that is, above our reason, so that we cannot grasp it, but it is never against reason.

And we should remember that Christianity is a religion of logic, as well as a religion of faith. Don't let people tell you that Christianity is illogical, or irrational, that it's been disproved by science, that it's foolish, that it's a fairy tale.

That's nonsense. You need faith to believe the gospel, but you also need faith not to believe the gospel. You need faith not to believe, to believe that there is no God, to believe that all of this came from nothing, to believe that there is no purpose in life, to believe that your feelings, your feelings of love, your feelings of anger, your feelings of whatever feelings you might have, of compassion and of pity, that these things are just chemical reactions, which is essentially what evolutionary materialism teaches, that it's all just a chemical reaction, that there is no purpose, that there is no meaning, that there is no afterlife.

You need faith, friends, to believe these things, and you need a lot of it. You had here the Reverend Mark McLeod last week, I remember him, I hope you wouldn't mind me saying this, I remember him speaking about his own testimony, of how he came to Christ, and battling and grappling with some of these things, and being in an astronomy class in university.

[ 36 : 22 ] And the man who was teaching them was himself an atheist, and he himself believed in the Big Bang. And he said, Mr McLeod remember him saying, that he said, well, you know, you need faith to believe in Christianity, but you actually need more, there are so many holes in this theory, that you actually need more faith, to believe in the Big Bang, than you do to believe in Christianity.

And, you know, that had an impact, on Mr McLeod at the time, and you can see why. And it should have an impact upon us as well. Christianity, friends, is the only reasonable explanation.

It is the only explanation, that satisfies the reason, and that allows you to rest in the truth, because it is truth. But how did he reason with Felix, and with Drusilla?

Well, the first thing is that he reasoned with them, regarding righteousness. How are we to understand this? Well, the Bible confronts us with the truth, that God is righteous, that the righteous love, the righteous God, loves righteousness, and that he demands righteousness.

When we're talking about righteousness, we're basically talking about doing that which is right, doing that which is good, doing that which is according to the law of God.

[ 37 : 49 ] God is righteous, and he calls us to be righteous. And yet the Bible tells us that there is none righteous, no, not one. That all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

That we come short of the righteousness that God requires, the righteousness that God demands. I wonder if that's how you see yourself today, as coming short of what God requires of you.

Or do you think that you're doing pretty well, and that you haven't really sinned, and that you haven't really come short? Well, if you look at yourself properly, if you look into the inner recesses of your heart, you'll see there are sinful motivations, sinful thoughts, words, actions, sins of commission, things that you do which you ought not to do, sins of commission, things that you do, say, or think, or things that you should have said, things which you should have done, things which you should have thought, and yet which you didn't.

The Bible tells us what we really know, or should know if we look through the utter selves, that we are sinners, that we are sinners, that we're not righteous.

And I think that Paul told Felix about this. He said, there is a standard and you don't meet it. But he also told Felix about one who is righteous, one who is perfect, one who is good, and who does good, about Jesus Christ, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, one who did no sin, neither was there any deceit in his mouth, one who fulfilled all righteousness, and who did all things well, who lived the life that we did not live, who passed the tests that we failed to pass.

[ 39 : 38 ] And I'm sure that the Apostle Paul would have told Felix that God has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, who knew no unrighteousness, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He is righteous and we are sinners, but he has borne our sin, that we might bear his righteousness. He has been punished for our sin, that we might be rewarded for his righteousness, if we believe in him.

And that trends is the gospel right there, that is the good news right there, that Jesus Christ rendered perfect obedience to God in his life, and perfect satisfaction to God in his death, paying the price, paying the penalty, suffering for sins, and that he did that for all who believe in him.

He reasoned concerning righteousness. I wonder, friend, if you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, have you believed in him, having your sins removed, having your guilt transferred to another, and are you clothed in his righteousness?

Does the Lord look down upon you today as one who is justified, one with whom he is satisfied, because your sins have been punished in another?

[ 40 : 58 ] He reasoned concerning righteousness. Secondly, he reasoned concerning temperance. That word temperance is the word from which we take another English word, temper.



We often speak of losing, losing one's temper. When somebody loses their temper, what they lose is basically their control. They lose control.

And often this word is actually translated self-control. Literally, it's self-power. Self-power. To have control over yourself. That word temperance isn't used often today.

What we do sometimes hear used is when we hear about the historic temperance movements, which were very much associated with the church historically, particularly in the 19th century.

And the temperance movement was a movement to encourage people to abstain from alcohol. That is, to have control over themselves when it came to strong drink.

[ 42 : 00 ] So, the gospel, friends, doesn't just call us to believe, it calls us to repent. And part of repentance is temperance. It is self-control.

And how rare is self-control in our day? We can control, with the advances of science and of knowledge, we can control almost anything.

We can control toxic and dangerous chemicals. We can control wild animals. And yet, how few people there are who have any control really over themselves.

In fact, today, self-control temperance, it's almost a bad word. It seems to be restrictive. Don't try to control yourself from what you want to do, from what you feel that you want to do.

But rather, on the contrary, treat yourself. Indulge yourself. Live life to the full. Do what you want to do. And that is the mantra of the day.

[ 42 : 58 ] And yet, it doesn't really work, does it? Because people who give themselves to their lusts, to do exactly what they feel that they want to do, are they happy people? Do they live in happy homes?

Do they make for happy families? Are they good fathers, good mothers? Good husbands or daughters? Good husbands or wives? Good sons or daughters? Are they good workers? Are they good for society?

Does it work? No, it doesn't work. We need self-control. And that's why a godly society, a repentant society, is always a better functioning society.

That's why marriages are healthier in Christian societies. It's why families are happier. That's why workplaces are more productive. That's why governments are more stable.

Because of self-control. Because self-control is a by-product or is a fruit of Christianity. And yet how uncomfortable it must have been for Felix.

[ 43 : 57 ] For Felix to have been reasoned with about self-control. One of the Roman historians which speaks about Felix is a man called Tacitus. And he says that as a man, Felix was cruel, licentious and base.

In other words, he was a man who did what was right in his own eyes. He was a man who did what he felt. Who followed his lusts. That's the kind of man he was.

And even more uncomfortable this must have been because Drusilla was here there as well. And Drusilla was actually Felix's third wife.

His third wife. And he had hired a magician called Simon. Simon from Cyprus. To cast a spell on Drusilla.

So that she would divorce her husband. And marry him. Now, can't say much for the spell. But she did that. She did divorce her husband. And she married Felix.

[ 45 : 05 ] Felix was a slave to himself. A slave to his lusts. And I suppose we have to ask ourselves. Do we have control over ourselves?

Is your body serving your soul as it ought to be? Or is your soul serving your body? Do you have control over your pride? Over greed?

Over your lusts? Over what you eat? Do you really have control over what you drink? And how much you drink? Do you have power over yourself?

Because where the gospel comes in. And when the Holy Spirit comes into your life. That is one of the fruits that we expect to see. That we must see. Self-control.

To a greater or a lesser extent. And so he reasoned with him about this. And he was found wanting, surely. But he also reasoned with him. And thirdly. About judgment to come.

[ 46 : 02 ] Now, reason tells us that there will be a judgment. That sin must be dealt with. That it is unjust for God not to deal with sin.

And, you know, sometimes this is put across as an old-fashioned doctrine. The doctrine of that there will be a judgment. Let us put this in its wider context.

The vast majority of the population of this world believes that there will be a judgment. We almost think that it's a highland, an island kind of thing. An old-fashioned kind of thing.

To speak of a judgment when we die. Most people in the world believe that there will be a judgment. Muslims believe that there will be a judgment. Hindus believe that there will be a judgment. Those who believe in reincarnation.

What is reincarnation? But a judgment. If you're good, you'll come back as a prince or as a king or whatever it might be. If you're bad, you'll come back as a rat or a mouse or some other form of viceroy.

[ 47 : 05 ] That's belief in a judgment. And the reason that all the religions believe in a judgment is that because we have a conscience. And naturally, we believe in right and wrong.

And because we believe in right and wrong, we believe in reward. And we believe in punishment. Children believe in that from the very beginning of their lives. It is innate. But what about those who live awful lives?

Who mistreat others? Who torment others? Who break laws in this life and seem to get off scot-free? Sometimes they do get off scot-free. And then they die a relatively comfortable death.

Is that it? Is there no punishment? Is there no punishment for people like Hitler and Stalin? Well, you know, a very inner man or inner woman, it can't take that.

It can't believe that. It believes that there is an afterlife and that there will be a reckoning. We believe that. And so it's not difficult for Paul to reason with Felix about a judgment to come.

[ 48 : 12 ] It's not difficult for me to reason with you about a judgment to come. Because innately, we know it. We can't understand a world. We can't understand an eternity. We can't understand a God without this.

If God is good, he will not send everybody to heaven. Because that would make God unjust. It would make God bad. If God is good, then he will treat sin as it deserves to be treated.

Just as today, a sheriff, a judge in a court who just lets everybody off scot-free, regardless of what they've done. Is that a good judge who doesn't treat crime as it ought to be treated?

Surely not. And the same goes with God. And the Bible teaches us what we innately believe, what we could believe and reason out without the Bible. It teaches us that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

That everyone may receive the things done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be bad. The Bible tells us that you will give a count for what you have done in this life.

[ 49 : 20 ] For what you have seen. For what you have done with it. For what you have heard. For what you've done with what you've heard. For the life that you've lived. The relationships you've had.

The choices that you've made. For all of these things, you will give a count and so will I. The Bible teaches us that there is not only a heaven, but that there is a hell.

That not only will there be a glorious acquittal and reward for those whose sins have been forgiven, but that there will be a fearful condemnation and punishment for those who die in their sins.

And in light of this, Paul reasons with him about the judgment that is to come. It's interesting that after in 2 Corinthians 5, where we read that, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

The very next verse, Paul writes, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Knowing the awfulness of this, the dreadfulness of this.

[ 50 : 23 ] That there is a great eternity. That there is a lost eternity for those who die outside of Christ. That there is eternal condemnation for them. We persuade men. We tell them to be ready, to be in Christ.

That there is a Saviour. That you needn't be lost. We persuade men. Friend, let me ask you, where does this find you today? The fact that there will be a judgment. Where does this find you?

Are you ready for it? Jesus tells us that on that day, those who confess him, he will confess. Before the angels of God in heaven.

And those who deny him, he will deny. Friend, if you deny Jesus Christ, he will deny you. If your life is a Christ-denying life, he will deny you.

But if you confess him before men, with faith in your heart and fruit in your life, then he will confess you before that judgment seat. Well, we've seen the way that the apostle raised him.

[ 51 : 22 ] Just quickly, let us see Felix's response. There were two things that were told about his response. Firstly, we're told in these two words, Felix trembled.

He trembled. Sometimes it's translated, he was afraid. He was alarmed. He trembled. It seems a good enough translation.

Clearly, he listened. Clearly, he was gripped by what he heard. He didn't think when he started listening to Paul, whatever he thought of what he heard, he didn't think it was irrelevant.

And I hope you don't think that what you're hearing today is irrelevant. Whether you agree with it or don't agree with it, whether you accept it or don't accept it, it's not irrelevant.

It has to do with the most important aspects of both life and of death, of time and of eternity. So Felix was gripped, and he was so gripped that he was filled with fear, is what he heard.

[ 52 : 24 ] He was filled with alarm, with terror. Because he realised, as the apostle preached, and as he went on, that as another realised before him, a man called Belshazzar, that he was weighed in the balances, and he was found wanting.

He'd been shown his sin, and his shared sin had shown him his lack of righteousness, his lack of self-control, and that judgment could only find him unprepared.

I think what Felix realised was this, that he was on his way to hell, and he was struck with horror. He trembled. You can see him sitting there, listening to the apostle Paul, and his knees banging against each other, as he thought of what was before him, as he thought of the reality of a sinful life, and a death out of Christ.

I wonder, friend, if the thought of judgment fills you with dread. If the thought of hell fills you with alarm and with terror.

You know, if you're not in Jesus Christ today, I hope it does make you tremble. Because it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[ 53 : 42 ] And it's a fearful thing to stand at the bar of God's justice, and not to have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, who is righteous. To go into eternity without a Saviour, having not known Jesus, who is the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

I wonder if you've trembled. I wonder if you've ever gone home after church, and sat and trembled having heard what you've heard. I wonder if you've ever lain in your bed, thinking about the eternity that is before you.

Thinking about the fact that your heart could cease to beat at any moment, and you could be lost for all eternity. And the many opportunities that you've had, and the many sermons that you've heard, all to no avail.

I wonder if it's made you tremble. I hope that it has. I hope that it's made me tremble. I hope that these things, friends, continue to an extent to make us tremble.

It's not a bad thing to tremble. It's not a bad thing sometimes to be afraid. It's good to tremble. But it's not enough to tremble. Know this, that many have trembled.

[ 54 : 46 ] And they've been lost. Many have shed tears, perhaps even been afraid, sitting in the very pews that you're sitting in. Hearing the truth preached to them. Hearing Christ offered to them.

Hearing of the reality of heaven and hell. And of a lost eternity before them. And they've trembled. And they've known they've needed to do something. And they've done nothing. And today, where are they?

Some of them, perhaps, are in a lost eternity. Some of them are far away from the truth. Far away from church. In the world and of the world. Many friends, friends, tremble and are not saved.

And so does with Felix. Because the second thing that we read about him is that he procrastinated. Felix trembled and he answered. Go thy way for this time.

When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. And you know, friends, sometimes time is a healer. And we often hear that. And it's true. But spiritually, time is often an anesthetic.

[ 55 : 50 ] It numbs the reality of the thing. It hides the truth from you. And this is what Felix wanted. He wanted that anesthetic.

He wanted that numbing influence. He wanted to forget about what he'd heard. It wasn't that he didn't believe it. It was that he didn't really have time for it. He didn't have space for it. Just now. And he says, go away for now.

You see, the gospel is an urgent thing. That's why it needs to be pressed upon you. That's why sometimes you need to feel uncomfortable when you hear it. Because it's an urgent thing. But he didn't like the pressure of the thing.

He didn't like the urgency of it. And he was saying, give me space. Give me time. You're too in my face with this. And then when I have a convenient season.

When things are convenient for me. When the time is right, then I'll call you. You know, we don't doubt the man's sincerity. That he meant it when he said it. But this is the thing.

[ 56 : 47 ] He thought that he would always want that convenient season to come. He thought that he would always want Christ for us all. He thought that he would always see the relevance of being saved.

And so, yes, it was a good idea. And it's not that I'm against what you're saying, Paul. I believe what you're saying. I hold to the truth of it. Just not now.

Just not now. Just not at this point in my life. With all of the things that I have going on. Just give me a bit of time. And you know, friend, you might be saying the very same thing.

I believe it. I believe the gospel. I believe in the Bible. I believe that there is a God. I believe that the only way for me to be saved is by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe in these things.

I've heard these things from my youth. From my granny. From my parents. I've heard these things. And I believe these things. And I don't doubt these things. That there is a heaven. That there is a hell.

[ 57 : 44 ] That I must be born again. That I must be saved. You might be saying that very thing in your heart. But not today. Not yet. Not now. I need time.

I need space. Another day, certainly. When it's easier for me. When it's more convenient for me. Is that you? Well, let me tell you, friend.

The convenient time will never come. A time may very well come. And I hope it does. But it won't be convenient. Because you see, Christianity is not a convenience. It's not a convenience.

It doesn't get easier. And you think to yourself, well, when I'm older. When I'm older. But, you know, the older you are, the harder, really, it becomes. Statistically, the older you are, the less likely you are to become a Christian.

You know, we think the other way about. We're used to growing up and going into churches and seeing greyheads. And we think Christianity is for old people. But what we maybe don't realise is that most of these old people have been Christians for decades.

[ 58 : 48 ] Became Christians when they themselves were young. And that tends to be the way that it is. You know, friends, there is no time like the present.

No time like the present. Felix thought that time was his friend. And he didn't realise that really time was his enemy. Because what happened to him was this. With every passing day, his fear lessened.

He didn't back on the fact that his desires would change. You know, for a few days after hearing what he heard, I'm sure he would often think about it. That perhaps his knees would begin to tremble again.

He would begin to feel that dread. But you know, as the weeks went on, he thought about it less. It had less of an impact on him. And he could rationalise it and argue it away.

And basically forget about it. The fact is that as far as we can see, the convenient season that he expected to come never came at all. We read in verse 26. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might lose him.

[ 59 : 50 ] Therefore he sent for him the offender and communed with him. But after two years, Portia's testers came into Felix's room. And Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

I don't know what you think about that. But one thing is very clear. That that was no Christian. That was a man who wanted more money for himself. A man who wanted to do the Jews a favour.

But would do no favour for the Apostle Paul. And no favour for Christianity. He was no Christian. He had once trembled. But now he was hardened. And you know, there are many who once trembled under the Gospel.

And today, they sit unmoved under the Gospel. That might be you as well. I remember speaking to a man. He told me that when he returned to church, maybe in his thirties.

He said, I used to be terrified hearing the Gospel. Hearing the urgency of it. The reality of it. That I was on the way to a lost eternity.

[ 60 : 51 ] This is a man who went out both ends every day. Continues to do so. Every day. Every Lord's Day. And yet, he told me, I don't really tremble anymore.

It doesn't really impact me. It doesn't really move me. Like it used to move me. And he's still there. Week by week. That might be you as well. You remember trembling.

You remember feeling like you had to do something. That you had to move now. And now perhaps you are hardened under it. And there are many like that. Who have grieved the Holy Spirit who once convicted them.

The Word says to us, my spirit will not always thrive with man. You have known perhaps times when the Spirit was thriving with you. When you were feeling compelled to come out on the Lord's side.

To pray for him to come into your life. To take a step of obedience. And yet, you put it off. And you put the Spirit off. And you put Christ off.

[ 61 : 50 ] And he says, my spirit will not always thrive with you. Will not always seek to persuade you. Will not always draw you. You know friends, you may be biding your time today. But for all you know, today might be the very last time that you will leave.

Then consider the Gospel. And consider the urgency of it. And consider the personal application of it to yourself. You may sit in this church for the rest of your life. Unmoved by the thing.

Unmoved by it. As many have. And as many will continue to do. If they continue to grieve the Spirit. But there's this too, friends. And I conclude with this.

That, and you've heard it many times. He waited for the convenient season. But tomorrow is not promised to any of us. And how quickly any one of us.

Could be whisked into eternity. And in eternity there is no convenient season. There is no mercy's ground. There is no day of grace. There is no Gospel preached there.

[ 62 : 53 ] And know this. That with every ticking second. That clock. Your day of opportunity. Becomes shorter. And the devil tells you. You have plenty time.

But the devil is a liar. And you don't have plenty time. Don't you put off until tomorrow. That which you can do today. Because tomorrow. Like the rich man in the story.

Of the rich man in Lazarus. You may very well lift up your eyes. In hell. And then, friends. You will really tremble. Amen. Let us pray. Gracious and ever blessed God.

Bless thy word to us. Grant that souls would be born anew. In the midst even today. That thy people might be encouraged. And edified.

And edified. Under the truth of the Gospel. Go before us we pray. Forgiving all sin. For Christ's sake. Amen. We conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 130.

[ 63 : 56 ] Psalm 130. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried.

My voice, Lord, do thou hear. Unto my supplications voice give an attentive ear. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, should mark iniquity? But yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be.

I wait for God my soul. That wait. My hope is in his word. More than they that for morning watch my soul waits for the Lord. I say more than they that do watch the morning light to see.

Let Israel hope in the Lord. For with him mercies be. And plentiest redemption is ever found with him. And from all his iniquities he is shall redeem.

The whole of Psalm 130. And to God's praise. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried. My voice, Lord, do thou hear. For from the depths to thee I cried.

[ 65 : 02 ] My voice, Lord, do thou hear. My voice, Lord, do thou hear. And to him, O Lord, do thou hear.

And to him, O Lord, do thou hear. And to him, O Lord, do thou hear. Lord, do thou hear. And to him, O Lord.

Lord, do thou hear. Lord, do thou hear. Oh, Lord, do thou hear.

His King. I wish the heart of all my soul and the way.

My hope is in His Word. For thanks to His for whoever is His soul is shown The Lord.

[ 67 : 17 ] The Lord. For which he's king And plenty of redemption This earth again And from all this iniquity He is eternal Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Amen