

# KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022 10 am

Felix – Delay is fatal!

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Welcome to all

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 559 Praise Him, Praise Him

Scripture Ps 32 (page 560)

Prayer

Children's talk Talking Bible

Chorus your word is a lamp, (2:33m) MP 825 Faithful one

Sharing time, Fauzia move,

BMS powerpoint Ukraine, other info/clips

Notices HG at Ina's house, members mtg, Ukraine church.

Prayer

Communion prep

Reading Acts 24:10-27 (p.1121)

Hymn MP 650 The King is among us

Sermon Felix – Delay is fatal!

Hymn ~~MP 272 I have decided to follow Jesus~~

Closing Prayer: MP 499 O Happy Day

Close

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See also on Felix

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013 Cameo lunch talk

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018

Northfield Methodist Church, Chatham road

on Conscience

31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 based on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008

BEC Rich Aroma 10:30 a.m. "Conscience"

## Welcome and pray

- Barry Sheene the charismatic motorcycle champion of the 1970's moved to Australia at the end of his racing career. In Australia he contacted throat and chest cancer. He decided he wouldn't address the cause because he believed in the power of psychological healing and natural remedies. It didn't, he succumbed, and sadly he died. He died because he refused the right medical help.

An unwillingness to act, to take appropriate steps, cost him his life.

- Margaret Masefield who was connected with KNBC for a number of years contracted cancer. She chose not to have the treatment, rather only find relief from the symptoms. She died a little while later.

Facing a serious illness? - The core problem must be urgently addressed.

**So too - not facing up to difficult truths about your own life will have dire consequences.**

As we continue to look at Bible characters, we now come to Governor Felix. Felix is confronted with the truth, what will he do with it? - But first who is Felix? What was he like? What is going on? And what can we learn?

## Who was Felix?

Since the Eastern campaign of Emperor Pompei in 63 BC Israel had come under Roman occupation. Governors sent to administer the colony were based at the coastal garrison town of Caesarea. In A.D. 51 Emperor Claudius appointed Felix to be procurator or governor of Judea.

## What was Felix like?

Roman Historian Tacitus says Felix ruled the province in a mean, cruel, and profligate manner. Jewish historian Josephus agrees, he describes Felix as putting down and crucifying men by the hundreds. His period of office was full of troubles and seditions. His severe measures and cruel retributions accelerated the already rapid course of the Jews to ruin. Felix's life was savage, treacherous, and steeped in blood. Eventually he was accused before Nero by the Jews, and only escaped punishment by the intercession of his brother Pallas. He was superseded by Porcius Festus in A.D. 60.

## What was going on?

The Apostle Paul back in Jerusalem from his missionary journeys is soon surrounded by angry accusing Jewish mobs. Only the timely intervention by the Roman authorities saved him. When the Jews plotted to kill him Lysias the commander escorted him to safety 70 miles away to Caesarea.

See how the Lord again and again uses secular powers to protect his people! We also see that it is the Lord's will that those in authority should hear the gospel and to this end Christians are brought before kings and governors to testify to them. The lower down the social scale you are, the more likely you are to hear the Gospel, that is how the Lord turns the tables.

The homeless hear the gospel frequently as those from whom they receive charitable help are usually Christians. But what about those at the top? God's plan is that all should hear, that is why Christians are frequently arrested and taken before those in authority that they too may hear.

■ [Peter and Hazelmary B& B owners, Ashers the NI bakers in court](#)

So two things are going on here. ...

On one level Paul is making a defense to the charges brought against him. Governor Felix had to decide whether he had committed any crime and what to do with him.

But secondly after Paul testifies to the Lord's call and work in his life he turns to speak of Christ. He challenges all in the room (v14 on) to the claims of Christ and what His rising from the dead will mean. It affected everyone gathered listening then - as it affects all who are here listening this morning.

Jesus' resurrection to life shows that He is Lord of all and will one day be the judge of all. It proves two things: To those who have turned to Christ it confirms that God has forgiven their sins and a glorious hope of eternal life past the grave awaits us. But to those who reject Jesus Christ there will be awaiting them a day of Judgment leading on to eternal punishment in Hell.

Here Paul is speaking to Felix about the state of his own soul. What does he do? **22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings.** They are in an official court setting; the accusers are there, the lawyers are there, why the delay? **"When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."** He never did x2, but instead to please the Jewish antagonists he left Paul languishing in prison. v27

Felix we are told was **well acquainted with the Way.** The **Way** being the title given to the early followers of Jesus. Did Felix know a little? – no he **was well acquainted with the** teachings of Christ and **'the way' like many of you.**

Many here have been blessed with a good grounding in the scriptures. With so many today completely ignorant of God's word - you are in a privileged position.

Felix was well placed to follow the events of Jesus's life yet right there within the ranks was a glowing example of Godliness. Had he conversed with Cornelius the Roman Centurion based in Caesarea who, (read Acts 10), **was devout and God fearing, gave generously and regularly prayed to God.**

**His wife Drusilla,** we read v24 **was a Jewess,** with her background she would have known the OT Bible well.

*What of Drusilla?*

Drusilla was a wife, but she was not the wife of Felix. She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, having been induced by Felix to desert her husband, the king of Emesa, she became his adulterous companion, wife no.2. Drusilla was still a young woman, but she had, says one observer, already enough notoriety to stamp her as one of the worst women in the whole of human history.

**24 Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.**

Was Paul sent for to satisfy Drusilla's strange curiosity about Paul and about Paul's Master Jesus? As a Jew, was she inquisitive, joining the debate as to whether Jesus was the promised Messiah?, to tickle her ears, her adultery insulted her Jewishness. Her lifestyle blocked the way. *So too for many today*

✚ *Is your lifestyle blocking the way to taking seriously the truth of Jesus?*

Are you fond to talk of the new and the novel? – and yet will not let your life be reformed under the power and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ?

**25 Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come.**

We do not have the whole sermon it has been reduced to three points he must have been a Baptist! The three elements of the Christian life.

*The first of the three headings is: - Righteousness,*

This is the way in to the kingdom of God, all of us need righteousness, I have none, you have none, No one has it. Since Adam no-one has it.

But now, through Christ, and His perfect life - and that perfect life given up on the cross - and with sin was completely paid for, - Christ's righteousness can become ours, yours and mine. He will give to anyone who is willing to change their ways and who come to him for it. "Have mercy on me a sinner"

That is the entry prayer - Have you prayed that prayer? Can you? will you?

✚ *Oh how we are all desperately in need of righteousness,*

Where can it be found? It is found in one only - Jesus Christ the righteous.

Through Him is offered **God's abundant grace, the gift of righteousness** Ro 5:17

Righteousness is a gift – not earned – but received from Jesus Christ who has it and will give it to anyone who seek it – he can because of the CROSS Christ can enable you to enter his Kingdom - Without Him you remain separated and away from this Holy God.

You might be saying I can never live the Christian life! Not only does Christ give righteousness - Christ also gives the power to live righteously!

### *Next there is 'Self-control'*

**self-control.** This the middle of the three. Here is how the Christian life is lived. Jesus is now to have Lordship over all areas of my life, - not my way but His way - and that requires self-control. You will never have enough unless Jesus gives his Spirit to help you, ask him, x2 so you can live with Christ in control.

### *At baptism we renounce our pursuit of the world and the ungodly desires*

To live this new life you must have self-control! If you seek holiness you need self-control. If you seek to master your ungodly desires you need self-control, against all those bad thoughts and passions you need self-control!

- *There's no 'Let go let God!'* Leaflet from Rev George Bennett

Without self-control there is no Godly life. Living to please God is hard work and constantly relies on the Grace that flows from Christ, the ever present power of the Spirit of Christ in me enables me to constantly suppress evil thoughts and desires and at the same time feed on that which is good - the means of Grace ...in step with the Spirit, time in prayer, time in the word, time in fellowship, time in service. They are all important!

Yes the Christian life is hard work - There are no breaks, no days off, no holidays. Paul also told Timothy to train himself to be godly. We have to perseverance, keep at it, keep going with God, then you will see victory and progress in your thoughts, your priorities and your love for God.

- *WD 40 - Anthony good illustration: try and try again until we succeed!*

As we persevere, gradually, bit by bit, unknown to us we make progress.

*As someone has said "Because I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, therefore I thus discipline myself."*

Paul speaking of righteousness and self-control aimed straight for Felix's heart - to convince him of his unrighteousness and his un-control!

Would Felix see the true ugliness of his sin and turn to Christ before it is too late? Would he? The Gospel has a warning:

### *'The Judgment' to come*

There is a **judgment to come**. There is a day when sentence will be passed and the everlasting state of every man, women and child will be finally and irreversibly determined. Men have their day now, Felix had his; but God's day is coming, when everyone shall give account of himself to God, the Judge of all.

.; Everything done in this life is important, ever act is seen and recorded, every careless word listened to, for an account will have to be given.

That is why the Gospel of Christ's righteousness must be heeded. Paul in his preaching aimed at the consciences of men, he was not to please their fancy, nor to gratify their curiosity - but lead them to see their sins and their duty to God their maker.

Every preacher can learn from Paul who preferred the serving of Christ, and the saving of souls, before his own safety. He lay at the mercy of Felix, who had power (as Pilate said) to crucify him - or to release him.

Felix, "you know your need - turn to Christ while you can"

- ✚ *Let us all who have been saved be as a watchman and give fair warning of the judgment to come.*

Paul had done what he always did and what we should do, **set forth the truth plainly and commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**"

2Co 4:2

And that conscience had done its work. The truth had hit home, the shot had found its mark, it got to him - the word of God had entered Felix' heart - the result: **Felix was afraid.**

### *There's his response*

**Felix was afraid, he trembled** x2 (says AV) Guilt produces fear, and rightly so, for guilt is an inbuilt reminder that we are all moral being who will one day have to give account to a moral & just God. We've every reason to be fearful.

- *Southern USA fearful of an approaching storm take action.*
- *Not like King Canute who in his arrogance spoke to the waves*

God's agent within ever man, woman, boy or girl is your conscience. When Paul brought the truth of God to bear showing up Felix's guilty life - the conscience did its work, and the result was fear. What would he do about it?

Would he fall before Christ realizing he was a man undone and desperately needed Christ's righteousness to face this Holy God angry at sin?

His right fear of judgment should have thrown him onto the Saviour! But no he let his fear rule and put up his hand. Stop **"That's enough for now!"**

When people are afraid it is either 'fight' or 'flight'. Felix could fight the resistance in his heart and do what he knew he should do – confess the wicked life he had led and turn from it. Instead he ran. He shut down the source. "Stop no more". **That's enough!**

Some people close the door – literally, or cover their ears, I have seen it – Most walk away or do all they can to avoid hearing the message.

Some try to silence the messenger. Felix and Drusilla duck down behind their hard shell, up goes their defences; the stop sign **"That's enough"** x2

Historian Tacitus points out that Felix began his life as a slave, and he ended his life as a king. But there was a slave's heart bonded to his sin all the time under Felix's royal robes.

**Felix would not submit to the one who was a King and became a slave – the King who became a slave and died like a slave – for people like Felix.**

This slave once humbled is now exalted to the highest place, he is indeed King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Yet this governor Felix, a small lord, a sinful man - would have none of - he would not have Christ rule over him.

It's good to **tremble** - Paul before Christ on the Damascus road fell **trembling** Ac 9:6, - he got up a changed man.

The Jailer at Philippi feel down before Paul **trembling** Ac 16:29, he became a changed man. But not Felix.

✚ Many are startled by the word of God who are not effectually changed by it. Many fear the consequences of sin, and yet continue live in love and league with sin.

Felix **trembled** and that was all, in his heart there was no willingness to change. **"That's enough for now!"** x2

✚ What would you do, any Felix's in the room?

Felix silences the message by saying to the messenger: **"You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."** Is there a convenient season? Yes, it is now x2 - If it is not now - it never will be!

So guard and listen to your conscience - Your conscience confirms the truth, it warns your soul, a conscience listened to can change your destiny

**"The conscience," says one Puritan preacher, is what the snout is on a bear, a tender part to tame him by. Conscience is acutely sensitive to God's wrath. And hell-fire itself could not take hold of the soul but at this point."**

Do not try to make deals with your conscience – Take note it will stand by its own mind on things: *O conscience! who can stand against your power !  
And endure your prompts and agonies one hour !*

Paul preached to the man's conscience. Felix sat in transfixed silence while Paul stood up before him and plunged the two edged sword of God's holy law into his guilty conscience, till the hardened reprobate could control himself no more. What an encouragement for all true preachers than that scene in the palace of Cæsarea that day. What an ally, unseen but omnipotent, all true preachers have in the consciences of their hearers!

**26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him."** It didn't come.

But was it Drusilla who so suddenly cut short Paul's message and sent him back to his prison. Did Drusilla **tremble**? We don't read of it. How much of Felix's cowardice resulted from the influence of Drusilla sitting next to him. If she had not been there would Felix have humbled himself? been baptized? and Paul would have been set free, before the day was over. How many men have been slain by their weakness for women whose steps lead down to the chambers of death and hell. Cowardice is a terrible sin **The cowardly,—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.** Rev 21:8

**"That's enough for now!"** said Felix to Paul. Who here this morning saying in your hearts the very same words to God and to your own conscience.

✚ Delay is fatal - beware of putting off repentance – there's no do it later with repentance!

Your soul is important, delay is dangerous; nothing is of more fatal consequence than men's putting off their conversion to another time.

Some tremble at God's warning, some do not really intend to shut out the truth and head to Judgment - but like Felix failed to seize the moment.

Convictions cool off, good purposes come to no purpose, the result is more hardness of heart not less. Felix put off this matter to a more convenient season, but that season never came. The present season is the best season - now is the right time. **To-day if you will hear his voice do not harden your heart.** Follow Christ and be happy for ever; - or else lose it forever.

✚ May God help each of us to receive his grace before it is too late. END