

June 21st Sunday 2015

Text: ACTS 24:1-9

Topic: The Trial before Felix

When the Jewish leaders of the Sanhedrin came down to Caesarea to accuse Paul, they brought with them a lawyer Tertullum. He started with praising Felix which was a custom of that day. Even though Felix did not deserve such praise as History revealed that he was a cruel and despotic ruler. Whatever we do our history will reveal it and interpret what people say about us or say in front of us. Despite our position of honour our attitude and behavior with people tell us who we are. People may praise us for favour but in our absence they will say the truth about us. And before God you will receive the true and transparent reward.

The lawyer whose job is to do what he was hired for charged Paul with the following offences.

- 1) That Paul was a trouble maker who stirred up riots among the Jews all over the world. This is a common offence labeled against Christians (Acts 16:20-21). This is the reason why Luke wrote this book to declare that Christians did not commit this offence.
- 2) And that Paul was a ring leader of the Nazarene sect (Jesus) this is linked to where Jesus comes from (Nazareth). (Luke 4:16).
- 3) Paul was accused to have desecrated the temple There was no proof to this allegation but the Lawyer was skillful and clever to make him guilty he twisted the truth that the Jews seized Paul, this gave the Jews an opportunity to seize Paul but the Roman commander snatched Paul from them. (Acts 21:30-32).

Lesson: It is a lesson for our religious leaders, pastors, church committees and the congregation to always say the truth. It is also a big step for our believing lawyers to stand for the truth, not bags of money. Tertullum is an example of some of our nation's lawyers who are ready to kill an innocent man in order to get money. Remember not to sell your destiny for money our beloved Christians lawyers.

Prayer: As your child Lord Jesus, give me the grace to say the truth and stand for it at all times.

June 22nd Monday 2015

Text: ACTS 24:10-21

Topic: Paul's Defense

Felix was the governor of Judea (the southern province of Israel) from 52 to 59 A.D. At the time of Paul's trial, Felix had already been governor for several years and knew great deals about Jewish customs. Therefore, Paul was happy to make his defense before him. Paul denied all the charges that Tertullum the lawyer had brought against him. He said he had not been, arguing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd, anywhere in the country. He challenged his accusers to prove with specific evidence. Paul put all his statement of faith before Felix. And went forward to state his reason for coming to Jerusalem. He said this purpose is to present his offering in the temple which is a proper thing to do. Paul accusers preferred accusing him behind, since their accusations are false, they could not face him. If we have something against someone we should say it to his face.

Lesson: Leaders should be careful to hear and listen to accusers who bring accusations behind the other party. It is common in churches to see lots of letters, petitions without names and yet taken seriously against a brother. This should be done in the open, before the leaders, with good evidence.

Prayer: We pray dear Lord that we will not be party to false accusation of the Brethren with no evidence for selfish reasons in Jesus name.

June 23rd Tuesday 2015

Text: Acts 24:22-27

TOPIC: Paul and Governor Felix

It is not known whether or not Felix held a further hearing on Paul's case, or whether the commander Lysias ever came or not. But we do know that Felix kept Paul in prison for the next two years with the hope of getting a bribe from Paul and to keep the Jews happy. Corruption is a world problem today, but our country is accused of being one of the most corrupt Nations, and this is why we failed to progress. Everything is done through bribe from admission to every level in life. Even military who have signed for life or death have to bribe officials. The Pastors and church leaders are not immune to this practice. I do not know if you are free of it? Felix and his wife Drusilla wanted to hear more about the way of the Christian faith. Instead of asking for Paul on this important topic, they were looking for Paul to entertain them and to hear new teaching.

Therefore, when Paul began to talk about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come; they became frightened. It is bad when people have opportunity to hear God's word but turn it to entertainment. This is what many Christians do today. They go to church for passing time, a big lost! Felix became uneasy. But in the real sense Felix and his wife were suppose to hear the message of righteousness self control and judgment. Whenever God begins to reveal our sin, we often like Felix become uneasy and say it is enough for now. We should not lose any opportunity to listen to the word of God. This is why we should be eager to go to church, seminars and all church gathering to warm our faith.

Lesson: It is hard to listen and accept the messages that portray our sins. The fear of God's judgment alone will not save us we must repent of our sins; Today is our opportunity not tomorrow.

Prayer: O Lord, create in me a heart that it is responsive and repentant in Jesus name!

June 24th Wednesday 2015

Text: Acts 25:1-12

Topic: The Trial before Festus

Shortly after Festus, the new governor arrived in Caesarea. He went up to Jerusalem to meet the chief citizens of the province of Judea. The Jews then seized the opportunity and began to accuse Paul before the new and inexperienced governor. Then they requested that Festus should send Paul back to Jerusalem for trial. Their intention was to ambush and kill Paul on the Road. The activities of Boko Haram did not start today, but ever since the truth has been under attack by the kingdom of darkness. It is only changing colour to adopt to the time and achieve its aims and objectives. When you are new in an area or office do not grant the request of people too quickly, for it may be a trap. This is common in churches; people with criminal attitudes among believers seize opportunity to dominate new pastors posted into the church in order to position themselves in the church for selfish reasons. Pastors and leaders in every office should be careful and be prayerful in taking decision on strange request. Thank God, Festus did not say yes immediately.

He therefore decided to listen to the case. These wicked and evil Jews narrated their various charges against Paul with no evidence nor witnesses. It is not the attitude of a Christian to make accusation against innocent people (Matt. 18:15-16) we are to avoid testifying falsely.

Paul was able to defend himself against all accusations, but Festus who wanted to avoid bad times for Felix and the Jews tried to persuade Paul to go Jerusalem. But Paul appealed to Caesar and this made things easier for Festus.

Lesson: As a child of God entrusted with people, you should avoid trading the rights of these people on the altar, seeking for goodwill as Festus did. Although Felix is not a believer but he stood his ground for justice of the state, we should stand for what the word of God says.

Prayer: O Lord Jesus, it is easy for us to betray you for easy life, help me to stand for you always.

June 25th Thursday 2015

Text: Acts 25:13-27

Topic: Festus Consults King Agrippa

King Agrippa was the son of king Herod mentioned in Acts chapter 12. He was also the brother of Drusilla the wife of Felix (Acts 24:24). The Roman emperor had given Agrippa a small kingdom, north of the province of Judea, and Agrippa ruled there under the emperor's authority. As soon as the new Roman governor of Judea (Festus) arrived, King Agrippa with his sister Benice went to welcome him. Being a Jew himself, Agrippa knew much more about Jewish customs than Festus. So Festus took opportunity to discuss Paul's case with him.

Upon narrating Paul's case it was disappointing that it was not as serious as Festus thought it was. Agrippa also requested to hear Paul hoping to hear more about the dead man, named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. They heard Paul and could not lay any offence against him. You should note that no matter the length of your suffering as a believer, it will end and the rulers will disappear within short time. Paul

alone is famous and is happily living with Christ Jesus in heaven. The only reason we remember Agrippa and Festus is because of the short time, they were together with Paul. God chooses the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chooses the lowly things of this world and despised, so that no one may boast before God (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

Lesson: Whatever situation we may find ourselves even insults and disgrace, we should never give up. This is because our time of glory is ahead and no one can stop it coming. The little time of pleasure is not worth it, stand firm brothers and sisters.

Prayers: The world hates us and despises us despite our honesty. Lord Jesus I pray on behalf of persecuted Brethren in the world that you help us to stand in Jesus Name.

June 26th Friday 2015

Text: Acts 26:1-8

Topic: Paul before Agrippa

Paul speaks in his defense before Agrippa as much as he spoke before the Jewish crowd (Acts 22:1-2). Luke portrays Paul's conversion as one of the most important events in church history. It is a radical conversion and an open truth of his acceptance of Christ. This is of great benefit to the kingdom. Unlike what is happening today, you can not differentiate between the life of believers before and after his conversion. Paul displayed extraordinary commitment to his Savior and determination to go beyond; even those who lived and stayed with Jesus Christ have not attained this level. What a shame to us, that there is no trace of difference in our conversion. I'm ashamed, I do not know about you. If I have made a mark on reading Paul's consistency and determination in preaching the gospel, I am ashamed. Paul said he is on trial because of his hope in what God has promised "the resurrection of the dead". This is the promise to Abraham the father of the Jews (Gen. 12:2-3) that promise was fulfilled in Christ and especially in his resurrection. Paul says, this gives us eternal life in Christ. The Jewish nation depends on this promise, bodily resurrection and eternal life. There is only one difference between Paul and the Jews. Paul believed that the promise has been fulfilled while the Jews do not.

Lesson: Our consistency in presenting our belief can make a difference, although this did not free Paul but it has made a difference in his life. We should stand by the truth at all times.

Prayer: My Lord and Saviour Jesus Paul had suffered for you and have done extraordinary things. Help me not to hide under excuses. Amen.

June 27th Saturday 2015

Text: Acts 26:9-23

Topic: Paul's Conversion

Before Paul's conversion, he did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. He considered the followers of Jesus to be enemies of the Jewish religion. That is, he put many of the saints in prison to death and he cast his vote against them (Acts 7:58, 8:3, 9:1, 22:4). Paul did terrible things against the brethren, and personally attended to his

wicked plans. Paul who thought that Jesus is dead heard him spoke to him from heaven. This contradicts his early believe.

Jesus appointed him to be an apostle to the gentiles and witness to his word. He is to preach Christ and suffer for him. But Christ promise rescuing him from his own people. The purpose of Paul's calling is to go to the gentiles and open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light and rescue them from the power of Satan. Jews opposed Paul beliefs as he preached among the Gentiles whom the Jewish despise which they where jealous and wanted to kill Paul.

Lessons: Would you proclaim the light to your own people and to the Gentiles around you? What are you doing with your life? Be the light of your community today.

Prayer: Help me Lord Jesus to be a light and bearer of your word despite my former background in Jesus Name.