

Paul Brought Before the Sanhedrin, and Felix (Acts 23-24)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Acts

I. Background and Introduction

- a. A riot ensued among the Jews in Jerusalem when they found Paul in the Temple area.
- b. The crowd was silenced, and Paul tells them the story of his own spiritual journey: from persecuting Christians to his encounter with Jesus and his baptism by Ananias in Damascus.
- c. When Paul concludes by telling the crowd that Jesus had commissioned him to spread the faith to the Gentiles, the crowd erupts in violence and attempts to kill Paul.
- d. The Roman soldiers bind Paul and bring him in and threaten to question him under scourging.
- e. Paul explains that he is a Roman citizen, which ends the plan to scourge him. However, the next day he is to be brought before the council of Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin.

II. Paul Brought Before the Sanhedrin

- a. Read **Acts 23:1-11**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. Paul is brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin (high priest, priests, elders, religious leaders in Jerusalem).
 - ii. He begins by defending himself, stating that he has a clear conscience right up to the present day.
 - iii. Ananias, the high priest, orders that he be struck on the mouth by those standing by Paul.
 - iv. Paul curses Ananias, calling him a “whitewashed wall” who is attempting to judge Paul on the basis of the Law, yet who is himself violating the Law of Moses (by ordering that Paul be struck before he has presented his case and found guilty).
 1. Those near Paul rebuke him for reviling the high priest.

2. Paul says he did not know that the man speaking was the high priest (Paul had been away from Jerusalem for a long time, and apparently the high priest was not wearing any of his special clothing).
 3. Paul shows his respect for the Law, and his desire to follow it by quoting from the Law: “You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people”, and apologizes on the basis of not knowing that the man he spoke against was, in fact, the high priest.
 - a. This is a direct quote from the LXX, from **Exodus 22:27-28** (easier to see if you compare the Greek of the New Testament with the LXX here).
 4. Paul notices that the group he is addressing has both Pharisees and Sadducees in it. He wisely splits his opponents with his next statement: “I am a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged.”
 - a. The Pharisees (and Jesus as well) believed in the (bodily) resurrection of the dead; however, the Sadducees did not.
 - b. The tactic works, the group is split, and the two parties start arguing between one another.
 - c. Things get violent. The Roman soldiers pull Paul out and take him to the barracks.
 5. The next night Jesus appears, encouraging Paul that just as he had testified in Jerusalem, he will bear witness in Rome.
- c. The wisdom of Paul in a challenging situation.
- i. **Question:** Is there anything *we can learn* from this situation, where Paul was faced with a very difficult challenge?
 - ii. **Answer:** I notice three things.
 1. Paul had the honesty and humility to acknowledge when he had made a mistake. (In this case, his mistake was made out of ignorance.)
 - a. He acknowledged that he should not have been speaking badly about the high priest; and that this was done in ignorance (not knowing that it was the high priest).

2. Paul quotes from the Law (which he is being accused of speaking against) and demonstrates his submission to it.
 - a. In showing respect for the office of the high priest (despite the fact that the high priest was a corrupt individual), Paul was following the example of Jesus. Paul also was living out what he taught in **Romans 13**.
 - i. “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” (**Romans 13:1**, NKJV)
 - ii. An obvious application for us: in the face of great division and even corruption we see among political or spiritual leaders around us, we should treat them with respect on the basis of the office they hold.
3. He wisely uses his Pharisee background and knowledge to split the Sanhedrin.
 - a. Satan uses the tactic of creating division against God’s people all the time (which is likely why Jesus prayed for the unity of all future believers, the night before He was crucified).
 - b. There is tremendous power in unity, *whether it is used for good or for evil*.
 - i. Consider the Tower of Babel story, in **Genesis 11**.
 1. “And the LORD said, ‘Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.’” (**Genesis 11:6**, NKJV)
 - ii. “A threefold cord is not quickly broken” (**Ecclesiastes 4:12**, NKJV)
 - iii. Jesus asked: “If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?...” (**Luke 11:18**, NKJV)

- c. A basic strategy that Satan and the wicked use (but here Paul uses it for good): stay united, but divide your opponents!
 - i. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, *be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*” (**Matthew 10:16**, NKJV)
 - 1. When I think of a serpent being wise, I think of Satan in the Garden, in **Genesis 3**.
 - ii. At the conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus concludes: “So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.” (**Luke 16:8**, NKJV)
 - iii. Remember that in the description of the Holy Spirit in **Isaiah 11:1-3**, the first two characteristics listed are the Spirit of *wisdom and understanding!*
- iii. A few thoughts in the doctrine of ‘the resurrection of the dead’, sometimes referred to as ‘the resurrection of the flesh’.
 - 1. Jesus believed and taught this.
 - a. Read **Mark 12:18-27**.
 - i. The Sadducees did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Jesus said they were wrong about that!
 - b. Read **John 5:28-29**.
 - i. “All those who are in their graves” (refers to the dead bodies, not just the disembodied spirits of men).
 - ii. **Question:** What is “in the grave”: the body or the spirit of a deceased person?
 - 1. **Answer:** The body is in the grave; the spirit is in Hades awaiting the resurrection (and reunification of the two) on the Last Day.

- c. At the tomb of Lazarus, before Jesus raised him, He spoke with Martha, the sister of Lazarus:
 - i. “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’” (**John 11:23–24**, NKJV)
2. This is a foundational, core Christian doctrine (despite the fact many Christians today don’t understand it!)
 - a. “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of *resurrection of the dead*, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.” (**Hebrews 6:1–3**, NKJV)
 - i. The *resurrection of the dead* was considered one of the six “elementary principles of Christ”, the foundational teachings of the faith on which everything else rested.
 - b. Paul devotes almost the entire chapter of **1 Corinthians 15** to explain and defend this core Christian teaching.
3. Despite the clear and consistent teachings of the New Testament, some Christians continued to struggle with this idea of a physical resurrection of the body, even in the early church. Early Christian writer Justin Martyr addressed this, in fragments of *On the Resurrection* (found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 294-299). Points Justin made in that work include:
 - a. Jesus both taught and demonstrated, in becoming flesh and being physically resurrected Himself, the resurrection of the dead.
 - b. Some of the arguments Justin heard from other believers who doubted the idea of the physical resurrection of the flesh, included:
 - i. Physical resurrection of a dead body *is impossible!*
 - ii. Our flesh is corrupt and is what causes us to sin.

- iii. Jesus said we would become “like the angels” in the resurrection (**Mark 12:25**), not marrying.
 - 1. Based on that statement, some have (incorrectly) assumed that we will *not* have physical bodies at that time.
 - iv. Parts of our bodies will have no function (organs of reproduction, eating, etc.) in the next life.
 - v. What about those who had diseased or maimed bodies in this life?
- c. Arguments made by Justin in defending the doctrine included:
- i. Jesus lived as a virgin, showing that in the future, sexual intercourse will be done away with.
 - ii. Jesus healed the sick and lame, showing that our bodies will be restored perfect, healed, whole and entire at the end.
 - iii. If a mosaic maker created an image out of small colored stones, if the stones were scattered by time or even by the man himself, the original artist could collect all the pieces and recreate the image.
 - iv. Man was created by God as both body and spirit. Therefore, we cannot say that the flesh is contemptible.
 - v. Our bodies and souls sin together, like two oxen in a shared yoke.
 - vi. Man is body and soul. That is the very definition of ‘man’. Therefore, saving man (entirely) must, by definition, involve saving and restoring both aspects.
 - vii. In our baptism, both our bodies and our souls were washed. Both sought righteousness, both had to stop sinning.
 - viii. God raised Jesus from the dead (nail marks, wound in his side, empty tomb).

- ix. Jesus calls us to keep our bodies from sinning. In that, he is *not* like the physicians who let their terminally ill patients indulge themselves in whatever dietary pleasures they may desire!

III. Plot to Kill Paul, and the Transfer to Caesarea

- a. Read **Acts 23:12-35**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. Over 40 Jews swear an oath to one another that they will not eat or drink until they have killed Paul.
 - 1. They conspire with the chief priests and elders.
 - 2. This is an early example of a ‘conspiracy theory’ involving corruption at the highest levels of power. Throughout history, there have been many such conspiracies.
 - a. Joseph’s brothers conspire against him.
 - b. Circumcision and murder of the Shechemites, in Genesis.
 - c. The Jewish and Roman leaders against Jesus (story of the disciples stealing his body).
 - 3. Sometimes you also have a ‘whistleblower’ who knows what is going on, who ends up interrupting the devious plan.
 - ii. Paul’s nephew, a young boy, learns of the plan. He tells Paul, who sends him to the Roman commander.
 - iii. The Roman commander thwarts the plan of the Jews to kill Paul.
 - 1. He has him sent with a massive force (200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, 200 spearmen), by night, to Caesarea.
 - 2. Paul is sent to Felix, the governor, with a letter.
 - iv. The plan was to keep Paul, a Roman citizen, safely guarded in Herod’s Praetorium in Caesarea, until his accusers could come there to bring charges in a trial before the governor, Felix.

IV. The Trial Before Felix

- a. The prosecution speaks first.
 - i. Read **Acts 24:1-9**.

- ii. Tertullus the orator makes the case.
 - 1. He is accompanied by Ananias the high priest and some of the Jewish elders from Jerusalem.
 - 2. Tertullus starts by 'buttering up' the governor with praise and flattery. (**Acts 24:3-4**)
 - 3. Tertullus then identifies Paul as a troublemaker who had created dissension among Jews "throughout the world". He asserts Paul is the ringleader of a dangerous religious sect.
 - a. He was appealing to the governor's desire to keep peace in the Roman-controlled world.
 - 4. The Jews were trying to judge Paul according to their law (alleging he had profaned the temple) when the Roman soldiers interrupted the process "with great violence".
 - 5. It appears the Tertullus is trying to give the Roman governor the opportunity to give Paul back to them so the Jews can take care of this trouble-maker themselves!
- b. Paul defends himself in the trial before Felix.
 - i. Read **Acts 24:10-21**.
 - ii. Paul answers the charges made by Tertullus.
 - 1. To the charge of profaning the temple and violating the Law of Moses, Paul pleads: NOT GUILTY.
 - a. Paul said he was not disputing with anyone, and not doing anything to incite the crowds.
 - b. He further stated that his opponents had no evidence to prove that charge, and that they could not produce any witnesses to back up those claims.
 - 2. To the charge of being a follower of the new sect, the Christians, Paul pleads: GUILTY, but this is NOT A CRIME.
 - a. Paul says he worships the God of his fathers.
 - b. He believes all the things written in the Law and the Prophets (including the prophecies about the Christ).
 - c. He believes in the resurrection of the dead, "both the just and the unjust", or in some translations, "both the righteous and the unrighteous".

- i. Note that many of the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, also believed in that.
 - d. When Paul was before the Sanhedrin, the thing he said that created a great stir was his statement, “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.” (**Acts 24:21**)
 - c. No decision from Felix, the governor.
 - i. Read **Acts 24:22-23**.
 - ii. Felix does not render a decision.
 - 1. Apparently, Felix had a more accurate knowledge of “the Way”, the Christian movement, than Paul’s Jewish opponents from Jerusalem did.
 - 2. Felix adjourned the trial and claimed he would make a decision later, when “Lysias the commander” came down to Caesarea. However, Felix never issued a decision either way.
 - 3. Felix allowed Paul, although still a prisoner, to have more liberty. He was allowed to have his friends visit and take care of him.

V. Paul Preaches to Felix and Scares Him

- a. Read **Acts 24:24-27**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. Felix never renders a decision in Paul’s case.
 - ii. Paul remained a prisoner under Felix for two years, until Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus.
 - 1. Felix was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe.
 - 2. Felix also kept Paul bound because he wanted to curry favor with the Jews.
 - 3. Felix was married to a Jewish woman, Drusilla. (It appears, based on the speech of Tertullus, that Felix himself, a Roman governor, was not a Jew.)
 - 4. Felix was curious about the Christian faith, and he sent for Paul to hear more about it. Governor Felix had many such conversations over the two years that Paul was under his charge.

- c. Paul preached to Felix.
 - i. **Question:** Felix is the Roman governor, and Paul is his prisoner. Considering that as governor, Felix had complete power and control in this relationship, *why was Felix afraid of Paul?*
 - 1. Re-read **Acts 24:24-25**.
 - 2. Felix is *afraid* based on what Paul is telling him regarding the message of the gospel.
 - a. **Further Questions:**
 - i. Isn't the gospel message supposed to produce hope and encouragement?
 - ii. What was Paul saying to Felix?
 - iii. Is this how we present the gospel today to unbelievers? Should we be considering Paul's approach here? Is there anything for us to learn?
 - ii. The message Paul preached: "He reasoned about:
 - 1. Righteousness,
 - 2. Self-control, and
 - 3. The judgment to come."
- d. On righteousness.
 - i. It is important to correctly understanding the meaning of key words used in the Bible.
 - 1. If you can redefine the terms, you can completely change the meaning. This is true in the case of contracts, laws, and the Scriptures as well.
 - a. In contracts, terms are identified, usually in the very beginning of the contract.
 - b. If you change the meaning of a word, you can completely change the meaning of a statement. For example, see Noah Webster's *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language*, the entry for the word 'marriage':
 - i. "MARRIAGE: The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man

and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children.”

- c. Consider how changing the meaning of this one word, “marriage” (replacing the definition above with one from a modern dictionary), completely changes the meaning of the following statement in Scripture:
 - i. “*Marriage* is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled...” (**Hebrews 13:4**, NKJV)
- d. I believe one of Satan’s tactics is to change the meanings of keywords in the Bible. If he can do that, he can effectively void some of the most important commands of God as found in the Scriptures!
- e. As a masonry building is made of bricks, the Scriptures are based on key words. If you degrade the meaning of words, you are building with bricks that will crumble to dust.
 - i. The goal is not a ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative’ definition, but rather, what did the Biblical authors mean when they used specific words or terms?
 - ii. When speaking with someone from another background, I often need to back up and make sure that when I use a term, the other person understands what I mean (and how the term is used in the Bible).
 - iii. This is critical. It is indeed ‘a hill to die on’!
- f. Some key Biblical terms that have been subject to changing definitions over time include:
 - i. Baptism: (originally to dip, plunge or immerse; now expanded to include even sprinkling)

- ii. Grace: (originally 'favor'; hijacked by Protestants to 'unmerited favor').
 - iii. Saving Faith:
 - 1. The Biblical definition of saving faith, from **Hebrews 11** and **James 2**, includes:
 - a. belief in something you cannot see,
 - b. combined with an obedient response, and
 - c. continuing over time, to the end.
 - 2. In contrast, in many 'Christian' circles today, faith is defined as: *simple belief* (which need only be observed in one moment of time).
 - iv. Kingdom of God:
 - 1. Either
 - a. kingdom = church, OR
 - b. kingdom = something that we are waiting for, which will arrive sometime in the future;
 - 2. AS OPPOSED TO: a more complete definition that encompasses both aspects.
 - v. Works: (This term is used in multiple different senses in the New Testament, depending on context.)
 - vi. Righteousness: (We will discuss what this word actually means as used in Scripture and some of the ways it has been misdefined over the past 500 years.)
- ii. Unfortunately, while 'righteousness' is a fairly simple term to understand, there are MULTIPLE misconceptions out there in the religious world regarding what this term means.
- 1. Martin Luther gave a famous sermon in 1519, '*Two Kinds of Righteousness*'. That teaching by Luther continues to have a significant impact in many Christian circles today.

- a. Luther taught that we are all unrighteous. Famously, he took the passage from **Isaiah 64** out of context and concluded that none of us have in us, nor are we capable of doing anything righteous.
 - i. “But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.” (**Isaiah 64:6**, NKJV)
 - ii. Note that it is a sinful group of Israelites who are *acknowledging their own religious hypocrisy*. This statement is *not* a universal pronouncement of God upon all people for all time!
- b. Similarly, Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers took Paul’s statement in **Romans 3:10** to a place that Jesus never went, namely that there is *no one* (after the Fall of Adam) who can be referred to as “righteous”; we are all totally depraved.
- c. Therefore, Luther said in his sermon that the first type of righteousness was *the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us* when we become Christians.
- d. Likewise, the second type of righteousness is manifested in things we do in obedience to Christ after we become Christians.
- e. **Question:** *Why does this matter?*
 - i. (having an accurate understanding of the meaning of the terms ‘righteous/righteousness’)
 - ii. **Answer:** If we do not understand what the term “righteous” means as used in the New Testament, we will not be able to properly understand important teachings of Jesus, such as:
 1. “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (**Matthew 5:20**, NKJV)
 2. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things

shall be added to you.” (**Matthew 6:33**, NKJV)

2. Some today have claimed that righteousness can only be understood in the context of a *covenant relationship* (such as the covenant of Noah, or circumcision, or the Law of Moses, or the new covenant under Christ).
 - a. However, read **Matthew 23:33-35**.
 - i. Jesus described Abel as “righteous”.
 - ii. **Question:** What covenant was *Abel* under?
 1. **Answer:** None. There was no covenant in effect during the lifetime of Abel (**Genesis 4**), the son of Adam and Eve.
 - b. Similarly, Noah was described as a righteous man (*in some translations, “a just man”, which means the same thing*), even prior to the Flood (**Genesis 6:9**). Therefore, this also was prior to the ‘rainbow covenant’ God would later establish with Noah.
 - c. Also, Peter said that *Job* was a righteous man, in **2 Peter 2:6-8**.
3. Several have made the claim that “righteousness” in the Old Testament is based on a Hebrew word that is only understood in the context of a relationship.
 - a. An internet search for “Righteousness + Relationship” will bring up several articles advocating this view of the term “righteousness”, from an array of different Christian backgrounds.
 - b. One example is from the introduction to the article, ‘Right or Righteous’ by Fred Faller, in *Disciples Today* online, October 3, 2017.
 - i. “...the word used for ‘righteousness’ in the Old Testament carries a deeply embedded cultural concept. The challenge was that this concept was more tied to the fulfillment of the relationship between two persons than to the fulfillment of a legalistic code. Thinking like an Old Testament Jew, even two thieves could be considered ‘righteous’ in their relationship to one another if

it were characterized by sharing, fairness, camaraderie and loyalty.”

1. [Note: Faller is a personal friend and a well-grounded Bible teacher I respect. However, I believe the mistake he makes here is a common one, misdefining the term ‘righteousness’ as used in the Bible. - CP]
- c. **Questions:** Two thieves can be considered *righteous*? Why stop there?
 - i. Could two men involved in a homosexual relationship also be considered “righteous” within their relationship?
 - ii. What about a married man involved in an adulterous relationship with a prostitute? Can they have a ‘righteous’ relationship, in the same sense that the word is used in Scripture?
- d. The Scriptures refer to thieves, fornicators and adulterers as being *unrighteous*.
 - i. Paul wrote: “Do you not know that the *unrighteous* will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither *fornicators*, nor idolaters, nor *adulterers*, nor *homosexuals*, nor *sodomites*, nor *thieves*, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10, NKJV)
- e. **Question:** Would the apostle Paul have applied the term ‘righteous’ to a thief?
 - i. **Answer:** Of course not!
 - ii. Righteousness has to do with how you live and what you do, not just how you treat one person in a relationship!
4. So how SHOULD we define the term “righteous” as used in the New Testament by Jesus, Peter, Paul, and others?
 - a. The Greek words in the New Testament that are translated “righteous” (*dikaio*s / δίκαιο*s*) and

“righteousness” (dikaiosune / δικαιοσύνη) were well known to the New Testament writers.

- i. Keep in mind that when Jesus and the apostles quote from the Old Testament, they generally quote from the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX), which also was in Greek.
 - ii. The same Greek words for “righteous” or “righteousness” are used a total of *over 700 times* in the LXX!
- b. Peter sums up the Christian way of life in **1 Peter** with the following phrase:
- i. “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having *died to sins*, might *live for righteousness*—by whose stripes you were healed.” (**1 Peter 2:24**, NKJV)
- c. Peter then goes on to address what it means to “live for righteousness”. Many of the things he says (how slaves submit to their masters, relations between husbands and wives, etc.) ARE in the context of relationships with others.
- d. However, Peter gives a more complete picture of “righteousness” by pointing to **Psalm 34** (quoting from the LXX, where it is designated **Psalm 33**).
- i. “For ‘He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him *turn away from evil* and *do good*; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who *do evil*.’” (**1 Peter 3:10–12**, NKJV; quoting David’s **Psalm 34** from the LXX, where it is designated **Psalm 33**).
 - ii. Note that living according to righteousness (in addition to treating others well) also demands that a person *turn away from evil* and *do what is good*.
 - iii. In that psalm, David goes on to say that while the righteous person may face many adversities, but

the Lord listens to the righteous, and He protects and delivers them.

- e. It is always preferable to *let the Bible define* the meaning of the important terms used in it, wherever possible!
 - i. Also, see **Ezekiel 18** for a clear and practical description of what is meant by the term “righteous”.
 - f. If a person is not doing what is right (for example, a thief), that person cannot be righteous, according to Peter and David (and Ezekiel)!

5. Therefore, with the Biblical definition of “righteousness” in view, I believe Paul was calling Felix to turn away from sin and do what is right. That certainly would involve how he conducted his relationships. However, it also would go well beyond that to encompass what Peter said (from David): doing what is good and turning away from sin.

e. Regarding self-control.

- i. Recall that Paul spoke to Felix about “righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come” (**Acts 24:25**). We now turn our attention to the second point made by Paul: *self-control*.
- ii. One of my favorite quotes on this topic is from early Christian writer Clement of Alexandria. Addressing the pagans, he wrote (c. 195 AD):
 - 1. “Your ears are debauched, your eyes commit fornication, your looks commit adultery before you embrace. O you that have done violence to man, and have devoted to shame what is divine in this handiwork of God, you disbelieve everything that you may indulge your passions, and that ye may believe in idols, because you have a craving after their licentiousness, but disbelieve God, *because you cannot bear a life of self-restraint*. You have hated what was better, and valued what was worse, having been spectators indeed of virtue, but actors of vice.”
 - a. (Source: Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, chapter 4; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 2, p. 189)
 - 2. In my opinion, this is one of the top real reasons that people do not want to become Christians, even today! It reminds me of

what Jesus said in **John 3** about people not wanting to come into the light and not wanting to give up their sins.

- a. Jesus said: “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (**John 3:19–21**, NKJV)

iii. The apostle Paul on self-control:

1. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age....*” (**Titus 2:11–12**, NKJV)
2. Also, in **Romans 12:1**, where Paul calls us to, “present your bodies as living sacrifices”.

iv. Self-control is a *way of life* for a Christian, restraining the desires of our flesh. That includes:

1. Sexual impulses.
 - a. Fornication
 - b. Adultery and other sexual sins
2. The lust of the eyes (**1 John 2:16**).
 - a. Looking lustfully at the bodies of others
 - b. Internet pornography
3. Sins of the tongue (**James 1 & 3**).
 - a. Gossip
 - b. Slander
4. Laziness (**Proverbs 6**).
5. Gluttony
6. Alcohol and drug abuse

f. **Closing Thoughts:**

- i. When sharing your faith with unbelievers, consider the outline Paul used with Felix: righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come.
- ii. You may find it strikes fear in the hearts of those who hear it, just as it did with Felix!