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**RELATED SCRIPTURES**

Acts 21:1 - 23:35 | Matthew 16:24-25 | Mark 10:17-22

**STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 10.29.23**

**SUMMARY**

As Paul's roundabout journey continues between Jewish and Roman officials, he finds himself back in the hands of the Romans. Tertullus, a representative of the Jews, brings three charges against Paul to the Roman governor, Felix. He accused him of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, profaning the temple, and of most concern to the Romans, one who stirs up riots. While the Romans promoted peace (*Pax Romana*), they often achieved peace through intimidation and force. So if Paul were one to "stir up riots," the Roman governor, Felix, would have motive to detain him and keep him quiet. Paul denied inciting riots and profaning the temple but then made his case that he was a faithful Jew who accepted the Law and the Prophets and looked forward to the hope of a resurrection. However, the primary issue between Paul and the Jews who accused him (who were not present) pertained to the role that Jesus plays in the resurrection; Paul's belief—as is the faith of Christians today—is that Jesus is the Messiah who didn't come with a sword, but instead delivered God's people from sin and death which brings about the resurrection *in Christ*. Felix didn't release Paul or even make a judgment with respect to the charges brought forth, but instead kept him in captivity and continued to have conversations with him, as did Felix's wife, Drusilla. Sadly, Felix was faced with the prospect of choosing who he would serve, believing he could serve and please everyone's wishes—including his own. The call of the Christian is to take up the cross of Christ and follow him, leaving behind *anything* that impedes us from doing this. History tells us Felix's indecision ultimately, and sadly, never obtained anything of true worth.

**GROUP QUESTIONS**

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Acts 24:1-27.

How does Paul's posture of defense strike you? What elements made up his response to the charges brought against him? What can we learn or apply from this when people speak falsehoods about us?

How does Felix's response to Paul make an impression on you? Why do you think he held Paul for two years and ultimately never let him go? If you had to guess, what was most important to Felix?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

**CLOSE IN PRAYER**

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.