

These questions are for the **April 25, 2021** sermon, "A More Opportune Time." Please read the sermon text (Acts 24:22-27) together out loud.

### Sermon Outline

AS CHRISTIANS, WE CAN EXERCISE SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT, EVEN WHEN . . .

1. Personal liberties are being restricted (22-23)
  - a. Paul's personal liberties may increase or decrease.
  - b. But Paul remains focused upon proclaiming Jesus Christ. That mission remains unhindered.
    - I. It should be expected that liberties will come and go. Don't be surprised by that.
    - II. It should be expected that believers take every opportunity to preach Christ.
    - III. Witness boldly even if you have only partial freedom.
2. Essential truths are being avoided (24-25)
  - a. Felix knows all the basic tenets of the Way (22).
    - I. But he puts Paul off. He leaves. He will listen to Paul when he feels like it (25).
    - II. Felix tries to assert control. He thinks his judgment and timing are sovereign.
  - b. Paul continues to faithfully and boldly proclaim Christ (as should we).
    - I. He speaks not of faith, but of "faith in Christ Jesus."
    - II. He customizes his good news presentation for Felix, to include righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment. Paul is in jail, but has complete liberty.
  - c. Felix was "alarmed" by the gospel. He held to spiritual procrastination.
3. Ulterior motives are being employed (26-27)
  - a. Felix continues to listen, hoping to receive a bribe from Paul
  - b. This musing costs Paul two prime years of his life while imprisoned at Caesarea.
    - I. While Felix continues to procrastinate and hopes for cash . . .
    - II. Paul continues to joyfully proclaim Jesus as the Christ.
      - a) Seemingly without frustration or angst. But faithfully.
      - b) Seemingly without perceptible success.

### Life Group Questions

1. Based on #1, above: In a world such as ours, it should be expected that governing authorities will often increase and decrease the liberties and freedoms of Christians. Those in China, North Korea and Pakistan (for instance) expect and even embrace governmental restrictions, inconsistencies and overreaches. Why do you think Christians in the US are so consumed with their rights and freedoms? In what way has this expectation of the government hurt our Christian witness? Are you truly free even if the government attempts to restrict?
2. Based on #1, above: Governmental restrictions actually greatly increased Paul's witness. If they had not arrested him, he would have been killed. This arrest has not only given Paul more time to write letters and connect with friends (23), it has also increased his influence from everyday people to governors. God will limit your liberty through diagnosis, broken relationships and quarantine. How have your recent restrictions increased your witness?
3. Based on # 2, above: People will often avoid the most important topics. Paul proclaimed the truth and then let Felix go until a future time when he wanted to talk more. What can you learn about faithfulness and patience in your gospel ministry? Are you growing in patience?
4. Based on #3, above: Paul did not succumb to bribery. Sometimes we can destroy our message about Christ by submitting to some earthly expectation, like bribery. Discuss.