

Acts 23-24 • Responding to the light of the Gospel

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You'll remember that where we are in the text, Paul is now before the council, which means the Sanhedrin of Israel. And it says in verse 1.

“And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.”² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.” (ESV)

And just like that, we know exactly what's going on. Because the fact that the high priest asked someone in response to Paul's statement to smack him on the mouth. And we don't know whether it was a slap actually, or if they did a closed fist, sort of a deck. I don't know what it was, but what it means is that the high priest vehemently objected to Paul's claim of innocence.

And that's the thing. He's simply getting up and he's giving his testimony. And it would be something like a defendant getting up in a court of law today and beginning to testify in their own defense, and having the judge just go, that's a lie. That's a lie. That's not true.

Well, the person has a right to speak and to speak in their own defense without a judgment being rendered yet. And you can see right away what Paul is up against and he's not about to take any of this lying down.

Verse 3 says, *“Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall!...”* That's a horrible thing to say about someone. We're like, if today, we're like, what does that mean?

A whitewashed wall refers to something made to look clean on the outside, but under the paint, it's a rotting, and corrupt, and falling apart. And that's exactly what he is saying. And so he says, *“...you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?”*

You see, Paul knew that the Sanhedrin had a responsibility to uphold the law. And the law... There was a law in Israel that was very much like what we have

here in the United States of America, in the sense that a person is considered innocent until proven guilty. And so, there was a violation of that very principle when the high priest in judgment, ordered that Paul would be struck. And so this is what Paul here is dealing with.

And it says, *“⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?”⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”*”

Now I need to stop here for a moment and tell you that commentators are divided on what Paul meant by this statement, when he said, I didn't know this was the high priest. They're like what?

He was a Pharisee and the high priest wore very unique clothing, which would set him apart as being the high priest. So why in the world would Paul make this statement? I didn't know he was the high priest.

Some believe that Paul genuinely didn't recognize him because he had a disease of the eyes which kept him from being able to focus very well. And he talked about that disease of his eyes in his letter to the Galatians. If you read through the Book of Galatians, you'll see that he told them it was because of a disease that he came to them in the first place. (Galatians 4:13) And then in the course of the letter, he says, you guys treated me like an angel from God, and I know that if you could have taken out your own eyes and given them to me, you would have. (Galatians 4:14-15) And that tells you what was going on.

And then elsewhere in Paul's letters. Paul didn't write his own letters, he dictated them to people. In other words, you didn't write them down, but at the end of the letter, he would often say, see what large letters I use as I write with my own hand. That was the validating stamp that the letter was in fact from Paul, because he would write the very last part in his own hand, but he had to write really large letters. And I believe, again, it was because he had a disease of the eyes, and that's one of the explanations.

Others say that Paul did recognize the high priest, but in fact was using sarcasm here as if to say that the actions of the high priest were unrecognizable. That was the unrecognizable part. Personally, I tend to think Paul's eyesight, I think the evidence is for Paul's eyesight being so bad at this point that he couldn't make out one man from another. And I really think that's a legitimate explanation, but either way, Paul knew at this point in this hearing that there was no way he was going to get a fair shake with this group of guys.

And so it says in verse 6. *“Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”*⁷ *And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.*⁸ *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, (they didn’t believe in those things) but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.*⁹ *Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?”*¹⁰ *And when the dissension became violent, (which would suggest, these guys started throwing punches or something similar to that) the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.”* I want you to stop there for just a moment.

What Paul did here, knowing as he did that this was a biased group of men who were not going to give him any sort of a fair hearing. They were not open to the truth of what he was going to say. You can see what he did is he used the division that was already there. He exploited the division within the Sanhedrin to his own benefit. In other words, to create a diversion because he knew this wasn't going anywhere.

And what's interesting is that there are a good many students of the Bible who really don't like what Paul did here because they think it was somewhat unethical that he divided the room. I don't know about you, but I think it was genius. I really do. I think it's brilliant. It's like, dude, that was, I mean, he knew exactly what was going on.

He knew the differences between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He knew that this wasn't going anywhere. He'd already been hit in the mouth just for simply saying, I've lived my life with a clear conscience.

Apparently that was so abhorrent to the high priest because he was so convinced that Paul was a reprobate that this just wasn't going to happen. Nothing good was going to come out of this so Paul did what he did.

And so it goes on in verse 11 and it says, *“The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”*”

So the Lord then told Paul and made it clear that he would eventually get to Rome. That was something Paul wanted very much to do. I don't think he knew at this time exactly under what circumstances he would be going to Rome, which was under arrest. And we'll see that as we finish up the Book of Acts, but at least he knew that he was going to make it.

And so that statement by the Lord would become a source of great comfort for Paul in the months to come. Because God told him he was going to make it to Rome.

Do you remember all the things that happened in the meanwhile? There's going to be a death threat. There's going to be poisonous snakes. There's going to be a shipwreck. And Paul is going to be able to say, oh no, I'm making it to Rome.

You wonder, how was Paul able to take a venomous snake that bit him and shake it off into the fire. And just sit down and have a hot dog with the rest of the group there as they're sitting around the fire. How was he able to do that? Because he knew God told him, you're going to go to Rome. And so, if you're going to go to Rome, that means you're not going to die. And so it doesn't really matter what happened.

It doesn't matter how many people decide they're going to kill you. It doesn't matter how many snakes bite you on the arm. It doesn't matter how many shipwrecks that you endure, you're going to get to Rome.

So you see when God gives you that sense of understanding you, and I'm, I guess I'm now talking to you. You can take that to the bank and you can rest in it. And there are certain things you say, well, God's never told me anything similar to that. Well, He has told you a lot of things that are in fact, similar to that.

One of the things He told you, and one of the things He's told me in the Word of God is that, "*all things work together for the good, for those who (love Him and) are called according to his purpose.*" (Romans 8:28) That's a promise and you can rest in that promise and know that whatever befalls you, God's going to work it for good.

Now here's the issue. Here's why people struggle with that passage or that promise so much. It's because their definition of good and God's definition of good sometimes is greatly different. Can I just tell you what God's definition of good is for your life so we can clear this up once and for all?

God's definition of good is that you would be more Christlike. He's not out to make you happy. And it's not that He's against happiness, but it doesn't say God works all things together for your happiness. It says, God works all the things together for the good of those who love Him and "*are called according to his purpose.*" And the highest form of good, as far as God is concerned in your life and in my life, is that we would be Christ like. Yeah.

And one day we're going to agree with Him on that particular score. Right now, it's not a big goal in my life. I mean, on a day to day basis, I'm just going to admit to you right here, right now, I don't sit and think about being, doing everything in my power to become more Christ like. Because first of all, there's nothing I can do in my power anyway, but even to desire it. What I desire from day to day is to get through the day. Don't you? And the older you hope to get through the day without injuring yourself. It's just the craziest thing in the world.

I got one of my kids who will say, he'll brag about the fact that he ran a marathon. And I brag about the fact that I put on my underwear without falling down. You know what I mean? That's just the difference in life. Anyway, but God's going to work all things together for good. Where did I come up with that, dear? I don't know. Anyway, the Lord said, "*Take courage...*"

Verse 12. "*When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.*" And do you think they're going to be able to kill him? Well you know the story. But you also know that God made a promise to Paul, right? It doesn't matter how many people are going to take an oath to kill Paul. It's not going to work. Why? Because God's got a plan, and do you know that He has a plan for your life?

And do you know that your days have been marked out? The Bible says, all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. That's David. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:16)

And you and I get all nervous sometimes. Well, I don't know about you or me. Or when life happens or when you get on an airplane. I know some, I'm talking to some of you guys about... And you're all nervous about whether the airplane is going to go down. Well, if it goes down, it's because it was the end of your days. I don't know if that's comforting or not, but that's just the way it is.

So anyway, it, it says in verse 13 that, "*There were more than forty who made this conspiracy.*"¹⁴ *They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have*

strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul.
¹⁵ *Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. (it's like, well, you got a few more questions for this guy) And we are ready to kill him before he comes near. ”*

So they're going to wait in ambush. They're all these guys, right? And yet, and here's another serious charge against the high priest. He's consenting to be involved in an assassination plot.

It says, ¹⁶ *Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.* ¹⁷ *Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him.”* ¹⁸ *So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, “Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.”* ¹⁹ *The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”* ²⁰ *And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him.* ²¹ *But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.”* ²² *So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”* That's a smart piece of counsel.

²³ *Then he called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night.”* In other words, they, he planned to whisk Paul away beginning at 9 p.m. That would be the third hour of the night.

Verse 24. *“Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”* ²⁵ *And he wrote a letter to this effect:*

²⁶ *“Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings.* ²⁷ *This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, ...”* Yeah, right. More like arrested him. That's really what happened. He and in a sense, he rescued him from the standpoint that they were going to kill him, but he came in and instead of just breaking it up, he actually arrested Paul.

Anyway, *“...having learned that he was a Roman citizen. (there's, not everything is totally true there)* ²⁸ *And desiring to know the charge for which*

they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, (look at this next phrase) but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.” Did you catch that? What was Paul charged with? Nothing. Nothing.

“³⁰ And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”

³¹ So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him.”

And what it's saying there is that all of the, most of the guard that came to bring Paul to Antipatris stopped at this point and went back to Jerusalem because the journey from this point on wasn't dangerous and they knew that so they could take less people.

“³³ When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.” The NIV says, “Herod's palace.” It was a headquarters.

Now, before we get to chapter 24, we're going to read through this fairly rapidly. Paul is now in front of Felix, the governor. We've never met Felix before. Let me just tell you a little something about it.

Felix was a man who had risen very quickly from very meager positioning in the Roman kingdom to becoming a Roman governor, which was a pretty big deal. In fact, he was a slave. In fact, Felix was the first slave in the history of the Roman empire to then become a governor, a procurator, if you will, right? Very first one. And he had a fairly miraculous rise to power.

Politically, he was a cruel man. He saw no bones in assassinating those who got in his way. Morally, he was a corrupt man. He had several wives. He stole his most recent wife away from her husband. And that was the kind of man that Paul was about to appear in front of.

Chapter 24. “*And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, (we're told his name, it was) one Tertullus.*” And that

means, and that's a Greek name, by the way. So this is a Greek prosecuting attorney for lack of a better, more modern term.

And it says, *“They laid before the governor their case against Paul. ² And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:*

“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, ³ in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. ⁴ But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵ For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. ⁸ By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

(and) ⁹ The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

¹⁰ And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. ¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹² and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. ¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, (which is what they called Christianity) which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. ¹⁶ So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. ¹⁷ Now after several years I came to bring alms (that means an offering or donation) to my nation and to present offerings. ¹⁸ While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia— ¹⁹ they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. ²⁰ Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, ²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

²² But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, (interesting) put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your

case.”” By the way, Lysias never came, we have no record of any Roman commander coming, and you're going to find out that this just dragged on and on.

“²³ Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

²⁴ After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, ...” And by the way, it was Drusilla that Felix stole away from her first husband. All right. So you need to know that.

You need to know that Paul is going to speak to Felix with a wife that he stole, and he's going to talk to them about the Lord. So keep that in mind. The last part of verse 24, in fact, says, “*...and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.*” All right.

Here's a man again, just to set this up, who is profoundly immoral. All right. Who has now called for Paul to hear him speak about what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ. Okay. How do you think this is going to go? Right. Here we go.

Verse 25. “*And as he (that's Paul) reasoned about righteousness and self-control (these are some things that Felix never had) and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”*”

In other words, Felix was convicted of his immoral lifestyle and he was frightened by what Paul said concerning judgment. That you're going to stand before God one day for the way that you've lived.

And so you can see what happened here. Instead of responding like we see others respond at times with confession and repentance. He says, when I get an opportunity, I'll summon you. Or as the NIV says, “*when I find it convenient, I'll call for you.*”

Would you like me to translate that for you even further? It basically means, we're done. And even though we may talk again in the future, we're not, I'm going to make sure we don't talk about this anymore because I am far too comfortable in my sin to have anything to do with this Jesus and any talk of judgment. Understood? That's what he said.

And so verse 26 says, “*At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. (in other words, he was hoping for a bribe) So he sent for him often and conversed with him.*”²⁷ *When two years had elapsed,...*”

It's so crazy. I mean, that just pops up right off of the page when “*two years had elapsed,...*” Earlier he said, well, when the tribune gets here, we'll decide your case. It's been two years now.

It tells us that after that time, “*Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.*” And what that means is, knowing that it would upset the Jews to release Paul, he decided to keep him in prison.

Isn't this fun? We got political favors, bribes, corruption, and endless bureaucracy. Isn't it comforting to know that nothing has changed? I mean, it's like we thought we invented all these things and we curse our politicians like they came up with this stuff. But politically nothing has changed.

But I want to talk just for a moment about governor Felix, because he was afraid to come into the light. That's what it comes down to. He wanted to stay instead in the darkness because don't you know that sin thrives in the darkness? It's..., sin struggles greatly in the light because the light exposes it for what it is. But when a person loves their sin too much, they'll just stay in the shadows. And this is what John wrote about in his Gospel account. From John chapter 3, there's a passage that I want to show you. It says,

John 3:19-20 (ESV)

...this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

...this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, (it says) and people loved the darkness (that's the bottom line, they just flat out loved the darkness) rather than the light (and the reason they did it is) because their works were evil. (and then he says) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

Who of us wants to come into the light and let it show us for the dirty people we are. It's like when you get a stain on your clothes, you don't want to get into the bright sunlight because everybody's going to see it.

Have you ever gotten dressed and you kept the lights dim because maybe somebody was sleeping and you didn't want to turn on the light. And you put on a garment, a shirt or pants or something that you couldn't see were stained. And you're doing your best not to wake up your loved ones. And you're getting all dressed, and you go to work, and you're like, oh, that's spaghetti stain didn't come out.

I'm the worst one for spilling things. If it can be spilled, I will spill it. And I get these oil stains. Like I'll drip butter, things like that and those things don't come out. You can wash it. I don't care how many times you wash it. And there's just this big, just sitting there for everybody to see. Shows you up for the slob you are. Well, that's what the light does. The light shows you up for who you are. Right.

And so people who love their sin, aren't going to come into the light because they don't want to be exposed. Now that's not the case with everyone. Do you remember when Peter preached the Gospel on the day of Pentecost? He got up and he preached a really hard message.

He pointed to the Jews and he said, you killed Him, you killed the Lord of life. And he was very pointed about his accusations related to the death of Jesus. And you'll remember that rather than running from the light of that revelation, those people didn't run, did they? Let me show you what they did do. Just a reminder back in Acts chapter 2. It says, *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, (right?) and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

You know what this is? When somebody says that, what do I need to do? You can tell they're not running. They're staying put and they're letting... You see, the light has already exposed who they are and they're willing to embrace it, understand their culpability, and address it. And when they say to Peter and to the rest of the disciples what do we do? What they're saying is, guilty. We're guilty. Now, what do we do about our guilt? What can we do about it?

And that's where Peter begins to give the good news. Well, here's the good news, you are guilty, but Jesus came to exonerate you of your guilt by taking your guilt upon Himself. And being punished in your place. That's the good news.

But the reason they got to the good news is because they embraced the bad news. They let the light do its work, shine on their lives, and expose what was there. And because they did, they got to the good news.

Did you ever notice Felix never got to the good news? I should say maybe Paul never got to the good news with Felix because he ran from the light. And so there are some who stand and there are some who run.

But here's the interesting part. I trusted everyone in this room has stood in the presence of the light of God's revelation as it relates to your sin. And you've just, you've dealt with it. And I know how, and I'm hoping, I know how you dealt with it. And that's by coming to the cross, recognizing what Jesus did there, and accepting what He did.

But here's the deal. This is not just a once and done sort of a thing for you and me. This whole idea of being exposed by the light of the Scripture. Have you ever noticed that even today, just sitting and going through the Scripture, do you notice the light was shining here in this room? And I'm not talking about those led lights up above. I'm talking about the light of God's Word.

It happens every time we're in the Word, doesn't it? The light comes on and we have to deal with it. And every time when you're praying, sometimes the light will come on. And sometimes it happens when you're just listening to somebody share. They're giving their testimony and you're convicted of something in your life. The light just came on.

And sometimes it even happens when you're reading a book. Maybe the book is somebody's testimony or the story of their life or something, the light comes on, the Holy Spirit shines the light of His presence in your heart. And as a believer, you still have a choice of standing or running.

Do you understand Christians that you can be a born again Christian, and having stood in the light as it relates to your eternal salvation, and then you can run from then on. In other words, you can, as the Holy Spirit convicts you on an ongoing basis, you can choose to say that I don't want to go there in any specific sort of a way, when the Lord convicts you of something in your life.

Something going on in your life, some practice in your life. Some whatever might be in your life. And you can say, no, I'm not, I'm going to run from that one.

I mean, I'll embrace the fact that I'm a sinner and I need a Savior, and I'm born again Christian, and all the things that go along with it. But as I'm walking out my life, I can still choose to either walk in the light or run from the light. I can still do a Felix in other words. I can still do a Felix.

But you know what? We never have to be afraid to let the light of God's presence shine in our lives. We never have to be afraid, because guys, there is a promise of perpetual forgiveness when we walk in the light.

Here's how the apostle John put it. We'll end with this. 1 John 1, verse 7. Listen very carefully.

1 John 1:7 (ESV)

...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, (first of all, there are many blessings that come from that) we (can) have fellowship with one another, (do you know that when you refuse to walk in the light about something the Lord's convicting you of, that breaks fellowship both with you and others, and you and the Lord? So first of all we have fellowship with one another and then there's this other wonderful blessing, it says) and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

See, here's the point about this. That word, cleanses, in this verse is in what we call the present tense. And when a word is in the present tense in Greek, it means it's an ongoing thing. And so you could accurately translate this verse, and the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing you from all sin. That is the most wonderful benefit of having that willingness to keep walking in the light, and never stopping, and pulling of Felix and running.

First of all, you're going to have wonderful fellowship with other believers. And then secondly, there's this perpetual forgiveness that is going to constantly restore your relationship with Jesus Christ. I'm not saying here today that if you refuse to walk in the light that you're not a born again Christian, or that somehow you have to keep yourself saved. I'm not saying that.

What I'm saying is your relationship with God is going to be broken. If you don't walk in the light, if you're not willing to stay and stand, and walk through the light and say, yeah, hey, I'm willing to let that light shine in my life and show what's really there.

And guys, can I just tell you something? I don't care how long you lived on this earth as a believer, God's light will never stop shining and revealing something in your life that you got to deal with. I don't care how old you get and how holy you are. There's always going to be something. And we never, you're never going to arrive this side of glory. Hallelujah.

There might be some people who tell you that's possible. I'm sorry. They're wrong. Not this side of glory. There's coming a day where you're going to shed that sinful nature, but it's not today.

And so the light is going to keep shining. And you and I have to keep making the decision to let it shine in our lives and not walk away, amen. All right, let's stand and we'll close in prayer.

Speaking of prayer, come on up here after the service. If you need prayer, we'll have some folks up here to pray with you.

Father, thank You so much for the opportunity this morning, just to dig into the Scriptures and to see what they say. And to understand the way you worked in Paul's life, and how those works manifested just Your faithfulness, and Your power, and Your mercy and all that goes with it.

We're just so grateful, Lord, that we can get into the Word of God and learn from You. And we pray in Jesus name that You would help us always to walk in the light. Never to pull a Felix and run away. But to always say, Lord, shine Your light in my life. Let it expose those areas that I need to repent of.

And Lord, I know always that there is a perpetual work of forgiveness that awaits me on the other side of that equation.

We thank You. We praise You. We rejoice in You, Lord. And we thank You, God, that You are coming again. And we anticipate your coming with great joy.

We pray these things in Jesus name and all God's people said amen.

God bless you.

Have a good rest of your Sunday.