



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions God in the Storms of Life Series, Lesson 54

Lesson Title: Paul Before Felix

Take Home Point: Follow God at all times.

Warm-Up:

Is it fun to wait? It can be. Think of the happy anticipation that is part of waiting for a special day such as a wedding or Christmas Day. But what if as you waited you suffered injustice? Wouldn't be as much fun, would it? And what if, on top of suffering while waiting, you had no idea when that special time would come. In fact, what if you weren't even sure it would come? The fun is probably gone. Sound farfetched? Consider the Jews of Europe who were in hiding during Hitler's Third Reich. Certainly they suffered unjustly while they waited for freedom. They had no idea how long it would be; they didn't even know if it would ever come. How does that make you feel? Keep those feelings in mind as you read the account of Paul in Caesarea

Read: Acts 24 and 1 Peter 2:19, 21

Observation (What happened?):

What specific charges did the Jewish leaders bring against Paul?

How long was Paul in Caesarea waiting for a decision to be pronounced on his case?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think Felix provided Paul with such generous terms of imprisonment?

Why is Peter so careful to instruct us about our attitudes and patience in suffering?

Insight:

We can be impatient, even when we trust God to work his good. Why? We don't like to suffer injustice or be forgotten. Our deepest nature prefers ease and smooth sailing through life. We like to follow God when all is well. But life's seas are stormy, and difficulties come if for no other reason than that it is a sinful world where bad choices cause us to suffer and, sometimes, bad things just happen. But God wants us to follow him no matter what. Paul waited two years in Caesarea, knowing his innocence and the ability of Felix to release him. Although we have no record of Paul's thoughts, he likely clung to God's promise to send him to Rome (Acts 23:11). Likely he also remembered Isaiah 55:8-9, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (NIV) It really is enough to know that God is in control and that he is always with us. Remember what Paul wrote later in Romans 8:31, *"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (NIV)

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What circumstances of unjust suffering are you in that require patient endurance while God works his way?

Pray for persecuted believers around the world who suffer unjustly for living out their faith in Jesus Christ.