

Paul Is Sent To Félix

Acts 23:23-24:27

MEMORY VERSE

MARK 13:9

"But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. And you will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A kitchen funnel and a Ping-Pong ball.

A tray with a few cotton swabs and cotton balls, scissors, a big needle threaded with black thread, band-aids, tongue depressors, and a syringe (a toy one).

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Something Invisible

Use a regular plastic kitchen funnel and a Ping-Pong ball. Hold the ball in the cone of the funnel with your finger while the small spout part points up. Start to blow into the funnel then let go of the ball. What holds it up? Something invisible (called lift). The air pressure is reduced on top of the ball when the air must pass by it, which leaves greater pressure under the ball causing it to "float."

Explain to your class that everything doesn't always appear as it actually is. Ask how many students expected the ball to fall to the ground. Sometimes the Lord takes us places and we don't understand; sometimes those places seem scary. We don't see what He sees, but we need to trust Him. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever had someone lie about you or make false accusations about you? Sometimes life just does not seem fair.

There are countries today where people are lied about and persecuted for their faith in Jesus. They have to keep their churches hidden. If they are caught worshipping Jesus, they can be arrested and put into jail, and sometimes even put to death.

In our lesson today, the Jewish leaders were lying about Paul. They were trying to have Paul put to death for preaching the good news about Jesus. God protected Paul from certain death by keeping him safe in prison under the control of the governor, Felix. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

After Paul's third missionary journey, he came back to Jerusalem. He reported to the Christian church what God had done among the Gentiles. They were very happy and praised God. They were concerned, however about Paul's safety because the Jewish leaders had told lies about him to the people while he was gone. Paul found himself the object of intense hatred.

A plot to kill Paul was formed. When he went to the temple, a riot occurred. He was arrested under false charges, but the Roman soldiers rescued him from the mob. His Roman citizenship gave him certain rights. When the soldiers learned about the plot to kill him, for his safety and to maintain the peace, he was sent to the Roman governor for a hearing.

ACTS 23:23-24

And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night;

"and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor."

Paul himself could not have put together a greater protection for his life than the one God orchestrated for him with the Roman guards. What a comfort to know that God will always protect us and help us when we need Him. He was not done with Paul yet. There was still work to do so His hand of protection was upon him. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

ACTS 23:25-30

He wrote a letter in the following manner:

Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings.

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.

And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council.

I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him worthy of death or chains.

And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell.

A letter of Paul's introduction was drafted so Paul could meet and be heard by the Governor of the region, Felix. Roman citizens had the opportunity to be heard by their officials, but sometimes a personal appeal took a very long time to be heard. God worked His plan so that Paul would see Felix immediately. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

ACTS 23:31-33

Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.

The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks.

When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.

Under the cover of night, Paul was taken to Governor Felix. The Jews so hated him that even the Roman guards felt it necessary to travel by night. An uprising of the Jewish people could have been very dangerous to an already unstable peace. God orchestrated even the time of travel for Paul's protection. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

ACTS 23:34-35

And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia,

he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

Felix consented to hear the case and commanded that Paul be kept in Herod's Praetorium. Even though he was under guard, Paul was under the safe protection of Rome from his accusers. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

ACTS 24:1-9

Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight,

"we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

"Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us.

"For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

"He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.

"But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands,

“commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.”

And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

The Jewish leaders tried to sway the case by using flattery and lies. They exaggerated the circumstances of the story to their benefit. The chief priests so wanted Paul stopped that they hired a great orator to do their talking for them, but God’s protection remained upon Paul.

ACTS 24:10-21

Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself,

“because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

“And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city.

“Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.

“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

“I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

“This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

“Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation,

“in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a multitude nor with tumult.

“They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me.

“Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council,

“unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.' ”

When Paul gave his defense, it became very clear that the case had to do with his belief in Jesus Christ and had nothing to do with any laws that he had broken. He pointed out that, even though a great orator had accused him, the witnesses of his supposed breaking of the law were not even present.

ACTS 24:22-23

But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case."

So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

Felix postponed the case because he did not want to offend the Jewish leaders by letting Paul go, but even he saw that there was really no case against Paul. By waiting for Lysias to arrive, he could excuse the Jewish leaders from the proceeding, hear the rest of the story, and rule without the threat of Jewish retaliation.

ACTS 24:24-26

And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

While Paul was in prison, Felix sent for Paul several times and listened while Paul witnessed about Jesus. He was hoping that Paul would bribe him so that he would have a reason to let Paul go, but Paul was a man of integrity. Paul was more concerned with Felix's soul than his own freedom. Paul was in prison doing the will of God. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

ACTS 24:27

But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

When a new governor replaced Felix, he left Paul in prison because he wanted to grant the Jewish leaders a favor. It probably seemed like a long time to be under house arrest, but Paul was using every opportunity to witness Jesus to those who would hear him.

When we look at Paul's circumstances, we might say, "Where was God in all this?" Paul was imprisoned for two years by Felix, not for breaking the law but because he believed in Jesus. Yet God was with Paul the entire time. God was protecting Paul. During Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea and later in Rome, he wrote letters to some of the churches he had started that have become part of our Bible. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

In the United States we have the right to believe in Jesus without worrying about being persecuted for our faith, for the most part. We need to be thankful that we can go to church and say what we believe without the fear that we will be arrested. We should understand what a privilege we have and not take it for granted. God has been good to us. As Christians we should show our love and appreciation by going to church each Sunday and being obedient to God's Word, the Bible. God is always with us and protects us whatever the circumstances we face.

Take Your Medicine

Prepare a tray with a few cotton swabs and cotton balls, scissors, a big needle threaded with black thread (signifying stitches), band-aids, tongue depressors, a syringe (a toy one), etc. Ask the children to look at your tray and try to think of five things that may really hurt, but do a lot of good (shots, stitches, surgery, etc.).

Explain that there are many things in life that hurt, but does good. Sometimes God will allow discomfort and insecurity in our lives to work together His good in our lives. **Sometimes God works to protect us in ways we don't understand; we just have to trust Him.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's wonderful control of our circumstances even when we do not understand them. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.