Acts 24 - Bair

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Preacher: Daniel Bair

[0:00] Berlin, 1943.

The Gestapo arrests a 37-year-old Lutheran preacher! and locks him in Tegel military prison. A better day can be found.
While in that cell, this pastor wrote letters and poems. One of the poems he wrote ends, Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I'm thine. His guards smuggle out his letters.
And eventually, two weeks before the end of the war, they hang Dietrich Bonhoeffer at Flossenburg.
But as the camp doctor watched Dietrich prepare for this, he saw him praying beforehand.
He wrote afterwards that he had hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God. The men with the keys were afraid.
[1:15] The man in the cell was free. Why is that? Why is it that stories like this we hear over and over again where the people with all the power are terrified of someone with no power?

Well, that person is at peace. Well, this morning, Luke takes us to a courtroom where the church first watched that happen.
We pick up where we left off last week. Paul had been handed over under guard to Felix to await a hearing. If you're a note taker, our text divides nicely into three parts.
The first is this accusation, verses 1 through 9. The opponents are presenting their case against Paul. And then in verses 10 through 21, Paul presents his defense.
And then in verses 22 through 27, we have the verdict. No, wait, that's not right. We don't have the verdict. What? No, instead we have a continuance.
[2:13] By the end of this chapter, I hope you'll see that Paul's not the one that's really on trial. The man in chains is free. The man playing his judge is not.

So kids, if you want this sermon in short, in a nutshell this morning, I would say it this way. Paul is in chains and unafraid. Felix is in charge and petrified.
Jesus warned before his death, it would go like this. At the end of Luke's gospel, he records this. Jesus says, they will lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness, Jesus says. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.
Acts 24 is that promise of Jesus kept. One note before we begin, when I preach, I want to stand out of the way because God's word is powerful and effective to change hearts and minds.
[3:32] But as Pastor Dan pointed out last week, God often uses the preaching of his word to affect change in the lives of his people. So my job is to maybe give some background, to give some understanding to the text, to maybe give some fun illustrations.

I don't know if I have any this week. To give a couple applications, but God's word is powerful and effective and the spirit will take his word and plant it in your heart and grow it. So let's pray as we come to the text that he would do that this morning.
Heavenly Father, we know your word is powerful and effective. Would you use it this morning to convict us, to drive us to change, to cause us to delight in you and take refuge in you.
We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Okay, so our first section, starting in verse one, after five days, the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one tertalus.
That's a fun name. We met Ananias last week. He's the one who had Paul's mouth struck. This week he has to hire a mouth to speak for him.
[4:44] This word spokesman, the Greek word is rhetor, a rhetorician. He hires a rhetorician, a spokesman, a lawyer, to defend his, or to bring the accusations against Paul.

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They're pulling out all the stops. And so, verse one continues, they laid before the governor the case against Paul. Tertalus is given permission to speak and read with me what this rhetor says. I'm going to try this here. Since through you we enjoy much peace and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation.
In every way and everywhere, we accept this with all gratitude. But to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.
What beautiful, loquacious, eloquent hogswallop. I mean, this is a lawyer at his finest. This is a rhetorician at his best. This is what we call buttering up the judge.
[5:51] And it's done to perfection. Marcus Antonius Felix. If I could give you a glimpse of what I've read about him this week in preparation for this sermon.

We have a historian, Tacitus, who has much to say about Felix and none of it so kind as we have here. In fact, so, I took the liberties of rewriting this introduction in some of the language and voice of Tacitus.
So, so listen to this as if it were from the pen of Tacitus. Since through you we have suffered much cruelty and since by your lawless greed, most base Felix, systemic ruins are being wrought for this nation in every way and everywhere we reject this with profound bitterness.
But to detain you no further, I beg you in your customary corruption to hear us briefly. Okay, maybe that doesn't fly for any judge but it'd be a more accurate depiction of who Felix is.
And as we read these words, I wonder how any Jew who had suffered under this guy's greed and corruption could not choke on those words.
[7:14] Maybe that's why they had to hire someone because they couldn't say those words. So, they hire someone to say this. We could preach a whole sermon on this section. The end of the sermon would be beware flatterers.

Be not one and beware the honey-laced tongue. But that's not our sermon this morning. So, we're going to continue with what this flattering pontificator has to say in verse 5.
For we have found this man a plague. That's cute. A disease walking around on two legs. This is Paul. There's more here than meets the ear.
Turtleus is playing actually a genius card here. The emperor Claudius, the one who had given Felix his position, he had warned the Jews of Alexandria.
Here's a quote from him that he would treat agitators as, quote, stirring up a plague on the whole world. He's playing this card. He's pointing back to this guy.
[8:15] Our writer knows what he's doing. He's reminding Felix that his position and his authority are contingent upon keeping law and order and keeping the higher-ups happy.

And permitting agitators to run amok is worse than allowing a plague, allowing a COVID to run rampant among your nation. Picture this. This is what he's saying about Paul.
He's a plague. He's a COVID that you let run free to your own peril. And then Turtleist is going to give this triple charge here to explain exactly how plague-like Paul is.
First, one, he's one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout all the world. And two, a ringleader!
of the sect of the Nazarenes! And three, he even tried to profane the temple! But we seized him.
[9:17] Three charges here. Three separate charges, each with its own legal nuance. But really, it's three in one. Paul is an insider of riots. He's an agitator.

One of the gravest offenses in the Roman world. And he does that by being a ringleader of this sect, by profaning the temple, which Rome had given the Jews the authority to guard with the death penalty.
So these are serious accusations. The word for sect here is heresis. Sound familiar? It's where we get our word heresies from.
It's a sect. It's a party or a path you choose from yourself that's outside the normal path. The charge here is Judaism has a protected status in the Roman world.
But any sect coming out of that is cut off from that protection. And so Turles is saying Paul is outside of that protection. He's not part of our group. He's this sect that's outside of this.
[10:20] And Paul says no I'm not going to be cut off but we'll get to that in a moment. But also notice too this final charge the third charge is also softened. Three weeks ago it was Paul had profaned the temple.

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Now it's well he attempted to he would have but we stopped him. Perhaps to us in free America these charges seem insignificant.
or at most an annoyance. But in Rome when a tenuous power control rested upon ruling with an iron fist insurrection riot are perhaps the most offensive acts possible.
Turles knew this Ananias knew this Felix knew this Paul knew this. And so the obvious question that would follow this up would be well why then did you not deal with him when you had the opportunity?
When you had him in your custody why didn't you kill him? You had the authority. Well look at verse seven. Verse seven fell out of my Bible. Anyone got it? Okay in a sermon we don't have time to talk about the whole world of textual criticism but I do want to touch on it here because if you're reading and you get to verse seven why is that not there?
[11:43] We have so many documents manuscripts of the Bible of the New Testament. We compare these to each other and try to figure out what the original was. Now of all these documents all these manuscripts we have all these copies of copies they agree almost in every instance.

There's a few places where they don't. Those few places are insignificant and not that important as here. Some manuscripts have verse seven some do not.
If you have the King James version or other versions you may have verse seven. If you have the ESV the translators and many others and I agree with them think that this verse was added to clarify the objection I just raised.
Well why don't you deal with them? Well here's why. The manuscript adds but the chief captain Lysias came upon us and with great violence took him away out of our hands. Well it's insignificant because we already know that.
So it doesn't really matter. If you want to talk textual criticism more I would love to sit with you over a cup of chili. That's something I get great delight out of talking on. But the ESV simply continues to verse 8.
[12:48] And I just want to point out that it's not a big deal. It's not in there but we continue in verse 8. And he says by examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.

And he says the prosecution rests its case to loud amens and hurrahs. That's what verse 9 tells us. The Jews also joined in the charge affirming that all these things were so. Amen.
That's the case. No witnesses. No evidence. Just a lawyer, a crowd, and a word. Now listen for that word. Turtleist says we have found this man a plague.
Found. If you were here three weeks ago when I preached our word was bound. We're going to be poetic. Bound and now it's found. This morning listen for the word found.
So we have in this first scene we have a governor on his bench, a persecution resting its case, and a prisoner in his chains. But the prisoner in chains is free.
[13:54] The man playing the judge is not. So we move to scene 2 verses 10 through 21. Felix doesn't say a word, he just nods. Nods to Paul for him to make his defense.

And verse 10, listen to Paul's noxious flattery here in verse 10. Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense.
That's it, Paul? Where's the cream filling? I mean, where's the flattery? Paul knows how to do this, why doesn't he have anything in here? What's Paul saying?
Perhaps he's saying, your honor, you've done this for a long time, no doubt you see through the facade of this false praise. Whatever he says, it's without flattery.
It actually reminds me of our epistle reading from 1 Thessalonians. He said, we never came to you with flattery. He's talking to the church, but whether church or courtroom, Paul is not a flatterer.
[15:00] But I think more important than that is how he makes his defense. Paul's not cowering. He's cheerful. Why? How?

He's on trial for his life, in change, facing fasting fanatics who want nothing more than him to be killed. And he's cheerful.
Where does a man get that? Part of it's the sweet filling of Pastor Dan's Oreo from last week. Remember Jesus said to Paul, take courage for you must also testify about me in Rome?
Okay, well, if Paul knows he's going to Rome, he knows the end isn't here. Okay, that's part of it. Another part of it, I think, is in what Paul wrote a few months ago in the book of Romans.

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He says, who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies. Again, Pastor Dan referenced this last week. He said that this counsel cannot bring a charge against him.
[16:06] Well, this lawyer's charge will not succeed either because Paul's verdict is already in from a higher court and that's where his cheer comes from. But let's look at Paul's defense here in verse 11.

First, Paul explains the circumstances of his coming to Jerusalem. You can verify that it is not more than 12 days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. Well, why did he come to Jerusalem?
To worship. Paul grew up a devout Jew. This was his home church. He's coming back to his home church to worship. And Tertullus says they found Paul a plague.
Verse 12, Paul says, 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. Huh.
They found me a plague, they say. No, they didn't find me doing anything like that. This is a direct answer to the charge of riot, that Paul's a riot monger.
[17:08] I was in the temple minding my worship. Judge, actually, if you look into it, you might find someone else stirring up a riot. But Paul continues in verse 13, neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me.

Now, if I hear a child say, you can't prove it, I think I know who did it. Right? Is this kind of some cynical catch-me-if-you-can admission of guilt?
You can't prove it? No, this is a neither-nor argument. Paul's saying, they did not find me doing this because I wasn't doing it, and they cannot provide any evidence because there is no evidence.
And so he's answering this charge of sedition by saying it didn't happen and they can't prove it because it didn't happen. That's the first charge.
What about the second charge? Well, Paul answers this in verses 14 through 16. Look at verse 14.
But this I confess to you. Oops. No one told Paul in court you're not supposed to confess?
[18:21] He's confessing in court? Well, this is not a confession of guilt. This is a confession of faith. And in fact, it's designed to refute the second charge.

The second charge. He says, verse 14, he continues, according to the way which they call a sect, remember a sect, a heresy, Paul's going to refute this charge of heresy in three points here.
First, I worship the God of our fathers. second, believing everything laid down by the law and written in the prophets. And third, verse 15, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.
The God of our fathers, no new God. Everything in the law and prophets, no new books. And the resurrection of the just and unjust, no new theology.
This is the oldest hope of Israel. Nothing created, nothing invented. The way is not a departure from the faith, it's the faith fulfilled.
[19:35] Paul actually here sounds a lot like the reformers that we celebrate on Reformation Sunday. We're not these same men accused of heresy. Rome called them heretics, inventors of new religion, but they answered as Paul did.

No new God, no new book, no new hope. We're not leaving the faith, we're going back to it. It's Luther standing before the emperor at Worms.
My conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.
conscience. Or if you joined us in catechism a few weeks ago, we have Guido de Bray, the 1561 pastor who threw the Belgic confession over the castle wall at Ternay with a letter to the king saying the reformed were loyal subjects and not some new sect.
It didn't work out so well for him six years later. Or as we sang in Luther's hymn this morning, that word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them abideth.
[20:49] The word, the word, according to the way, which they call a sect. But then in verse 16, Paul says what this confession does to a man, so I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

Conscience. We heard conscience in Luther's confession. We heard conscience last week. Paul said that he's, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.
But Paul, a clear conscience? Didn't he just, in chapter two, say, I persecuted this way to the death? A clear conscience?

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Paul never hides it. Years later, in 1 Timothy, he writes, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, an insolent opponent, but I received mercy.
But I received mercy. A clear conscience is not a clean record. It's a cleansed record.
[22:01] It's a cleansed conscience. Paul received mercy. I think that's perhaps the reformation in a single sentence.

So Paul says, this isn't a sect. First, he says, there was no riot. There's no record of a riot. I've been here 12 days. Look back in your records. No riots. Second, he says, this is not a sect.
It's what we've always believed. And the third charge, did Paul profane the temple? Well, he continues in verse 17. Now, after several years, I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.
While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple. How do you profane the temple? Well, by entering unpurified, by bringing unauthorized persons in.
But again, Paul turns the words of Tertullus back on him. We've found this man a plague. Well, they found me purified. And Paul adds the icing on the cake without any crowd or tumult.
[23:10] Peacefully worshipping, and they brought a mob. And here, in verse 18, is where Paul turns the table. Look at the end of verse 18. But some Jews from Asia.

He stops mid-sentence. He's looking out. Where are these guys? I think this is dramatic, Paul. He's looking out. Some Jews from Asia. Stand up, anyone?
Your Honor, I hate to inform the court, the star witness is notably absent, and I move to dismiss all charges. Because it's ludicrous to bring an accusation without the accusers.
And this is what Paul says in verse 19. They ought to be here before you and make an accusation should they have anything against me. But it's laughable to us, but it's even more dramatic, even worse than laughable in a Roman court.
Remember Emperor Claudius, we talked about the one who gave Felix his position? He said to the Senate, quote, Paul's hanging on the list in Caesarea.
[24:30] His accusers are off home in Asia. Good play, Paul. And if his accusers won't bring their witnesses, that's fine, Paul says. He continues in verse 20, let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found.

Oh, they found. When I stood before the council, they didn't find anything there either. What did they find? Ask them.
The only charge they can pin on me is this one from chapter 23, verse 6, where Paul said here in verse 20, he repeats it, let these men, sorry, verse 21, he repeats it, it is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.
What did they find? not a riot, not a heresy, not a defiled temple, they found a man who believes the dead will rise. Paul's defense is airtight.
In fact, I think as Pastor Tad mentioned a couple weeks ago, Luke is clearly interested in showing us that Paul is innocent. By every rule of Roman provincial justice, Paul should walk out of that room a free man.
[25:41] man. The man in chains is free. And so we move to our third section, our final scene, Felix's verdict. We read verse 22, but Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the way, put them off, saying, when Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.

A case that should be dismissed is adjourned. Felix cries for a continuance, not for fact-finding, not to wait for the accusers to show up, not to weigh the evidence.
No. Maybe he gives three reasons here. First, ostensibly to wait for Lysias. It's a blatant stall tactic. Felix already has his official deposition.
He's already written this. We looked at that last week. Verse, chapter 23, verse 29. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.
He doesn't have to wait for this guy to come down and say this. He already has it. The Roman who arrested him, we have that word found again. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law.
[26:56] Chapter 23, verse 29. Felix knew enough to acquit, but he did not. That's the first reason. The second reason is Felix is actually in a little bit of hot water already with the Jews.

See, many suspected him of arranging the murder of Jonathan, a former high priest, and he needs to appease the Sanhedrin and the ruling Jews, and we'll see more on this actually at the very end.

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We see he leaves Paul in prison to do a favor to the Jews. We'll come back to that. But the third reason, I think is the real reason, is extortion. Luke tells us down in verse 26 that at the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul.
He just wants some money, which is strictly illegal. A Roman provincial magistrate could not accept money either to imprison or to release from prison someone convicted.
Yet, someone corrupt like Felix did it all the time. He wasn't the only one. We won't alone. But he was willing and clearly waiting for this to happen.
[28:06] And he had just, you know, in his defense, he had just heard Paul say he came to present alms. This guy's got some money. What can I get out of him? And in verse 23, he loosens the security but keeps Paul bound.

Some liberty, but his friends are allowed in and still in custody. Paul's bound and stuck by a corrupt judge. Where's Paul's cheerfulness now?
I don't think it ever leaves him. Sure, he has his ups and downs like anyone, but look at how he responds when called before Felix a few days later in verse 24. After some days, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.
Faith in Christ Jesus. Paul's not missing an opportunity to share the gospel with his captor, the corrupt judge who should have set him free. And his wife Drusilla comes too, so it's like a two for one with this.
Do you know Drusilla? Do you know who Drusilla is? You know her father. One Herod Agrippa, the Herod Agrippa the worms got.
[29:22] Remember that? That's a great story. Go back and read that over lunch. She's about 20 years old, and when Felix took her for wife, she was actually already married to someone else.

But Paul carries the name to them. Maybe a reminder that Paul was going to carry the name before Gentiles and kings and Jewish princesses and Roman governors.
And he tells them in verse 25, he tells them about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment. He should have written the book, How to Win Friends and Influence Folks.
Those three words? To Felix? Self-control, Felix? Righteousness, Felix? Hmm.
Coming judgment? That even Felix, the judge, would face judgment? Someone else preached that to a Herod and lost his head. You remember John the Baptist?
[30:26] Paul had said it in Athens, God's fixed today and the proof is a man raised from the dead. The dead are getting up and the judge will be judged. Paul preaches it without flinching to Felix and his wife.

And Felix was alarmed. See that in the middle of the verse? Felix was alarmed. Paul's in chains and in peace. Felix is sitting in judgment with his stolen Jewish princess wife by his side and he's terrified.
He's not afraid of Paul. He's afraid of Paul's judge. We continue in verse 25 and as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, go away for the present.
when I get an opportunity I will summon you. We'll talk about it later. That can mean a lot of things. My family says I use that too much.
We'll talk about it later. Go away for now. We've seen others in this book fear. Cornelius, he trembled and he bowed down and he said, what is it Lord?
[31:43] And believed. the jailer in Philippi was afraid and fell down trembling and said, what must I do to be saved? Felix trembles and says, go away for now.

Felix trembles and stalls. It's too much for Felix to handle. So he does what Felix does best. Punts it to a later date.
Puts off the judgment that has him terrified to later. Puts off passing a verdict on Paul so maybe he won't ever have to as we'll see.
For Felix later was not a date. It was a hiding place. Nevertheless he's hoping for money as we said in verse 26. Look at the end of verse 26.
He sent for him often and conversed with him. Many conversations, no conversion because he kept putting it off. And here's the pivot of the chapter.
[32:43] You can put off the preacher but you can't put off the judge. Verse 27. When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Portius Festus and desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left

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Paul bound.

That's our word bound from three weeks ago. Two years and half a verse. Felix ran out of laders. We heard in our responsive reading this morning or also echoed in the Watts hymn afterwards that you return man to dust and say return, O children of man, for a thousand years in your sight or by yesterday in his past or as a watch in the night.
You sweep them away as with a flood. Felix got swept! He left Paul in prison to curry favor with the Jews but it didn't help because we're told actually by another historian that Felix went on trial because the Caesarean Jews accused him.
And Josephus says that the only way that Felix was spared was because his brother had the year of the emperor and so he was pardoned. Felix ran out of later.
And what about Paul? Felix thought he was keeping Paul but God was keeping Paul for Rome because the man in chains was free. The man playing the judge was not.
[34:26] At the beginning I talked about Luke 21 we read it. This will be your opportunity to bear witness Jesus says. It was.

Look at Paul's opportunity to bear witness here to Felix. We read this testimony aloud in Wheaton Illinois 2,000 years later and Tertullus remains a footnote.
What's the point of this? What's the point of all this passage? I'll close with two words here. A word to the believer and a word to the one who's maybe putting it off.
First to the believer your verdict is in who shall bring a charge against God's elect. Accused by man acquitted by God.
The judge you will stand before on that day is the judge who is even now interceding on our behalf. God will be not to be able to make an accusation that can overturn his.
[35:40] So be cheerful. Not because the charges are fair, not because the judge is just, not because the weight is short, but because the case that matters is closed.

And I think we're supposed to take from Paul's example here an encouragement in what we do in our continuance, what we do in the time in between.
Bear witness. Confess Christ. That's what Paul says. He confessed Christ. Jesus says in Luke 12, everyone who acknowledges me is the same word, acknowledge, confess.
Everyone who confesses me before men, the son of man will also acknowledge, will confess before the angels of God. Confess, proclaim Christ.
Now some of us may be paying for this way already at work or in your family or in a friendship that went cold the moment you mentioned Christ, but I think most of us in free America are not.
[36:50] Nobody has ever found anything on us to bring an accusation. But I think we take from this, we need to remember that Jesus never promised an easy, quiet life.

He promised you mouth and wisdom when the hearing comes. He'll give you the words to say. So the trial is the testimony for those who believe.
But what if you're a Felix in the room? If you, maybe you know the way, rather accurately, you know what it means to be a Christian. Maybe this word has frightened you more than once, but you like to say later.
I'll deal with it later. I can hear it and tuck it away and deal with it later. Hebrews 12 says, see that you do not refuse him who is speaking. You can put off the preacher, but you can't put off the judge. He fixes the day and the day will come. Felix found that out. He found out two years goes by in half a verse. Judgment will find you.
[38:04] And that's the scary part that starts first, but hear the rest because this is why it's good news and not just a warning. You do not have to put him off. The judge Felix was afraid of is the judge who turned to someone else on the cross beside him and said, today you will be with me in paradise.

He's the one who said, whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. You can't put him off forever and he will not put you off in the end.
In a moment we'll sing another hymn, rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee. That's a better place to hide than in some later.
Hide in the rock of ages. We also sing in that nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I clean. Felix wanted something out of Paul's hand to give him a verdict that he could leave, a dismissal. But to be cleansed with Christ, we don't have to bring anything. In fact, we come empty-handed. that gospel asks for nothing of ours. Cornelius, I mentioned, was afraid and he said, what is it,

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Lord?
[39:25] What do I need to do? Say that. Not today, not later, not later, today. Today. They found Paul a plague.

But what did they really find? a man who believed the dead would rise and a judge that could not sit in the same room with Paul without trembling.
That's what they found. The man in chains was free. The man playing the judge was not. They found Paul worshiping.
They found Paul confessing his hope out loud. Judgment will find every one of us, believer or unbeliever. The only question is what they will find.
So maybe this is what you take home with you. If they came looking for you today, what would they find? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we see in the example of Paul a man who unashamedly, boldly proclaimed what he believed.
[40:38] would you give us that same boldness to proclaim the hope we have, the cheer we have in Christ? Would we be people full of cheer, full of joy that is confusing to the world because we have the final verdict from Christ?

Would those who maybe have been putting this off, would they think seriously about what this word means, about what this word is calling them to do?
Would they come with nothing in their hand but hearts open to receive the gift of Christ who said to the thief on the cross, today you will be with me in paradise.
We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

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