

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

Volume 34 Number 4

www.southeastchurchofchrist.org

APRIL 2019

A CONVENIENT TIME

Vernon Teagarden

“And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, 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 (trembled, KJV) and answered, ‘Go away for now, when I have a convenient time I will call for you’ (Acts 24:24-25, NKJV).

As Paul stood before Felix and Drusilla, and spoke concerning righteousness, there was a sharp contrast between his message and the lives of the two whom he addressed. They no doubt never concerned themselves with what was right, pure, and honest. They were not concerned with what constituted right living. As Paul spoke of self-control, he spoke to those who never demonstrated self-control but fulfilled every desire and lustful thought. Secular history indicates to us that Felix and Drusilla were living in adultery at that time. She belonged to another man and Felix had no right to her. Here were two people that needed to understand that they had been treading underfoot God’s law, that they had been living in defiance of God, and that they would not escape His wrath. Therefore, Paul taught them about the judgment to come.

As Paul spoke, the record tells us that Felix was so moved that he became afraid. Yet he did not obey! No, Felix knew what direction Paul was wanting him to go, and when he saw it he answered that it was just not a convenient time for him to obey.

A “convenient” time, what’s that? Webster defines “convenient” as, “favorable to one’s comfort; easy to do, use, or get to; handy, etc.” A convenient time then is a time when you can do a thing as easily as not. A time when a thing is done at no trouble at all. A convenient time never comes to a wicked person called upon to repent. Why? Because it’s going to cost some-

thing, it’s going to create a great inconvenience to make a change. It’s hard to throw off bad habits all at once. It takes self-sacrifice, a denying of one’s self in order to make one’s life right with God. Felix recognized this and was not willing to make that sacrifice. I’m reminded of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and wanted to know what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus eventually told him that if he really wanted to possess eternal life then “go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me” (Mt. 19:21). The record indicates that this young man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. He wasn’t ready to deny himself, take up his cross and follow the Lord. To do so would have cost too much, and there would have never been a convenient time for him to do so. It could never be done with no trouble at all.

Too many today are like Felix. They perhaps have contemplated obeying the gospel, but have been waiting for a convenient time to do so, a time when circumstances are just right, when they can obey it as easily as not. That convenient time will never come. Today is just as convenient as tomorrow will be. The apostle Paul wrote that “now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2)

As far as we know, Felix died in a lost state having never obeyed the gospel, waiting on a convenient time that never came. Don’t let the same be said of you.

Southeast Church of Christ

35 Walnut Ct

Mogadore, OH

330-628-7432

Service Times:

Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm

Wednesday: 7:30 pm

“My Sin Is Ever Before Me”

Mark White

King David of Israel had sinned. Yielding to lust and passion, he brought another man’s wife into his palace and committed adultery with her. A child was conceived. To conceal his sin, he tried to arrange for her husband to come in from battle and spend an evening at home with his wife. But Uriah was too loyal to his king and to his comrades in arms to enjoy the comforts of home, even for the night. Instead, he spent the night on the steps of the king’s house. The next morning, he was sent back to the battle carrying orders from the king for his own death. “In the hottest part of the battle,” David said, “put Uriah at the front and then withdraw from him so he will be killed” (see 2 Samuel 2:11).

Sin was snowballing on David. One sin led to another, then another. He was covering his sin the wrong way. Sin covered by other sin is equivalent to solving a dandruff problem by wearing a tweed jacket. The real problem is still there and it can only grow worse until proper remedies for it are sought and applied. David’s conscience however, would not let him forget what he had done. Even though he married Bathsheba, and although he was punished by the death of the child conceived out of wedlock, there was a price to pay for his sin. There were deep regrets and the loss of joy and contentment. Certainly, there had been temporary pleasure in the adulterous sex, but the pleasure quickly gave way to intense suffering and anguish of mind (see Hebrews 11:25).

This is why David cried in Psalm 51:3, “For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me.” As long as he was impenitent, his conscience cried out against him. He could not put this wrong in the back of his mind and forget it. It went along with him no matter where he was. Like an albatross around his neck, the sin grew heavier by the hour. David had lost the joy of knowing he was saved (vs. 8, 12). His bones were “broken” (lit., crushed) and could not rejoice as they had in former days. Upon receiving God’s mercy, David promised to warn other transgressors and to convert other sinners (vs. 13). He would loudly sing praise to God because of what God’s mercy had done for him (vs. 14, 15). In desperation and anguish, David turned to his righteous God for the removal of this guilt.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” (Psalm 51:1-2). A sinner really has no other place to turn besides the tender and plentiful mercy of God! To turn elsewhere is to be eternally lost. David never euphemized his sin, nor did he attempt to blame others for it. As horrendous as David’s sins had been, God’s mercy and grace were greater in power and strength. His mercy was not only plenteous, but tenderly offered. God is not stingy with mercy. Neither is He cold-hearted in extending His grace. God is harsh with judgment, but tender with forgiveness. David was now broken in spirit, and his contrite heart was not despised by God (51:7).

Could there be someone reading these words who should repent and turn to God? There really is no other recourse if sin is to be remedied. The wonderful truth of the Gospel is that God pardons sin! He cannot condone it, nor will He ignore it. However, He will not hide His face from the sinner who really wants to do right.