



Cape Coral Church of Christ

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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A Convenient Time

In Acts 24:24-25, we read of Paul's bold message to Felix, governor of the Roman province of Judea, and his wife Drusilla. Paul, having been accused by the Jews in Jerusalem of causing problems and encouraging strife among the people, was arrested by the Roman authorities and eventually imprisoned by them in the provincial capital of Caesarea. While awaiting trial for these false charges, Paul used every opportunity to teach and preach the gospel to whoever would hear. On this particular occasion, Felix decided to hear Paul speak. As was his character, Paul used this opportunity to preach a strong, scriptural sermon to the governor and his wife.

His message was evidently effective, for it caused Felix to be fearful and apprehensive. It says in verse 25 that Felix became "afraid." (KJV says he "trembled.")

Paul's strong, pointed gospel message struck a chord in the heart of the governor. This ruler apparently stood convicted of his past sinful actions and was now contemplating what he must do about them. Would he accept the challenge and change his life by following the teachings of the gospel or would he just ignore the obvious truth and choose to do nothing?

In verse 25 of the text, we can see that, sadly, he chose to take the latter course - the "path of least resistance." He responds to Paul's message by telling him to: "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." Felix decided that it was too hard to change, too difficult to commit his life to Christ. He made the decision that many of us do - he wanted what was "convenient" for him. This same word as used in verse 25 is translated from the Greek word *kairos* which means: "an occasion, i.e. set or proper time: ...opportunity, (convenient, due) season." The dictionary defines "convenient" as: "easy to do, use, or get to; handy." When we want what is "convenient", we want what is easy.

Convenience usually involves something that offers little chance of challenge, struggle, or sacrifice.

Yet, Christianity is not convenient! It is not easy! It was never meant to be something that is, as some people say: "Easy come, easy go." It requires that we commit everything - our whole self - to serving God. Jesus explains this well in Luke 14:33; "... whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Let us not do what is convenient, rather let us do what is right in the sight of God! When we do what we think is right, easy, and convenient in our own sight, it only leads to other problems and ultimately to eternal condemnation, "the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). True, being a Christian, at times, can be very difficult and challenging. It can be a daily struggle! However, we are promised strength for the journey (Isaiah 40:31) and at the end of our life, a great reward. If we stay faithful to the end, we will, as our Savior says in Matthew 19:29, "inherit eternal life."

Jesus Went about Doing Good

Peter made one of the simplest statements about Jesus that you'll find in Scripture. But it is also packed with meaning and application. He said that Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). This understated affirmation deserves our deeper exploration. What were some of these good things that our Lord went about doing?

He Pointed People to the Scriptures. People regularly approached Jesus with questions. Some were only trying to trap Him in His words, but others were genuinely seeking His help. Either way, our Lord knew that everyone, regardless of their problem or their motive, needed to

encounter God as He had revealed Himself in the Scriptures. That's why we find Jesus saying things like, "Have you not read in the law?" (Matt 12:5), or "Have you not read in the book of Moses?" (Mark 12:26), or "What is written in the law? How does it read to you?" (Luke 10:26). We regularly encounter people with problems, questions, dilemmas, and issues. We would do well to follow the example of Jesus and point them to God's will.

He Called People to Higher Ground. Jesus did not want His followers to be content with mediocrity or the status quo. He called on His people to exceed the righteousness of the recognized religious leaders of the day (Matt. 5:20). He taught people to love their enemies (5:44), put the kingdom of God first (6:33), and treat others the way we would want to be treated (7:12). There is no higher ethic than the Christian ethic, and our world would be a better place if it would heed our Lord's call.

He Put Others Ahead of Himself. There is no better example of Jesus "doing good" than His putting others ahead of Himself. That's what brought Him to us in the first place (Phil. 2:5-8). "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). From His perfect example we learn, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).

As we fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2), let us determine that we will follow His perfect example and go about "doing good" just like He did.

Self-Pity

"Self-pity is our worst enemy, and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in this world." - Helen Keller. (Well said from someone who was blind and deaf.)

We are referring to "a feeling of pity for yourself because you believe you have suffered more than is fair or reasonable" (Merriam-Webster).

At times, we indeed may find ourselves holding the opinion that we have it worse than anyone that we know. Life has dealt us with an unfair hand, and so we wallow in our self-pity which only serves to make us feel more miserable. If only one could walk into a Children's Hospital

and see the children and the plight that they face, and note that in suffering, many of them still have smiles on their faces.

Often in life we tend to focus on those who are very well-off with money and possessions. We tend to look at them and think that they are the epitome of happiness. And then we scratch our heads wondering why the suicide rate among the rich is so high?

The masses gather at the convenience stores, standing in line for those precious lottery tickets. "If only" becomes their motto, not realizing that even with a win, their joy will be short-lived.

The view of self-pity is a very narrow one. It is isolated to this world without any thought of what is yet to come. We sing the song: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' thru." Apparently we are oblivious to what we are singing.

What did Paul write? "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). It was Peter who made reference to being "sojourners and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11). Our desire is not to live in this world, but to prepare ourselves for that which is to come. If we would adjust our focus, we may well find that the desire to wallow in self-pity is no longer there. Something better awaits if you are faithful to the will of God!

The Blessings of Friends and Family

It is truly a blessing to be part of a loving family. In like fashion, it is a great blessing to have dear friends. Sadly, not everyone knows what it feels like to be part of such things. All too often we take our family and friends for granted.

If you are so blessed as to have good friends, thank your heavenly Father.

If you are so blessed to have a loving earthly family, thank your heavenly Father.

If you are so blessed as to have a loving spiritual family (meaning you are a member of the body for which Jesus died - the Church), thank your heavenly Father.

In fact, the sacrifice that brought about the New Testament Church is one of the ways by which we know we are deeply loved by God (Acts 20:20).

In the church, God has provided everything a family needs: Leadership (1 Peter 5:1-4); Companionship and Strength (Gal. 6:2; I Thess. 4:18; Heb. 10:24); Love (I John 3:1, 11). Don't you want to be part of this? Don't you want all that are dear to you to be part of this?