

THE SOVEREIGN GOD AND THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL: A STUDY OF EPHESIANS

(LESSON ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY)

“BELOVED AND FAITHFUL”

EPHESIANS 6:21-24

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, as we approach the conclusion of our study of Paul's letter to the **Ephesians**, we must resist the temptation to hurry through to the end. The Holy Spirit still has a few more beautiful truths that He desires to reveal to us, and we must be careful not to miss them.

Commenting on these closing verses of **Ephesians**, **Stephen Cole** makes the following observations:

“Up to this point, Ephesians has not been a very personal letter. Perhaps this was because Paul intended for it to be circulated among several of the churches in Asia Minor. But now, this brief conclusion oozes with his evident care for these Christians. It's all the more

pronounced when you stop and think about Paul's circumstances. He was in prison in Rome, chained to a guard. He was getting up in years and his health was probably not great. From Philippians, written during the same imprisonment, we learn that fellow Christians in Rome were attacking Paul. We would understand if Paul sent out an appeal for prayer for his own needs.

But instead, these verses do not contain a hint about his difficulties...the apostle's only prayer request was that he would be bold in proclaiming the gospel. When it comes to saying farewell, Paul's focus is his concern for these Christians and their needs. Paul knew that they were concerned about him and his imprisonment...So he sent Tychicus to tell them about his situation and to comfort their hearts...Then Paul concludes with a benediction, which is really a prayer, reflecting again his love and care for these brothers and sisters in Christ."

One of the truths that the Holy Spirit desires to reveal to us in these verses, is that we who are engaged in spiritual warfare are not fighting alone. There are other believers who are engaged in the same conflict and are fighting, not only with us, but for us! In the closing verses of this letter Paul introduces us to Tychicus, one of his companions in arms. In verse **21** he writes, "*But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.*"

Paul calls Tychicus, "*a beloved brother.*" The Greek word translated "*beloved*" is **agapétos**: (**ag-ap-ay-tos**'), which is an adjective derived from **agapē**. The word means, "beloved, esteemed, dear, favourite." **Agapétos** properly refers to, "divinely-loved ones"- persons who have experienced God's **agapē**-love.

Agapétos is the word that God the Father uses to describe the Lord Jesus Christ in **Matthew 3:17**. He says, "*This is my beloved (agapétos) Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" In fact, the first 9 uses of the word

agapétos in the New Testament are of God the Father speaking of Jesus Christ, His beloved Son. This should give us an idea of the preciousness of Tychicus to Paul!

Agapétos is also applied in Scripture to persons who have been reconciled to God and judged by him to be worthy of eternal life (**Romans 1:7, Romans 11:28; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4**).

Brothers and sisters, it is very important for us to understand that all believers who are “divinely-loved ones” as a result of experiencing God’s **agapē**-love, are bound together by that common experience, and therefore ought to be beloved (**agapétos**) to one another also! Paul emphasizes this truth in **1 Timothy 6:2** and **Philemon 1:16**. We will read these verses as they are rendered by the **King James Version**:

1 Timothy 6:2

*“And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and **beloved**, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.”*

Philemon 1:16

“Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?”

“Beloved” is a term of endearment and is used to refer to persons who are very highly valued. Certainly the Apostle Paul did not refer to every person as “beloved.” Obviously Tychicus had, so to speak, “struck a chord” in Paul’s heart. There was a strong bond of love that drew them together.

The word “*brother*” is a translation of the Greek word **adelphos**: (**ad-el-fos**), which literally means, “one born from the same womb.” The word describes a close association of a group of persons having well-defined membership. In the New Testament it often refers to believers in Christ

united together by the bond of **agapē**-love. The term “brother” brings to mind the idea of a family, the members of which are close knit because they share a lot in common. Paul is of course, referring to Tychicus as a brother in a spiritual sense. The family of God makes brothers and sisters of all those who are members of it. Some of these become “beloved” brothers and sisters to each other, as was the case with Paul and Tychicus. Indeed, in many instances the relationship between “spiritual” brothers and sisters are closer than those between natural brothers and sisters.

Not only was Tychicus “*a beloved brother*” to Paul, but he was also a “*faithful minister*.” The Greek word translated “*faithful*” is **pistos**, which means, “trustworthy, dependable, reliable.” The word was used of persons who showed themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.

Tychicus was such an individual. He was a man of true fidelity, which is a word we do not hear too often nowadays. Fidelity is defined as, “faithfulness to something to which one is bound by pledge or duty.” It implies strict and continuing faithfulness to an obligation, trust, or duty. It is the degree of exactness with which something is copied or reproduced. For example, fidelity is the degree to which an electronic device like a compact disc, radio or television accurately reproduces sound or pictures. Let us consider that for a moment in the light of Paul’s statement in **1 Corinthians 4:2**: “*Now what is sought in stewards is that one be found faithful*” (**New English Translation**).

In **Luke 16:10** our Lord made an axiomatic statement: “*The one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much*” (**New English Translation**).

The word “*minister*” is a translation of the Greek word **diakonos**: (**dee-ak’-on-os**), which refers to one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a sergeant, attendant, minister.” The Anglican

archbishop, **Richard Trench**, says that **diakonos** represents the servant in his activity. The idea is of serving by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature, including such unexciting, activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs—activities without apparent dignity. The word covers both slaves and hired servants.

John MacArthur notes that the basic idea **diakonia**, “had to do with humble, submissive, personal service, not simply with an office or a particular function.” Paul does not use the word here in the technical sense of the office of a deacon, but in the sense of a servant. Tychicus is described by Paul as a servant, faithfully serving the Lord in a lowly place.

Mary Ann Evans, known by her pen name **George Eliot**, was an English novelist, poet, journalist, translator, and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. In her novel, “*Middlemarch*” she wrote the following: “The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.” How true those words are!

Tychicus is mentioned on 4 occasions in the New Testament apart from **Ephesians 6:21-22**. We will briefly consider the passages related to him as they are rendered by the **New English Translation**.

Acts 20:1-4

1 After the disturbance had ended, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left to go to Macedonia.

2 After he had gone through those regions and spoken many words of encouragement to the believers there, he came to Greece,

3 where he stayed for three months. Because the Jews had made a plot against him as he was intending to sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

*4 Paul was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, as well as **Tychicus** and Trophimus from the province of Asia.*

Verse **4** indicates that Tychicus accompanied the Apostle Paul on a part of his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem. Perhaps he travelled with him all the way to Jerusalem. The term “*Asia*” does not refer here to the **continent** of Asia but to the **Roman province** of Asia which made up about one-third of modern **Asia Minor**, and was on the western side of it. Both Tychicus and Trophimus were from this area.

Colossians 4:7

*7 **Tychicus**, a dear brother, faithful minister, and fellow slave in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.*

8 I sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are doing and that he may encourage your hearts.

9 I sent him with Onesimus, the faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

Paul’s words here are almost identical with **Ephesians 6:21-22**. In both passages he refers to Tychicus as a “*beloved,*” or “*dear*” brother and a “*faithful minister.*” In both passages he tells the believers to whom he is writing that he is sending Tychicus to them for two reasons. Firstly, to inform them of his welfare, and secondly, to “*comfort,*” or “*encourage*” their hearts.

Evidently, Tychicus had the gift of **exhortation (Romans 12:8)**. The Greek word translated “exhortation” in **Romans 12:8** is **paraklésis**: (**par-ak’-lay-sis**) which means, “a calling to one’s aid, encouragement, comfort.” Exhortation is the gift of coming alongside someone to comfort them or to help them with instruction.

Interestingly, in **Colossians 4:7**, Paul refers to Tychicus as his, “*fellow slave in the Lord.*” The Greek word translated “*fellow slave*” is

sundoulos: (**soon'-doo-los**), which refers to “a fellow-servant; one who serves the same master with another.”

Regarding the noun **doulos**, The Greek New Testament scholar **Kenneth Wuest**, made the following comments:

“It [**doulos**] designated one who was born into his condition of slavery, one bound to his master as his slave, one who was in a permanent relationship to his master, which relationship could only be broken by death, one whose will was swallowed up in the will of his master, one who served his master even to the extent that he disregarded his own interests. This word was used in the first century world as a designation of a class of slaves that represented a most abject, servile condition. It is the word taken over into the New Testament to designate a sinner as a slave (**Romans 6:17**). It is also used to speak of a believer as a bonds slave of the Lord Jesus (**Romans 1:1**). However, in this latter case the servility and abjectness are not included in the meaning of the word, but the fact that the Bible writers used it to describe the Christian, shows that they desired to retain its connotation of humbleness on the part of the slave. As bonds slaves of the Lord Jesus, we are to ever remember that we must serve Him in all humility of mind. Using the various meanings of **doulos**, the reader can see for himself how the classical usage of the word is in exact accord with its doctrinal implications in the New Testament. For instance, a sinner is born into slavery to sin by his physical birth, and into a loving servitude to the Lord Jesus by his spiritual new-birth.”

Paul considered himself to be a **doulos** of Jesus Christ and he considered Tychicus to be the same! They were both in bondage, bound by “chains of love” to their Master Jesus Christ. They were willing to be completely controlled by Him and to obey His commands. They were living examples of the paradox of slaves who were free. They understood that freedom in Christ did **not** mean that they had the **right to do as they desired**, but rather that they had the **power to do what Christ desired!**

As Paul wrote his letter to the believers in Colossae, it had been more than two years since his arrest at Jerusalem. Since then he had survived a plot by the Jewish leaders to murder him, trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, and a harrowing voyage to Rome. Tychicus may have been with Paul through that entire time. He definitely was with him during his imprisonment at Rome.

Because Tychicus was a man of proven loyalty, Paul had an important task for him. Paul asked him to deliver the letter to the **Colossians**. Not only does he carry the letter to the **Colossians**, but he also carries the letter to the **Ephesians** and probably the one addressed to **Philemon** as well. It is also likely that Tychicus was given the responsibility by Paul of escorting the slave Onesimus, who had run away from Philemon and had been converted through Paul's ministry in Rome, back to his owner. Tychicus would then have been Paul's personal envoy to Philemon with the mission of intervening on the slave's behalf even before Philemon had read Paul's letter.

Perhaps Tychicus also carried with him the "lost" letter to the church of the Laodiceans mentioned in **Colossians 4:16**. The trip from Rome to Colossae was a difficult one. Tychicus would first have to cross much of Italy on foot, then sail across the Adriatic Sea. After traversing Greece on foot, he would have to sail across the Aegean Sea to the coast of Asia Minor. After all that, he still faced a journey of nearly one hundred miles on foot to reach Colossae. That he was entrusted with delivering at least three inspired books of Scripture indicates Paul's great trust in him.

Titus 3:12

*"When I send Artemas or **Tychicus** to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there."*

This verse indicates that Paul intends to send either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete, presumably to take Titus' place temporarily as the leader of the church there. This would allow Titus to meet Paul at Nicopolis where he had decided to spend the winter. Paul obviously had the highest regard

for Tychicus' loyalty as well as for his leadership skills and his proficiency as it related to the Word of God.

2 Timothy 4:9-12

9 Make every effort to come to me soon.

10 For Demas deserted me, since he loved the present age, and he went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is a great help to me in ministry.

*12 Now I have sent **Tychicus** to Ephesus.*

13 When you come, bring with you the cloak I left in Troas with Carpas and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

This passage informs us that Tychicus was with Paul in Rome toward the very end of his life. Facing imminent execution, Paul desired to see Timothy one last time. Because Timothy could not leave his congregation at Ephesus without a replacement, Paul sent Tychicus to assume temporary leadership of the Ephesian church. Just as it was in the case of Titus, Paul clearly expresses his confidence in the ability of Tychicus to take over for Timothy in Ephesus, which would allow the latter to be with Paul at perhaps the most critical time of his life.

What a tremendous blessing Tychicus was to Paul and the Body of Christ! He was faithful. He was a man of integrity. Paul could trust him with the great responsibility for the churches in Crete and in Ephesus. Tychicus could be trusted to deliver safely the letters to the believers in Ephesus and Colossae, and the one to Philemon. He probably had no idea that they would one day become a part of sacred Scripture, but because he was faithful, we have them in our Bibles today!

According to **Galatians 5:22**, faithfulness is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit and should therefore characterize every genuine believer. It is therefore very sad that true faithfulness appears to be so lacking in the

church today. The truly faithful individual carries out his or her responsibilities, “as unto the Lord.” He or she does not need to receive the applause of men, for their motive is the glory of God.

Stephen Cole says that there are basically two types of persons who come to church. The attitude of one type is, “Here I am people! I have needs and you are here to meet them!” The attitude of the other type is “Here I am church! What are the needs that I can meet?” The latter type are the Lord’s servants. They are not here to be served. They serve Christ by serving His Body!

These people will one day hear the words recorded in **Matthew 25:21**:
“Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master” (**New English Translation**).