

**TYCHICUS, AND PAUL'S FINAL PRAYER**

Ephesians 6:21-24

Final Message

**Intro:** Today we are concluding the present study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus after spending forty-two Sundays on this great epistle. It is very similar in content with the Paul's letter to the church at Colosse, but it is longer. One thing that is unique about Ephesians is that it concludes the passage which we have just concluded on the Christian's warfare. Needs always had a great influence on the content of the letters which Paul wrote both to churches and to individuals. I think that this should lead us to the conclusion that in Ephesus the believers were facing special opposition from the Devil, and so they needed special instruction on how to stand up against the various ways in which they were experiencing trouble. Paul certainly knew what it meant to be opposed by the Devil. He wrote from Rome where he was awaiting trial because of his ministry in preaching the Gospel. He had founded the church in Ephesus, and it always had a special place in his heart. It was the center of the worship of the goddess Artemis, but because of her similarity to the Roman goddess Diana, the Romans called Artemis, Diana, of the Ephesians. Anyway Ephesus was a great center of heathen worship, and the spread of the Gospel to Ephesus had caused many of the Ephesians to turn away from Artemis, or Diana, to Christ. And this is what stirred up great opposition against the Gospel. Whenever this kind of thing happen, either on a large scale or small, the forces of hell are call-ed into action. Therefore, we have Paul's instructions as to how the Devil and his forces were to be overcome. The problem that Paul had faced in Ephesus, which is described for us in Acts 19, was six or seven years before Paul wrote Ephesians, but obviously the conflict remained.

I go back into this situation this morning because of the man whose name we come to in the closing verses of this epistle. The man's name was

**I. TYCHICUS (Eph. 6:21-22).**

His name appears four other times in the NT. We come upon it first in Acts 20:4, as one of the men from Asia, who along with one other Asian, Trophimus, and several others accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey at least for a time.

Tychicus is also mentioned in Paul's letter to the church at Colosse. See Colossians 4:7. He is mentioned along with Onesimus. Evidently it was Tychicus and Onesimus who delivered Paul's letter to the church at Colosse. Then even just a few years later in Paul's ministry, we find Tychicus mentioned in Titus 3:12 and last of all in 2 Timothy 4:12. He is always in the role of going on some kind of an errand or mission for the Apostle Paul.

One fact that is often overlooked in speaking of Tychicus, is that he was a Gentile. Before Paul was saved, Tychicus would have been an enemy of Saul of Tarsus, and Saul would have been after him just by the very fact that Paul was a Jew and Tychicus was a Gentile. But we meet Tychicus as a Gentile Christian in his relationship with the Apostle Paul who was a Jewish Christian. But we meet them as one in Christ. It immediately is evident that the Gospel is, among many other things, the solution for race prejudice. It was Paul himself who in writing to the churches of Galatia, said (and it is recorded in Galatians 3:27-28),

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Notice in verse 21 of our text how Paul spoke of Tychicus. He called him "a beloved brother and a faithful minister in the Lord." Let us make sure that we know the meaning of those terms.

I have mentioned that in all probability Tychicus was a Gentile, and Paul, a Jew. Why would Paul call Tychicus a brother? A brother is a person who to whom by birth you have the closest relationship. But how could a Jew and a Gentiles be brothers? They obviously had different parents. Paul's parents were Jewish; Tychicus' parents were Gentiles. So they were not related to each other in the flesh at all. By their natural birth they probably wouldn't even have liked each other. Why did Paul call Tychicus his brother?

Most of you know the answer to that question. It is that Paul was talking about their relationship to each other in the family of God. They had been "born of God." God was their heavenly Father. By the work of the Holy Spirit Paul and Tychicus at different times and at different places had been "born again," as the Apostle Peter wrote, "by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). Both Paul and Tychicus had

been born the first time of their parents as human beings, but with a sin nature. They needed to be changed. They needed a new kind of life. They needed the life of God in them. In some way they both were exposed to the Bible where they learned about salvation through the Gospel of Christ. The Holy Spirit opened, not only their eyes, but their hearts, they were given new life by a spiritual birth and they trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior. They learned from the Bible that when Christ died on the Cross, He did not die because He deserved to die. He died for them. He paid the penalty for their sins. Hence by their faith in Christ, which was itself a gift from God, they demonstrated that they had been born into the family of God. God did not have one Gospel for Gentiles, and another Gospel for Jews. They were both born again, saved, by the same Gospel into the one family of God, *and so they were brothers!*

But Paul did not just call Tychicus his brother; he called Tychicus “a beloved brother.” The Apostle John had this to say about those of us who are in the family of God. You will find these words in 1 John 3:14:

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. There was obviously a special relationship between the Apostle Paul and Tychicus. Tychicus was “a beloved brother.” But still the very fact that they loved each other because they were both in the family of God, was proof that Paul was saved, and Tychicus’ actions showed that he loved Paul just like Paul loved him. This is a special love that God puts in our hearts for each other as members of His family. It was because Paul and Tychicus were both in the family of God that they were devoting their lives to telling others how they could get into the family of God.

You see, regardless of how great your human parents are, they were born into this world as sinners. And even though they may have heard the Gospel and believed in Christ, their salvation did not change the situation for you. You and I, all of us, were born sinners. We need a second birth. We need to be born again. This is not something that we do for ourselves. This is what God does for us. He seeks us. He convicts us of our sin. He draws us to Christ, and we are born again by His power.

And the wonderful fact is that once you are born into God’s family, you can never be put out. We are given eternal life, a life that will never end. My human life is going to end some day, but the relationship that a child of God has to the heavenly Father will never end. None of us deserves to

be in God's family. It is all because of God's grace and His love for us. But, as we have seen, Paul used another term for Tychicus. In addition to calling Tychicus "a beloved brother," he called him, "a faithful minister in the Lord."

Now when we usually hear that word "minister," we usually think of a pastor or a preacher. But we have no evidence in the Bible that Tychicus ever preached a sermon. Maybe he did, but the Bible doesn't say that he did. Paul used a word which is sometimes translated, or transliterated, *deacon*. But it does not just refer to a deacon in a church, one of the leaders in a church. Basically the word translated "minister" basically means *a servant*. Tychicus was a servant of Paul because Paul was serving the Lord. If you and I would have known Tychicus, we would have been amazed at his humility, for of all, and then of his faithfulness. Tychicus did not have to be recognized for his service to Paul. He was content to serve the Lord by serving Paul unnoticed. He was a faithful servant to God and to Paul. Paul could always depend upon TYCHICUS.

Faithfulness always has been, and still is, a rare commodity among people. There is a proverb in the Bible that says.

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? (Prov . 20:6).

Tychicus not only had made himself Paul's servant, ready to go anywhere Paul wanted him to go, but he was also prepared to do whatever Paul wanted him to do. Just reading about Tychicus makes you love him, doesn't it? One of our songs which I know that Tychicus would have loved to sing was this:

Naught have I gotten but what I received,  
Grace hath bestowed it and I have believed;  
Boasting excluded, pride I abase;  
I'm only a sinner saved by grace!  
This is my story, to God be the glory,  
I'm only a sinner saved by grace.

This ought to be our song too.

But what did Tychicus do in Ephesus where Paul who was in prison could not go?

He went to tell them all about what was going on with Paul, and that he might comfort and encourage their hearts. He would not only have told the Ephesians how Paul was getting along in Rome (which was a long

way off), but he would have told them, as Paul told the Philippians, that his imprisonment had opened up new opportunities for the spread of the God. And he would have told them how Paul constantly was praying for them. As proof of this latter point, was the conclusion of Paul's letter to them.

## II. PAUL'S FINAL PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS (Eph. 6:23-24).

The Ephesians would have read what Paul wrote in these last two verses, but they would know that these verses were not addressed primarily to them. They were his closing prayer *to God for them*. He was letting them look in and listen to what he was saying as he prayed for them.

Do we want to know how to pray for each other? We can do no better than to pray the prayers that we find in Scripture if we really make them our own prayers. Notice what Paul was concerned about: their peace, their love, their faith, knowing that all of these blessings could only come from God. And then he prayed that they would express the grace toward each other that the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ had shown in saving them.

The letter which we are just completing shows how amazingly good God had been in saving those who were born sinners, and whom God was transforming into saints. But Paul had also shown that there is nothing easy about the Christian life. We war against the world, our own sinful flesh, *and the Devil!* Daily we need the peace of God to prevail in our hearts and lives. We need verses like the Apostle Paul gave to the church at Philippi, but which was just as much for Ephesus, and for Portland, or Vancouver, or wherever it is that we live: I am referring to Paul's words in Philippians 4:6-7:

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Or what about those two wonderful verses in Isaiah 26:3-4 which were not written to us, but certainly are for us:

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is

everlasting strength:

Or what about those good words which the Lord gave to His disciples who were grieving because the Lord had told them that He was going away, and that they could not at that time follow Him. I am thinking of John 14:27:

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Have you ever asked yourself why over and over again in Paul's letters he greeted the saints with a verse like we had in Ephesians 1:2?

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

What about the next two words, "love with faith"? The Devil always tries to use our trials to turn us away from the Lord, particularly when we don't see the answer to our prayers. Who is it important that we should love, and in whom do we need to have our faith strengthened and maintained? Certainly not in ourselves, nor in each other, *but in God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit*. We must guard carefully our love for the Members of the Godhead – our Father, our Savior, and our Comforter. Only They can keep our love fervent, and our faith strong, as Paul prayed in verse 23, the latter part.

And finally we come to that Word which gained entrance for us into the heart of God: "grace." Only those who genuinely love the Lord Jesus Christ know what the grace of God is, and only we have access to that continuing supply of God's grace. It was through an unanswered prayer that God did something even greater for Paul than what he had asked for. Let me remind you of what he wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:8-10:

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The grace of God means sufficient strength for those of us who love the Lord.

**Concl:** Now we need to apply these verses to ourselves, don't we? I need these verses just as much as you do. We all need them. Life is too great a burden without the blessing of the Lord upon us. We probably all have wished that we could be like the Apostle Paul in the way he trusted the Lord. *But have you ever wanted to be like Tychicus?* Probably you and I have even skipped over his name because we didn't know how to pronounce it, instead of looking for the food there is for our souls in what the Apostle Paul said about him. Not everybody who is mentioned in the Bible is an example for us to follow, but Tychicus surely is!

Has the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians taught us how much we need to pray more than we have been praying. And has it helped us to know for what we should be praying, and how we ought to be praying for each other. Paul hasn't told us how to live because he thought we could do it on our own. He has told us how to live so that we will be able to see those areas in our lives that we need to pray about, and also how we need to pray for each other about the same things.

Let us all pray more faithfully for ourselves, and for each other, that we will really trust the Lord to enable us to be humble and obedient children of our heavenly Father.

If you are not in the family of God, you need to be born again. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Forsake your wicked ways, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Let us pray.