

Ephesians Chapter 6
Week 12, v. 21-24

Eph 6:21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

One more thing as Paul is closing this letter – he is concerned about continuing to encourage the saints at Ephesus, still more concerned about others than himself. He has a dear friend, Tychicus, whom he is sending to them to keep them informed how Paul is doing and what he is engaged in while in prison.

When we are in a difficult position needing encouragement, most of us would desire to have our closest friends by our side. Certainly that is not the time we would readily shoo them off to minister to others' needs. Yet, here we see Paul doing just that. *What does this say to you about Paul's heart towards the church and his priorities? Are you more concerned about your encouragement or the encouragement of others? How do you know? Is your conversation usually all about you or all about them?*

A faithful minister of Jesus Christ is so tenderly affectionate towards his flock, that he prefers their spiritual edification before his own private and particular advantage; William Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament

What do we know about Tychicus from this passage?

- he is a beloved brother (dear friend)
- he is a faithful minister in the Lord (trustworthy servant)

Paul considers him a dear friend, both bound by Christ's love. Paul considers him to be trustworthy in the things of the Lord. This is a great picture of the unity we can find as a family striving for the same goal. There is no concern from Paul that his condition or purpose would be misrepresented by Tychicus.

In Col 4:7 we see the same character ascribed to Tychicus: *As to all my affairs, Tychicus, [our] beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.*

Other words for trustworthy are reliable, dependable and honest.

What does it mean to be reliable and dependable?

1. able to be trusted to do what is expected or has been promised
2. likely to be accurate – able to be trusted to be accurate
3. consistent, steadfast, unswerving

What does it mean to be honest?

1. morally upright – never cheating, lying, or breaking the law
2. truthful
3. impartial – presenting information in an impartial way
4. reasonable in a particular situation
5. unpretentious – modest: not putting on a false or showy display of importance, wealth or knowledge; humble
6. respectable and virtuous; honest, sincere, straightforward

How often do we thank God for those brothers and sisters in Christ who are trustworthy? Are you a faithful minister in the Lord? Are others able to depend on your character?

Ministers are servants to Christ, and fellow-servants to one another. They have one Lord, though they have different stations and powers for service. It is a great comfort under the troubles and difficulties of life, to have fellow Christians caring for us. Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

Think! There was no postal service at that time. Communication was done by messengers – people – bringing a verbal or written message. How important was it that these messengers were reliable and trustworthy? Have you ever played the game 'telephone'? What typically happens at the end of the round with the message that was started?

Eph 6:22 And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Paul is in dire straits, things don't look good for him in prison. He does not want his suffering to be a source of discouragement to those he loves. How will Tychicus be able to comfort the Ephesian church?

Think of how God is using Paul to further the gospel. As a believer, it is always exciting to see God working through circumstances – especially difficult ones – for His glory.

Phil 1:12-14 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in [the cause of] Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that

most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

How have you seen God work through difficult circumstances, in your own life or the life of another, to bring glory to Himself?

In Eph 6:21, Paul also says that Tychicus will make everything known to them. Paul has nothing to hide. There is no part of his life that would hurt his testimony, nothing he needs to keep hidden from others. How about you? Are there areas in your life that you would be too embarrassed to reveal, areas that do not honor God? Do you need to take action to eliminate those things? It is often in our personal struggles that we see God's mighty work in our lives. Our failures shouldn't surprise us – they don't surprise God. The story of how God has worked in our lives to transform is an important part of our testimony to His faithfulness.

Think upon the last few years – how has God changed you through circumstances in your life – how has He revealed sin to you? As you look back, do you see with different eyes – is your heart changed?

Paul closes the letter to the Ephesian church with these last two verses:

Eph 6:23-24 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with [a love] incorruptible.

There is a peace that comes from God alone. This peace is one of quietness and rest and is available to those who know God. It is not the peace we find in the world which is temporary and dependent on circumstances. This peace is found in difficult times as well as joyous times and comes from within. God is in control and since He is in control nothing comes into our lives without His knowledge and allowance.

Jo 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Phil 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

How are you at being peaceful even in distress? What are some things you can do to keep yourself from feeling troubled or fearful?

How is the love that comes from having faith in God different than the love found in the world?

Love given by grace alone is undeserved. It is given only on the basis of God's love for us. Not because of who we are or what we have done but because of who He is and what He has done for us through His Son. We can extend this unconditional love towards others. We love because God loves us. This love is also not based on feelings but on a sacrificial gift already given. Surprisingly, the English Dictionary explains God's love this way: the mercy, grace, and charity shown by God to humanity. Unfortunately, many do not understand the true meaning of God's mercy and grace.

Love in the world is based on feelings and affections. It is ruled by passions and performance. It is given and taken away dependent on circumstances. There is no security in this kind of love. It is not love based on faith in Christ Jesus.

Are you promoting the peace and love you have in Christ towards others in your home, at church, at work, with your neighbors, with those you come into contact with? To show Christ's love is to love *regardless* if someone deserves it in your eyes.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with [a love] incorruptible.

God has given His favor and His perfect love to His children for eternity.

Quest. But when, and how, may a person know that he loves Christ in great sincerity?

Ans. If Christ be enthroned in thy heart as a chief commander; if he be esteemed by thee as thy chiefest excellency, and thy choicest treasure; if he be thy chiefest delight and joy; and if he be thy chiefest refuge, unto which thou fliest in all dangers and distresses; thou mayest conclude thy supreme love is placed upon him, that thou lovest him in sincerity. William Burkitt's

Notes on the New Testament

Is your life a profession of your faith in Christ? Is Christ Lord and Master of your life? Do your works speak of His love? Do your words bring Him honor? Are you filled with joy at the thought of God? Do you find rest, safety and peace in Him? Do your thoughts look to His glory alone? Is it all about you or all about Him?

Matt 22:37 And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

Application

Read Ephesians Chapter 6 then re-read verses 21-24.

In verse 21 we learn two things about Paul's friend Tychicus. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.

Consider what it means to be a 'faithful minister in the Lord', a trustworthy servant. Look these key words up in a dictionary.

Faithful –

Trustworthy –

Are these qualities displayed in your life? How?

What does it mean to be honest? Write the definition you find.

Read Eph 6:22. why did Paul send Tychicus to the Ephesian church?

How are you encouraged when you hear of God's children standing firm in their faith, even through difficult circumstances? Read Phil 1:12-14.

How have you been able to encourage others through your own testimony of God's grace and strength in your life?

In what areas has God grown your faith through trials? How are you different today than you were a month ago, a year ago, several years ago?

Paul closes his letter in Eph 6:24 expressing his desire that the brethren have peace that comes from God. Read John 14:27 and Phil 4:6-7. How does the peace we get from God differ from the peace found in the world?

Review the entire chapter of Ephesians 6. How has God spoken to you through His word? Write down one or more applications that you have been encouraged to pursue because of this study.

Read Psalms 16 for next week.