

Paul closed his letter to the Colossians with greetings from the people who were with him. He begins with Tychicus who was probably the bearer of the letter. ⁷ *Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.* ⁸ *I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,* Colossians 4:7-8 (ESV)

There are three descriptions used for Tychicus. Let's look at each one. First, he was a beloved brother (*agapetos adelphos*). Greek sentence structure is very flexible, so the order in which things are placed usually gives a sense of the writer's emphasis. Paul valued Tychicus, first of all, as a beloved brother. As the family of God, we have a lot of brothers and sisters! (Mark 10:29-30) But certain ones are especially beloved. We connect on a deeper level and can really share our hearts with these beloved ones. (Proverbs 18:24)

I hope you have a number of beloved brothers or sisters. There is never any concern that what you share with them in confidence will be broadcast. If you disagree, your love for one another is not threatened. You never have to wonder about their motivation. They love Jesus. They genuinely love you. That's their bottom line. You can't help but love them because love begets love. (1John 4:19) Just as we love Jesus because of his love for us, we love them because we see His love in them. (2Corinthians 5:14)

Tychicus was also a faithful minister. The term is used for deacons. It means those who serve. It had come represent an office in the church that originated in Acts 6. (Acts 6:3) The people chose men who were full of faith and the Holy Spirit to handle the physical affairs of the church. The first martyr was the deacon Stephen. (Acts 7:59) Man could he preach! Deacons differ from pastors simply in that their service is more physical in nature though their qualifications are almost the same as that of the elders. (See 1Timothy 3:8-13)

By calling Tychicus a faithful minister, Paul was saying that he carries out his service to the church with dependability and sincere conviction. He had probably been supplying Paul's daily food in prison. Roman prisons did not feed their prisoners. That was up to family and friends. Because Paul was in prison for having a Lord higher than Caesar, those who visited him risked being asked where their loyalties lay. Could they call Caesar lord? Tychicus risked imprisonment to meet Paul's needs. That is a faithful minister! (1Corinthians 4:2)

Commented [Paul1]: Mark 10:29-30 (ESV)

²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,

³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

Commented [Paul2]: Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)

²⁴ A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Commented [Paul3]: 1 John 4:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

Commented [Paul4]: 2 Corinthians 5:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

Commented [Paul5]: Acts 6:3 (ESV)

³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

Commented [Paul6]: Acts 7:59 (ESV)

⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Commented [Paul7]: 1 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV)

² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

Finally, he was also called a fellow servant. This Greek term is literally translated, “a slave with me”. In other words, Paul saw himself as a slave of Jesus. Jesus was his master, and he was glad to be in His service. It was a privilege to take orders from Him. (Romans 1:1) Tychicus was a fellow slave. They both served without question their Master who is also their Maker.

Commented [Paul8]: Romans 1:1 (ESV)

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

I don't know if you could use any higher expressions for a brother or sister in Christ than these: beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant. Paul obviously held Tychicus in very high regard. Could these be applied to you? Are you a beloved brother or sister to others? It is usually only about a dozen or so people that you can really be a beloved friend at any given time, simply because it is an investment of time. They pass in and out of our daily life but will remain beloved to us forever. Some will go before us into heaven. Are you being a beloved brother to someone? (1Peter 1:22)

Commented [Paul9]: 1 Peter 1:22 (ESV)

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

Are you a faithful minister? You don't have to be a deacon or deaconess, but are you faithfully carrying out the call that God has on your life? Pastors appreciate the faithful ministers because they are the ones that make the church function. No matter what their calling, the faithful ones can be counted on for consistency and sincere devotion to the kingdom of God. I don't mean that they do what I ask, but they do what God leads and that always builds up and strengthens the church. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Commented [Paul10]: Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Are you a fellow servant of Jesus? That is someone who has died to their old nature and lives to glorify God each day. That kind of person is always seeking God's will. They put their own needs last and live to serve, following the example Jesus set at the Last Supper. (John 13:14-15)

Commented [Paul11]: John 13:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, Colossians 4:8 (ESV) Tychicus had purposes other than carrying the letter. He was to share the testimonies from Paul's ministry. Paul wrote them very little about what he was enduring or of his accomplishments. His main concern in writing was to help them stay on track spiritually and not be deceived by the slick talkers. Tychicus would be filling them in on how things were going with Paul.

He was also to encourage their hearts. Paul had prayed that God would encourage their hearts (Colossians 2:1-2), but he put feet to his prayers by sending Tychicus with this letter. Tychicus was probably going to encourage their hearts by reminding them how they were loved and prayed for as well as by the testimonies of what God was doing through Paul's ministry in other parts of the world. When we hear about people coming to Christ, churches being formed, lives being transformed, we are encouraged to see the kingdom of God advancing.

Commented [Paul12]: Colossians 2:1-2 (ESV)

¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,
² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,

Maybe you've been praying for someone to be encouraged. Have you considered putting feet to your prayers? I'm so blessed to have a number of you stop by and tell me how you have been praying for me through times of difficulty. Just to hear that you are with me in the battle and believe in the calling on my life is such an encouragement. Who do you know that needs encouragement? Have you been praying for them? Do you need to put feet to your prayers, or perhaps a phone call or card? (Hebrews 3:13)

Commented [Paul13]: Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

I'd venture to guess that Tychicus was also supposed to make sure Onesimus stayed faithful to his conviction to return to his master. ⁹ *and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.* Colossians 4:9 (ESV) Onesimus is also described as being faithful, and as a beloved brother. Notice the deacon term did not apply to him. Nevertheless he was faithful in following Christ. Nor was he a fellow slave of Jesus yet. That is a state of spiritual maturity. He was still a babe in Christ. But they can both share testimonies regarding the place of Paul's imprisonment.

¹⁰ *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions— if he comes to you, welcome him),* Colossians 4:10 (ESV) He was from Thessalonica and was currently a prisoner with Paul, most likely because of his stand for Jesus. It wasn't the first time he'd been in trouble for hanging around a radical like Paul. He was the one that the mob in Ephesus dragged into the theater when the idol makers were upset with all the conversions and downturn in their business. (Acts 19:29) He was also with Paul on the ship that ran aground on the isle of Malta, perhaps as a prisoner with Paul or perhaps serving him by supplying his necessities. (Acts 27:2) Some brothers are there with you no matter what difficulties you are going through.

Commented [Paul14]: Acts 19:29 (NIV)

²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater.

Commented [Paul15]: Acts 27:2 (NIV)

² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

I have some that have been with me through a few shipwrecks. It's part of becoming beloved brothers. I hope you have some too. If not, reach out and be that to someone, and you'll find they will be to you as well.

John Mark is a story of redemption. He left Paul and Barnabas in the middle of their first missionary journey. (Acts 13:5, 13) under the name of John Paul decided he didn't trust taking him on the second mission because of Mark's failure. Barnabas thought he deserved a second chance. Paul and Barnabas couldn't agree so they went their own ways, Barnabas taking Mark with him. (Acts 15:39-40) But now, much later in Paul's ministry, Mark had proved himself and was again working with Paul. Paul made special note to tell the Colossians to receive him, probably because they had heard about his past failure. John Mark was one of the few that stayed by Paul's side before he was

Commented [Paul16]: Acts 13:5 (NIV)

⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

Commented [Paul17]: Acts 13:13 (NIV)

¹³ From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

Commented [Paul18]: Acts 15:39-40 (NIV)

³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

executed. (2Timothy 4:11) He went from backslider to most faithful servant during the long ministry of Paul.

Commented [Paul19]: 2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV)

¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Paul also mentions Justus of whom we know very little. (Acts 1:23; 18:7) He says that these men are the only believing Jews that are ministering with him. He has a pretty small team considering the size of his ministry. It was very hard and risky work Paul was doing. He'd been stoned, beaten, scourged, shipwrecked, and was currently in bonds, and he wonders why there aren't more believing Jews with him?

Commented [Paul20]: Acts 1:23 (NIV)

²³ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

Commented [Paul21]: Acts 18:7 (NIV)

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

When you saw the things that Paul saw, and when your life was so radically transformed from Christian killer to Apostle of the early church, it *was* hard to understand why more fellow Jews didn't jump on board in spite of the cost. Would we have volunteered to serve with Paul if we saw the potential risks involved? Do we put security before the will of God today?

It's always a blessing to have people from your background in ministry with you as it is easier to relate with them. Paul called them a comfort to him, and yet he loved these Colossians enough to send two of the brothers off to encourage them.

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. Colossians 4:12 (ESV) We met Epaphras earlier in the letter. (Colossians 1:7) He was the evangelist that started the church. He also started the churches of Hierapolis and Laodicea. He was truly a slave of Jesus. He is staying there with Paul, perhaps jailed as Paul's servant. They used their prison time "struggling on your behalf in prayers". The thrust of his prayers was mentioned in the first chapter, the Colossians' maturity in the faith, and that they be fully assured in all the will of God. That is what we are praying for our church as well. (Colossians 1:9-12)

Commented [Paul22]: Colossians 1:7(NIV)

⁷ You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Are you continuing to pray that prayer, that we be filled with a knowledge of God's will, walking in a manner that is fully pleasing Him, bearing fruit, growing in the knowledge of God and being strengthened with God's glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to God...? If these men of God struggled on their behalf in prayer, can't we do the same for the church of which we are a part? Sounds like some serious praying, like devoting yourself to prayer. (4:2) Epaphras will forever have the testimony that he worked hard for the churches of the Lycus Valley.

Commented [Paul23]: Colossians 1:9-11 (NIV)

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

¹⁰ And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

Commented [Paul24]: Colossians 4:2 (NIV)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. Colossians 4:14 (ESV) Luke is probably the stenographer and Paul's personal physician, caring for his thorn in the flesh. He too will be with Paul to the end. (2Timothy 4:11) Without Luke we'd be

Commented [Paul25]: 2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV)

¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

missing a large chunk of the New Testament and much of our knowledge of the early church. His work has literally influenced billions!

And then there is Demas. We have been challenged by some amazing servants of God. Their testimony has lived on to encourage us to be all out in our service to God. But now we come to a warning message. In the letter about Onesimus called Philemon, Paul mentions Demas as a fellow laborer. (Philemon 1:24) That was a short time earlier. In this letter there is no comment. In Paul's final letter, he mentions that Demas left him because he loved the world. (2Timothy 4:10) He was a picture of the seed that fell among thorns, and the cares of this life choked him until he became unfruitful. (Mark 4:18-19) What a warning!

Paul also sends greetings to a woman whose home is the gathering place for a church. Some Greek women did very well in business and had homes large enough to hold the weekly gathering of believers in the area.

Archippus also had a church in his home. (Philemon 2). *17 And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."* Colossians 4:17 (ESV) My guess is that he had been appointed as an elder of the church in his home. As the owner of a large home, he would have had a lot of business to attend to, and yet the people were to remind him to fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord. I see increasing numbers of people leaving a successful secular career and enter into ministry fulltime.

Paul authenticated the letter by writing the last lines in his own hand, probably large Greek letters because of his eye condition. (Galatians 6:11)

Paul closed the letter with a strange request. Remember my chains. (Hebrews 13:3) He would have been chained to a soldier that kept watch over him. The mention of the chains is not for sympathy but rather a claim of authority. He has the right to tell us to suffer for Christ and count it gain because he is living it. Can we effectively tell others to carry the cross of Christ if we have not done so ourselves? (Matthew 16:24)

In these closing greetings, we've caught a glimpse of a number of lives. We've seen portraits of their testimonies. Some were incredibly strong men of faith that were sold out to Jesus. One had failed, but thanks to the grace of God had proved himself committed and stayed faithful, even serving Paul in his last days. Another loved the world more than he loved Jesus and walked out on ministry.

Someone shared the thought that the events of our life are like portraits hanging in our life's gallery. When others walk through the gallery of your life what will they see? What

Commented [Paul26]: Philemon 1:24 (NIV)
²⁴ And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

Commented [Paul27]: 2 Timothy 4:10 (NIV)
¹⁰ For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Commented [Paul28]: Mark 4:18-19 (NIV)
¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;
¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Commented [Paul29]: Philemon 1:2 (NIV)
² to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

Commented [Paul30]: Galatians 6:11 (NIV)
¹¹ See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Commented [Paul31]: Hebrews 13:3 (NIV)
³ Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Commented [Paul32]: Matthew 16:24 (ESV)
²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

do you want to see there? Today and tomorrow and the next day will add to the portraits. Which one of these that we have seen in our text today will our gallery look like? Each day we decide what that day's portrait will be in the choices we make.

Questions

- 1 What are the portraits of Tychicus?
- 2 Describe the three main expressions?
- 3 What was his assignment?
- 4 How can you put feet to a prayer to encourage someone?
- 5 Describe the portrait of Aristarchus.
- 6 And Mark?
- 7 And Epaphras?
- 8 And Luke?
- 9 And Demas?
- 10 And Archippus?
- 11 What kind of portraits do you want in your life's gallery?