

**Russell Kelfer**

**Tychicus:  
Faithful Minister,  
Fellow Servant**

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**Series: Little Known Legends**

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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# Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

How often he seemed to appear in Scripture. He was always either at Paul's side or doing his bidding, though we have no record of words that he spoke or acts that he did that were in any way spectacular. His assignments were often difficult, yet we never read of any resistance on his part. What he did was considered mundane, but vital. To do those tasks, he had to be trusted, not only to be honest, but also to be discerning as well. Though little known, he was a man of God, indeed.

His name is not often heard in sermons or read in books, for the role he played was that of both a servant and a friend, doing tasks that do not often catapult a man or woman into the headlines. His name was Tychicus. And he leaves us a rich heritage of faithfulness and servitude that is often overlooked as we travel the paths of Scriptural biographies. To many, he is an unknown, but of course to God he is a living legend.

We read of him first in Acts 20. Apollos had gone to Corinth. Paul had taken the interior road to Ephesus. After three months of "speaking boldly" and "arguing persuasively" we read in Acts 19:9, that opposition arose in the synagogue, and Paul took his seminars onto more neutral ground, at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Now Tyrannus was a philosopher of that day, and tradition has it that he used the hall himself up until 11 A.M. in the morning and after 4 P.M. in the afternoon. From approximately 11:00-4:00 in Ephesus, because of the oppressiveness of the heat, everything seemed to shut down, and records indicate that more people were asleep in Ephesus at 1 o'clock in the afternoon than at 1 o'clock in the morning. But during those hours, Paul seized on the availability of that assembly room and redesigned his ministry accordingly. Apparently, he worked at his tentmaking profession early in the morning and late in the evening and used the heat of the day when others were resting to schedule his gospel ministry.

We could learn much from Paul right here. He used whatever times were available and whatever space was available, and trusted God for the outcome. So often churches today build and build and

Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

spend and spend in order to accommodate all of the people at the most convenient times, leaving large areas of facilities vacant much of the time. Paul was satisfied to teach wherever and whenever he could. He did not confine his ministry to the synagogue, where religious tradition had made preaching truth almost impossible. He went out to neutral ground and let the people come to him.

Great things were being accomplished during this time. Scripture says he remained there

for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

(Acts 10:10 NIV)

Those practicing witchcraft and sorcery were said to have brought their books and evil charms together and burned them publicly. Verse 19 adds that the value of these satanic materials was worth more than 50,000 drachmas, a drachma being worth about a day's wages. In our society, that would amount to about 2½ million dollars. They burned their bridges behind them. They left no room to turn back. So conviction began to spread throughout the region.

It was about this time, according to verse 23, that a great disturbance occurred in Ephesus. A silversmith named Demetrius who made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis, began to feel the pinch of Paul's ministry. The demand, needless to say, for his product was diminishing rapidly, and with it, his profits. He stirred the people into a frenzy until they began to shout, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." They were about to seize Paul and his disciples and lynch them, when the city clerk quieted the crowd and convinced them that this was a matter for the courts, not for a wild-eyed mob. With that, the crowd was dispersed.

Chapter 20 begins here. At this point, Paul leaves the city and heads for Greece and then on to Syria and back to Macedonia, but he did not travel alone. Paul always had a contingent of men he considered to be faithful at his side. Here we read,

He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

(Acts 20:4,5 NIV)

So with Paul on this journey was a team of men he chose to go

## Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

with him both to help him and to learn from him. This was ever the case. And one of those men was a man named Tychicus. This is the first time he appears on the scene, but certainly not the last.

Already he had been in the midst of the spiritual battlefield with Paul. He had seen his leader ousted from the temple, nearly lynched by an angry mob, and walked with him as he left Ephesus. They went on to plant the seeds of the gospel in new and more fertile soil. Joining Paul at Troas, the team stayed there together for seven days. It was during that week that Eutychus was raised from the dead. The team then proceeded to Assos by ship, where Paul, having made the trip on foot, met them once again.

Our next reference to Tychicus is found in Ephesians 6. Paul is concluding his letter to the church at Ephesus by sharing the concept of spiritual warfare once again. He makes his famous illustration of the whole armor of God come alive, then adds:

Pray for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (Ephesians 6:19,20 NIV)

Then he adds:

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing.

I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. (Ephesians 6:21-24 NIV)

### DEAR BROTHER, FAITHFUL SERVANT

Paul is in prison in Rome. His hands are tied, both figuratively and physically, and from a human perspective, it would appear his ministry was over. But of course our God who delights when we are in a position where only He can act, had Paul exactly where he needed him. And right by his side, simply available to do whatever he needed, was Tychicus. No doubt he had been by the Apostle all this time. He had seen God take what appeared to be the end and make it a platform from which the gospel could go by mail

throughout the then-known world.

So Paul was writing letters, and sending those letters to the churches he had helped to form, encouraging them, instructing them, and enlightening them to the fact that his imprisonment was, in fact, a blessing. The letter sent to Ephesus was, no doubt, an encyclical or “circular” letter, one addressed to one church, but intended to be read in all the churches in Asia. For that to happen, two things must take place.

1- Someone reliable must see that it was delivered to each church.

2- Someone must be so discerning that he could not only read the letter, but answer questions and respond to inquiries about the Apostle and the issues discussed in the letter.

Such men were few and far between. You would have to choose out the most honorable, most dependable man you had for such a task, because how he responded to the questions he received would say as much as the letter itself.

This particular Ephesian letter said nothing about Paul except that he was in prison. It would be up to the messenger to explain in detail what was happening in Paul’s life, and how what was happening fit in with the ultimate plan of God. And so God laid His hand on a man who would be satisfied to labor in the shadows, his labors serving to make another successful. Look at the words Paul used to describe Tychicus.

He said he was a dear brother. The word “dear”, translated beloved in the King James version, comes from the root word “agape” that denotes God’s love for us. He was one highly regarded, deeply respected, greatly loved. The word “brother” used here is the word “adelphos”, a community of life which springs out of a community of love. He is saying, “Here is a man who is my kinsman in Christ, and who is loved as deeply as if he were my own brother.”

Each of us has only a handful of friends, if that many, that we can look at with such endearing terms. But Paul went beyond that. He said, “Tychicus, my dear brother, who is also my faithful servant in the Lord.” The word “faithful”, in the Greek, “pistos”, is a word used to denote someone who is so reliable and trustworthy that their word to you is like money in the bank. Two words used to define that Greek word are sure and certain.

In other words, just as surely as the sun will rise, if Tychicus

Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

says he'll do something, he will. The word is used many times in the New Testament, but only a few of those times is it used to describe an individual. Most often it is used to describe God Himself and that quality of His being that makes His Word trustworthy. The inference is that if someone is totally faithful, their word is enough to assure their conduct.

Look at the ways God used that same Greek word to describe His own reliability towards us:

God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (I Corinthians 1:9 NIV)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (I Corinthians 10:13 paraphrased)

The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (I Thessalonians 5:24 NIV)

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (II Thessalonians 3:3 NIV)

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (II Timothy 2:13 NIV)

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. (Hebrews 3:6a NIV)

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23 NIV)

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. (Hebrews 11:11 paraphrased)

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (I Peter 4:19 NIV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9 NIV)

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. (Revelation 19:11a NIV)

There is no word in Scripture that more adequately defines God's nature than that one. Abraham had faith, but that faith had to have an object. The object was God. He had proved Himself to be

## Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

faithful. It was God's faithfulness that generated Abraham's faith. Paul had faith in Tychicus. He believed him to be a man he could count on.

Now what was he faithful to do? The next word used to describe Tychicus is the word "minister" or "servant". The Greek word is "diakonos", the same word that is translated "deacon" in other passages. If you look in a Greek lexicon or concordance, you will see it defined this way: "a servant, an attendant, a waiter of tables." This particular word does not necessarily denote the office of deacon, but rather the role of a servant. It is a word used to describe those who did the menial things, the humiliating things, the things that accrued no glory.

It was used in Acts 6 of one who was in charge of the offerings. It was used in Romans 16 of one who had been charged with caring for the sick and the poor. It is the title given to those called alongside who silently bear the burdens of others and carry out the tasks of others, freeing them, in some instances, to perform more visible jobs themselves. Tychicus was a faithful servant. He was always there to do the least important things in the most dependable way.

The church today is lacking men and women like Tychicus. In years past, the kingdom seemed to be blessed with an abundance of workers called alongside who couldn't preach or teach, but were there to plant the trees or clean the church or take food to the needy or paint the buildings or mow the grass. Now we hire people to do those things, often because those who used to volunteer to do them are too busy.

Perhaps there is a second reason. It may also be that we have so deified success and performance and visibility in the Christian community that people no longer grasp what a privilege it is to serve in such menial ways. And with the affluence the church enjoys today, even the smallest flock is able to pay someone to do those things it assumes no one wants to do.

Tychicus was a faithful servant. He was always ready to do the little things; and if he said he would do it, he did. It isn't uncommon to be in a gathering with a group of pastors or Christian workers and have the topic turn to how disappointed they are in the absence of dependability of believers. You pass a list and ask people to sign up, or you telephone people and ask for volunteers, and two problems seem constant in every church.

1- How few will make themselves available if it is inconvenient.

## Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

2- How many say they will and don't. The first has to do with being a servant. The second has to do with being faithful, being a man or woman of his/her word.

Somehow people don't grasp that if a person volunteers for something and doesn't bother to show up, he is not demonstrating the mind of Christ. Can you imagine praying tomorrow, and getting a message back, "God is faithful, but He is too busy to listen today."? Or "God would like to help, but He forgot to come to work today."? We expect God to keep His word. Others have the right to expect God in us to do the same. End of sermonette. On with the study.

### HE WILL TELL YOU EVERYTHING

The third thing we know about Tychicus is that he was close to Paul's heart. Paul said, "He will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you." His real motivation for sending this particular man was that this particular man could share Paul's heart as well as Paul's ministry. He knew the man, and he knew the mission.

The fourth thing we know is that Tychicus understood the concept behind Philippians 4:8,

whatsoever things are of good report...

(Philippians 4:8 paraphrased)

Paul said, "I'm sending him so you can know how I am and that he may encourage you." Unless Tychicus had God's perspective, there was no way his report could be encouraging. The man who seemingly had been hand-picked to preach the gospel to the Gentile world was locked in a Roman prison, chained to guards, and unable to leave the grounds. From a human perspective, it was all over for Paul. All he could do now was write a few letters, right?

Right. And as we read in Philippians 1, that was exactly what God had in mind all along. Oh, how much higher are His ways than ours. It takes a man of maturity to look beyond the bars and the guards to the freedom inside Paul's soul. It took discernment to see that those shackles only freed him to send the message farther, faster than he could ever go. It took discernment to see that by having to put his message in writing, it could be handed down from generation to generation as a living word from a living God. It took discernment to see that the power being generated in the ranks by the enslavement of their leader was only working for the good of



Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

the gospel.

Paul needed a man with eyes to see life through the lens of the Spirit. He had such a man. His name was Tychicus. His name surfaces again in Colossians 4. It is an almost identical explanation about his favorite mail carrier.

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. (Colossians 4:7,8 NIV)

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he concludes with these greetings:

I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.

But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (II Timothy 4:12-18 NIV)

Apparently Paul needed Timothy. But he did not dare leave the work in Ephesus without proper guardianship. So he sent Tychicus to Ephesus to free Timothy to go to Rome. He may have taken this letter, II Timothy, with him as he went.

At another time, Paul needed Titus to come to Nicopolis, so he apparently sent Tychicus to take his place there. We read in Titus:

As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.

Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.

## Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. (Titus 3:12-15 NIV)

So here is a man who was with Paul in Nicopolos, in Ephesus, in Rome, and on his journeys from Greece to Asia. Commentators seem to agree that he was with Paul much of the time he was in prison, and was, in fact, his most trusted messenger and one of his closest friends. He went wherever he was needed, stayed as long as necessary, did whatever he was called upon to do, and never once chafed over being in Paul's shadow. By Paul's own words, he was a "faithful minister, and a fellow servant." He could be counted on to be available and could be depended on to finish the task, even the unpleasant ones and the unnoticed ones.

Paul's task was an enormous one. The burden was upon his shoulders to pray for and be concerned with the needs of all the churches. Beyond that, he was bound by literal chains and could not go to those churches personally to untangle their problems or build them up in the faith. All he could do was write to them and pray that God would be able to communicate through the written page what he could not do in person. So God gave Paul a Tychicus. He reached into His eternal treasure chest of little-known legends and drew out a man whose middle name was availability, and whose main character quality was trustworthiness. He placed that man alongside Paul and let him walk with him, work with him, suffer with him, even flee with him, until his heart was so intertwined with Paul's that he could literally send him anywhere, and he could act on Paul's behalf.

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO TYCHICUS

There were no gospels according to Tychicus. Or were there? Maybe he wrote with his life what Paul was saying with his pen: faithful minister, fellow servant. He became Paul's feet, running to the churches where hurts were and proclaiming the message of hope and truth where doctrinal errors were. He became Paul's hands, reaching out to the churches who needed to hear the words of the Apostle but could not. He became Paul's mouth, speaking for him, his eyes, watching for him and his ears, listening for him.

The jobs that needed to be done, he did, not because they were glamorous, but because they were necessary. All about us today

## Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

are people who, like Tychicus, do the little things without fanfare for the glory of God. You see them setting up chairs, practicing music, visiting the hospitals, working the sound boards or the tape recorders, mowing the grass, working in the library, going to the nursing homes, planning the retreats, on the floor in the nursery teaching and entertaining your children so you can do the more visible things, or spending the time doing the things you need to grow yourself.

Only occasionally do we say, "Thank you." Only rarely do we acknowledge they are there. But if what they do is not done, we cry out in anger. Why isn't the library open? Why aren't the chairs in place? What's wrong with the sound? Nobody went to the hospital? Nobody fixed them a meal? When they don't do what we take for granted, we're crushed. They have become quiet fixtures in the body of Christ, so faithful that we simply expect them to be there when we need them.

I believe Paul felt that way about Tychicus. He knew that when the need arose, his man would be ready. So he called him "faithful minister, fellow servant." How about stopping right now and making a list of those people whose faithful service make your ministry or your spiritual growth possible? And this week go to them or write to them and say, "Thank you." No one else may ever know about it. That's good. God will know, and they will know. And God will know they know. And God will be pleased because men and women like Tychicus are His kind of men and women.

And Beloved, the next time there is a request for people to help do the "little" things, don't take it lightly. God doesn't. Stop and ask God if maybe He isn't scouting around the body of Christ for another Tychicus, a faithful servant who is just available to do life's seemingly insignificant tasks so the work can go on, and on, and on.

If he says, "Yes," maybe you should say, "Yes," as well.

"Somebody needs to do it,"  
We often hear people say  
It's a totally insignificant job  
With absolutely no pay.

No one may ever even know  
You were willing to pay the price,  
But somebody wants you to do it—  
That somebody's Jesus Christ.

Tychicus: Faithful Minister, Fellow Servant

And when in Heaven's choir room  
We gather round God's Son,  
He'll say, "Somebody had to do it,  
"I'm so glad that you were the one."

Let's pray.

*Our Father and our God,*

*We thank You for those about us who seem so willing just to serve, just to do the little things that make it possible for others to do the things that maybe get more attention, receive more accolades. And yet without the faithful people, the men and women like Tychicus, who just take the messages and do what they are asked to do quietly, without them, Father, we know that the Kingdom could not have the power it has, and they could not have the rewards they will one day have.*

*Some of us need to thank You this morning for all of the men and women like Tychicus even in this church who, every day and every week, continue to faithfully do the insignificant. And some of us in this room, Father, need to be more available ourselves to do those very things so that like Tychicus, it can be said of us, "faithful servants indeed!"*

*In Jesus name, Amen.*

### A Challenge to Further Study

1- Ask God this week to give you the time and the burden to call those who so quietly do the "little" things in the body of Christ and say "thank you".

2- Ask God to give you a servant's heart, and then, when someone asks you to serve, know that He is answering your prayer and say, "Yes."

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