

An Ambassador in Bonds

Ephesians 6:18-24

***Ephesians 6:18-24** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; **19** And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. **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. Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.*

Introduction

I want to introduce Ron McMillian to you this morning. I first met Ron and his wife Janice while I lived in Hephzibah, GA. I was going through a lot of soul searching and really needed someone to talk to. I drove by their small Christian book store every day and one Friday, the Holy Spirit prompted me to stop. The place was small and dark, and their selection of theology books was limited, but I loved going in there because of Ron and Janice. I found out that Ron was a pastor of a Southern Baptist Church in Augusta, GA. We became friends and ultimately confidants. He helped me to understand the calling God had placed on my life and I will forever be thankful to him. He became my pastor. Not long after joining the church, Ron led the church to ordaining me.

We would move from Augusta, GA to Longview, TX and that parting was difficult for Linda and me. As we were packing the last of the boxes, the awkwardness of saying goodbye began. We promised we would keep in touch and as I saw them in my rearview mirror, I knew we would not be seeing them anytime soon. The hope was there, but the 1,000 miles separation was the reality

I get that same feeling when my kids are packing the car to go to their home after visiting with Linda and me. I know the “good byes” are soon coming, we will hug, and pray for safety for their trip home. Linda and I will stand on the driveway and wave as their car heads north.

That is the feeling that I am having as this epistle is coming to an end. It has been a great journey, we have had some great times, learned much, but the end is in sight. I will read it again many times, but this intimate review of the letter stands in the future.

Paul wrote a love letter to the church at Ephesus while being in bonds in Rome. You never get that idea from the words that he penned while he is in prison. There were no pleas to break him out. Lawyers were not working on appeals to his imprisonment.

Paul wrote epistles to the churches at Ephesus, Philippi, Colossi, and a personal letter to Philemon while in prison mentioned in Acts 28.

Paul received word from the body of believers in Ephesus and he responded by pouring his heart out to them in love, always the teacher. Paul wrote Ephesians as an encouragement to them. He wrote about the doctrine and teachings of Christ and explained how they could take those teachings and live together as a body of believers in Ephesus and in the world.

The Secret Weapon of the Christian

***Ephesians 6:18-19** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; **19** And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,*

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” – The secret weapon of the Christian warrior in many cases is not exercised or employed. Putting on the Armor of God is very important and crucial. Properly wielding the Sword of the Lord is very important and crucial. Prayer is very important and crucial to the Christian warrior.

Prayer has given triumph where there was only loss. Prayer gives a victory when defeat was unmistakable. The skill and courage of the warrior, the design and proper fit of the armor, while important, are never a replacement for prayer. God has a history of coming to the rescue those that call upon His name (1 Chronicles 5:20; 2 Chronicles 20:15). Prayer changes things.

Remember that the Christian does not battle flesh and bone.

***Ephesians 6:12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

When we are tempted, it is important to keep in mind that we are in spiritual conflict! We are to pray!

“...*watching thereunto with all perseverance* – What could Paul be talking about, “perseverance”? Looking back at the eleventh verse this becomes clear. They are to endure and press on against the wiles of the devil. The devil himself, unbelief or being short of faith must be stood up against.

“...*and supplication for all saints*” – praying for all saints

“*And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel*” – Paul is entreating the church to pray for him so that he will be able to preach the Gospel with boldness. The first thought that comes to mind is, this is Paul! The greatest missionary of the Bible and he is coveting the prayers of the church that he might find boldness. This is the church planter. This is the missionary that one missionary journey was not enough. This is Paul, the incarcerated many times for preaching the Gospel. This is Paul who joyfully said: “I must also see Rome” knowing that Rome meant death.

Acts 19:21 *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.*

Therefore, if the Apostle Paul knew the importance of the prayers of the church in order that he might boldly proclaim the Gospel, how much should we also ask the same of our brothers and sisters right here, right now.

Speaking As an Ambassador

Ephesians 6:20-22 *For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 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.*

“*For which I am an ambassador in bonds*” – At this point, Paul was in chains or in confinement. But being in jail did not take away the commission that Jesus gave him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

“...*that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*” – tell the Gospel openly and without fear.

“*But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do*” – Paul wanted them to know his condition and his own deep fears that he would fail Jesus in not proclaiming the Gospel. It was his desire for the churches to know exactly how and what he was doing.

“*Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things*” – since Paul was in confinement, he sent Tychicus (Greek for *fateful*). Tychicus was from Asia Minor and Ephesus was its capital. It is highly probable that he was a delegate from the church at Ephesus and accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. Paul used Tychicus to carry letters to Colossi and to Timothy. That meant that Paul considered him highly trustworthy. Paul trusted Tychicus, Trophimus and Titus with the collection for the poor Christians in Judea and Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:16-24

“*Faithful minister*” could carry the inference that Tychicus was in service to the church and most likely a deacon.

(See Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21, 24; Colossians 4:7, 18; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12).

“*Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*” – The Apostle Paul was well known in the early church. He felt compelled to explain his welfare as he was a prisoner in Rome. Any news would be important to the church where Paul was concerned.

Written in Sincerity

Ephesians 6:23-24 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. Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.

“*Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” - Paul closes this letter in much the same way as he closed all his letters. He wished the believers in Ephesus peace, love and faith that only *God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* could provide.

“*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*” – Paul’s use of “*grace*” means “May God’s favor and blessings be with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in honesty and freedom of deceit.

“Amen” – let it be true!

Conclusion

Therefore, if the Apostle Paul knew the importance of the prayers of the church in order that he might boldly proclaim the Gospel, how much should we also ask the same of our brothers and sisters right here, right now.

Do you have the same deep fears that you would fail Jesus in you do not proclaim the Gospel?

To understand the heart, soul and mind of Paul at this point in his life and at the conclusion of this epistle to the Ephesians, let's look at his farewell written to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:6-8 *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Robert C. Crowder