

# A WELL-KNOWN UNKNOWN

## Ephesians 6:21-6:22

### INTRODUCTION

Typically, here at STBC, we preach expositionally through a book or letter of the Bible. Today, we are going to do something different.

This message has its origin about 7 years ago when we were preaching through the book of Titus. We came across a name, an individual who's name was hard to pronounce. That Titus passage offered no details about this person.

His name: Tychicus

Today, we are going to introduce you to Tychicus - a well-known unknown.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### Paul's journeys

**Acts 18: 22-23** - "When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. And having spent some time *there*, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples."

- the end of Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary and the beginning of his 3rd journey (53 AD)

**Acts 19** – Paul in Ephesus for 3 years, ended with quite an uproar (AD 54-57) - Paul preaching against idolatry and they arrest Paul and throw him out

**Acts 20: 1-3:** Goes to Greece (Corinth) where he writes the book of Romans

**Romans 15: 22-26:** Not yet visited Rome, heading to Jerusalem with gift from the Macedonia churches collected during the third journey - this is a significant part of his third journey. He is going to deliver it to these churches who are suffering through a famine.

Now, we meet Tychicus - one among several companions.

**Acts 20:4** “And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

- Possibly a delegation from the local churches for gift from Macedonia - they would join in delivery of gift in a show of love from those churches to the others.

**Illustration:** I had the privilege of being a delegate to Soviet Union in the late 80s. I was a university student representing Arizona. We arrived bearing gifts, experienced culture shock, were a source of good-natured mocking as we were not accustomed to Soviet customs but we were treated very well as a delegation.

I am not sure it was that way for Paul and this delegation headed to Jerusalem.

**Acts 20:22** - “And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there”

- Note the contrast for this delegation: unknown future but known affliction
- Is Paul someone you want to be with on this journey? Tychicus did

Significant event: Paul’s farewell to Ephesians (Acts 20:17)

**Acts 20:36-38** - “When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they *began* to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.”

- what do you think this bodes for Tychicus as he travels with Paul?

We do know Paul and the delegation arrive.

- Trophimus seen with Paul (Acts 21:29)
- these Gentiles are part of why Paul is getting in trouble

- the Jews assumed Paul had violated the law and taken these Gentiles into the temple

So, will we see Tychicus again? Yes

Let's follow Paul's timeline:

Arrested in Jerusalem and taken to Rome (Acts 27)

- we don't know if Tychicus was with him
- we only know that Luke (Paul's personal physician) and Aristarchus accompany Paul
- this could be that Aristarchus had seniority as we know that he was arrested with Paul in Ephesus (Acts 18)
- For fun: Paul a winter visitor in Phoenix? (Read Acts 27:12)

Paul is now in Rome for his imprisonment (AD 60-62).

Do we know if Tychicus is in Rome? Yes, as we see in Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

**Ephesians 6:21-22** - "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. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts."

Somehow, Tychicus had made it from Jerusalem to Rome and spent time with Paul during his imprisonment. He has now been selected to deliver this letter to the Ephesians.

-delivered to the Ephesians, probably his home area (1500 miles away from Rome)

-consider the time and effort of Tychicus to get that letter to Ephesians

Companion passage:

**Colossians 4:7-9** -“As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. *For* I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.”

-also delivered Colossians letter - 100 miles from Ephesus

-Onesimus: Tychicus probably also delivered the letter to Philemon with the slave Onesimus,

These letters known as the Prison Epistles from Paul while in first imprisonment (house arrest) in Rome (AD 60-62)

Will we see Tychicus again? Yes

Paul was then released from prison for a short while (AD 62-64) and during which time he wrote two more letters - 1 Timothy and Titus (his protégé pastors)

Read **Titus 3:12**: “When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”

- Tychicus must be back with Paul because he is seen by Paul as a potential replacement for Titus while Titus comes to visit Paul
- We do not know if he went but we do know that after five years of known ministry, he is seen by Paul as a qualified substitute

Will we see Tychicus again? Yes

Paul is rearrested and imprisoned in Rome where he would die in prison in AD 67

He wrote 2 Timothy from prison - his last known written words

**2 Timothy 4:12** - "But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus."

Sent to Ephesus - probably delivered letter

A substitute for Timothy in Ephesus

- Apostle John in Ephesus at the time - may be among the leaders of this church
- Tychicus sent to pastor this church!
- Ephesus is the first church mentioned in Revelation 2

Will we see Tychicus again? Not in the Bible, but we will in heaven. Pastor Miller wants to meet Ishmael in heaven, I want to meet Tychicus.

**Historical Summary:** Tychicus went from one among many and a mere delegate on a missionary journey to the substitute pastor for one of the most important churches of the time.

This is not just a history lesson.

**We see five principles of serving from Tychicus:**

- 1. Christian**
- 2. Community**
- 3. Committed**
- 4. Conduit**
- 5. Comforting**

**READ: Ephesians 6:21-22 - "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. I have sent him to you for this**

very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.”

1. **Christian** - v. 21 - “in the Lord”

Paul is not recommending Tychicus just because he is a great minister or a great servant; not because he is a dear brother in the Church - but because he is “in the Lord” - Tychicus is a Christian.

**Illustration:** Many years ago, I was having a lunch with a man who was a great leader. I believe he became a President of a major university. He knew I was a Christian and he told me that he also went to a church. In fact, he told me that he was an elder in that church. This surprised me because I knew what he had described about the Bible and such. He told me that, upon accepting the elder position, he had to make an arrangement with the other elders. He told me that if he didn't believe the Truth of the Bible, he didn't believe in the Deity of Christ and he didn't believe in the resurrection, but just because of these things, they didn't have a problem keeping him off the Elder Board. Can you imagine?!

Read **Ephesians 1:4-14**: This is a beautiful description of what it means to be “in the Lord” - predestined by the Father, redeemed by Jesus' blood, and sealed with the promise by the Holy Spirit

Recently appointed deacons: I can promise you that this was a priority in evaluation - was their love of God - “in the Lord”

2. **Community** - v. 21 - “Tychicus, the beloved brother”

**brother**- the Greek word indicates like a family - part of a distinct group of relationships - there is an exclusivity here -

- a loved one - not just a fellow believer in an organization
- a relationship with others that takes time with others - a “**brother**” within the church family - “**beloved**”

Examples:

- **Acts 20:** Tychicus is around people of different locations, backgrounds and cultures

- **Colossians:** Onesimus – he is spending time with people of different social and economic conditions - Onesimus is a slave

- Paul – Tychicus is not hanging out with the pretty and popular people - Paul was very unpopular in many places

Tychicus understands community - hanging around with different people in different cultures and different backgrounds.

**Illustration:** When Ann and I were first married, we were traveling abroad and were detained in Israel. They separated us to hear our explanations because they couldn't believe our story. We had met Christians from Australia while traveling in Egypt who introduced us to Christians from Texas who were ministering in Israel who took us to various places free of charge and without prior planning - all because we said they were Christians. This was too unbelievable to the immigration officials. They couldn't believe that you could be in true community with believers from other places and cultures when you had never met them before.

Tychicus understood this.

### 3. **Committed servant - v. 21 - “faithful minister”**

In the Colossians passage - **“faithful servant and fellow bond-servant”**

- Minister: from Greek word ‘Deaconos’ - from which we get the English word deacon; servant.
- Bond servant: co-slave, works without pay, dependent on Master
- Not a church “volunteer” - when you volunteer there is this idea that you come and go as you like

Techies was committed despite:

a. Secondary status

Not in it for the personal glory

b. Sacrifice

Leave home and travel

Unknown future (Read: Acts 20:22)

c. Shame

Physical abuse of Paul (Acts 21:30-32, 23:10, 23-24)

Trial (Acts 24-27), imprisonment (Acts 28)

d. Sorrow (Acts 20:25, 37-38)

Weeping with the Ephesian leaders in Acts 20

Watching Paul in his last days, not being there

e. Suffering

Companion of Paul

i. Paul's description of life (Read 2 Cor 11:23-28)

4. **Conduit** - v. 21 - knows Paul's circumstances, information delivery

Tychicus allows others to minister serve through him

- Here: Letter carrier, so Paul can minister
- Prior: Gift deliverer, so Macedonians would minister
- Future: Substitute pastor, so others could minister

Illustrations: There are many conduit ministries at STBC.

Sermon note taker - so Pastor Miller can minister

Power point/sound board - so Pastor Bloomquist can minister

Conduits of ministry work as a team - it is not “my” ministry

## 5. **Comforting** - v. 22 - “comfort your hearts”

Words of truth from Paul AND Tychicus’ presence

Tychicus was not sent from Paul so that he could be fixing situations

- no jail breakout plan
- no funding Paul’s trial

His Goal: To bring comfort to the believers

Jesus had this same message - John 14:1 - “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”

- comfort because we know our heavenly future

Paul had this message in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 - “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”

- comfort knowing our future

CONCLUSION: Who among us will be like Tychicus?

A Christian, committed, living in community with believers, a conduit for others' ministry, and wanting to comfort each other.