

Grace Remembered

Prayer

This morning we are gathered together to worship God and to remember those who have bought our freedom with their blood. We as Christians know of the great sacrifice of Jesus who redeemed us with the sacrifice of his blood. I cherish his grace daily.

Yet, this morning I am compelled to ask, what of the men and women who sacrificed their blood so that you and I could freely worship God this morning?

In John 15:13 we read:

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

This morning my friends let us turn to Ephesians 6:21-24 NET just following our discussion on the Armor of God and read what Paul has to say of Tychicus. (Tee-Ki-Cuss)

Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you too may know about my circumstances, how I am doing. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

The name Tychicus translated actually means "Lucky". Through study of the five occurrences in scripture we see of this individual it seems likely that he was an Ephesian convert as he makes his first appearance in Acts 20:4. For those of you who want a refresher, this is at the end of Paul's mission in Ephesus.

We then see that he went with Paul on many of his missionary journeys, and was eventually sent to take over for Timothy as pastor of the church in Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12) at the time of Paul's second stay in the crowbar hotel.

We find that the apostle Paul gave him two tasks. He was to deliver a letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21), a letter to each of the Colossians and Philemon churches (Col 4:7,8) The main idea here was to inform the churches about what had happened to him and to encourage them.

As an Ephesian himself the church knew him and Paul pretty well... Now Paul had just been talking about the battle and the Armor of God. It doesn't take a great leap to get that these two soldiers for the Lord were inspiring the church to stand strong in their spiritual warfare. What were some of the characteristics and attributes that these men of God, dare I say soldiers of God exhibited? What can we take away from these men that would be worth modeling in our battle against the principalities of darkness in our world today?

Let us turn to Ephesians 6:21 once again:

Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you too may know about my circumstances, how I am doing. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

I wish to draw your attention to the words "Dear Brother". Many today use this salutation without meaning, but the intention when written was one of that should not be misunderstood. This can be translated as Dear or Beloved. Paul expressed agape love toward his sons and daughters in Christ and Tychicus is no exception. Paul was not being cold or officious. He was not creating professional distance. He was expressing sincere love. This was undoubtedly a love that those who knew Tychicus probably shared.

So Question #1

In this battle to take ground for the kingdom of God, how would people describe you? Are you loving and relational? Do you spend time with others in the church? Do they know who you are? Now there are churches and other places of worship where the answer is probably not, but in a loving church in a culture of honor, if you answered NO. What is that saying to you right now?

I have met a lot of veterans and I can sincerely say that war changes people. Some become hard. Some are afraid of further hurt and so hide from social contact. Regardless war and the battle can make one, if not apathetic afraid to be open with others. Yet, I have found with effort and love one can break down these barriers and find that the veterans of the Christian battles like their veteran counterparts of the wars of this world are deeply loving and relational.

So what is wrong with being isolated, with not coming to express this love to one another? Turn with me to Hebrews 10:24,25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

So we have determined that God's soldiers are to be - loving. In this we also see that we are called to interact and help each other. Are we disciples of Christ? Just a few chapters back from our main scripture today in John 13:35 we read: *"by this all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another"*

Love isn't an optional characteristic. Are you encouraging one another this morning?

Okay next point. Let's look at another couple of words from Ephesians 6:21...

Let us examine what Paul is saying when he calls Tychicus a "faithful servant"

On one hand, faithful means to be full of faith, to not give up to be a person of integrity, to be a person who others could count on. I believe this characteristic is why Paul chose him to relieve Timothy as pastor at Ephesus.

When each of us as soldiers in God's army say something to others, can they count on our integrity? Is there any doubt about honesty and follow through that we will do what we say we will do?

Honesty and integrity are not optional characteristics. God's soldiers are honest

On the other hand, faithful can be interpreted to mean faithfulness in using the talents and resources that God gave each one of us to serve him and help others.

What gifts did Tychicus bring to the table? Was he a good teacher? Probably as he was assigned as pastor. Was he encouraging? Was he active? For Paul to choose him for this purpose I believe that he served God faithfully and used what God had given him for the good of others. Like the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:24-28 a soldier for the Lord uses the talents that God has given them.

Do you remember 2 Timothy 1:6? In this verse we see Paul telling Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands"

This morning, do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Are you growing in them? Most important of all... Are you using them?

Using your gifts is not optional... look back at what God says about those who do...

In Matthew 25:21 NKJV we read:

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.

Do you as a soldier of Christ give up?

Let me use an illustration that I borrowed from history...

"In the eleventh century, King Henry III of Bavaria grew tired of court life and the pressures of being a monarch. He made application to Prior Richard at a local monastery, asking to be accepted as a contemplative and spend the rest of his life in the monastery.

"Your Majesty,' said Prior Richard, "do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That will be hard because you have been a king."

"I understand," said Henry. "The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you."

"Then I will tell you what to do," said Prior Richard. "Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you."

When King Henry died, a statement was written: "The king learned to rule by being obedient."

Are we as soldiers of Christ leaning on his strength? Are we continuing despite what comes against us in this life?

Are you being faithful where you are right now? Are you doing what God has asked? If it helps... I think of this as a training ground for ruling and reigning with Christ when he comes back.

Right now, this morning what is God calling you to do?

Is it:

- Not giving up in your current trial; to keep trying until you overcome
- To grow your faith and your belief in him
- To become more knowledgeable in his word
- To find out what your gifts are
- To use the gifts he has given you
- To be honest and open

There are many others, but I think you get the idea

A Godly soldier is a servant. Tychicus is called a faithful servant in the Lord

There are really two types of people who come to church...

The first comes to church to have the church meet their needs. Unfortunately, many in this boat get discouraged and fall away from the church. Why? It is because somebody has let them down or failed them in some way. They have their eyes on what they can get and if they don't get it they walk or they find some flaw in the people and associate this with God himself. How many have we seen over the years walk away from the church disheartened?

The second comes to church with a different mindset. They come in expectation of what God will do. They come to serve God and sincerely want to know how they can serve the church. They will ask question about the needs and how they can be met.

Remember Christ? He came to serve not be served (Mark 20:45)

This morning are we asking what are the needs and how do we meet them?

A Godly soldier sees a problem and helps in whatever way they can to resolve the problem.

Are you an encourager? Are you coming alongside others and helping them in the battle?

The Greek work "Parakaleo" means to come alongside for help. Christ used this word in reference to the Holy Spirit in John 14:16

Are we listening to God?

Are we listening to others?

Are we encouraging others?

Are we praying with and for others?

Are we sharing Gods word?

Are we creating Disciples of Christ?

Are we interceding for those who need it?

There are many attributes of good soldier, which I can relate to you but for this day it is sufficient.

When we think of the veterans who have bought our freedom with their lives blood or their health or even their mind. As no one comes back from war unchanged, do we see how they have:

- Put on their battle armor
- Sacrificed for us
- Followed orders
- Been caring and loving
- Given their life or their time for us
- Followed orders
- Been faithful to the cause and to us
- Been the servant of us all
- Came alongside each other to help in a common cause
- Came to the battle not just for themselves but for others

These are noble things. Today I honor all veterans for their sacrifices for us. For their faithfulness to our peace and freedom and for their love for those they may not have or may never even meet.

As a soldier for Christ who has received armor, forgiveness, eternal life peace and a myriad of other blessings, most significant of which is the Grace that Jesus has shown us, how can I... In fact, how can any of us do less?

Prayer