

Unsung Heroes of the Bible #5

TEXT: Col 4:7-18

INTRODUCTION.

We have seen that the disciples were ordinary people empowered by God's Spirit. *"for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."* [Phil 2:13]

They enjoyed the fellowship and encouragement of other believers and endured the persecution of Jews, Gentiles and Roman authorities. *"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."* [Heb 13:3]

Whatever the opposition, most persevered against all odds to serve each other and the Lord. *"Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring."* [2 Thess 1:4]

I. THESE UNSUNG HEROES SET BEFORE US EXAMPLES.

1. Tychicus: One Who Encourages (v8) *"I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts."*

A. He was a native of Ephesus.

B. He served as Paul's personal representative and went to *"encourage (the) hearts"* of the Colossians.

C. When despondent or discouraged we are blessed to have an encourager to help us through.

Note. Paul says some have the Spiritual Gift of encouragement.

[Rom 12:6-8] *"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving [Gr-Ministering], let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;*

8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage."

The Greek word for encourage is *"parakaleo"* called to one's side to help.

He was indeed the example of an encourager.

Do you encourage other believers? How?

2. Onesimus: One Who is Transformed by the Gospel [v9b] *our faithful and dear brother; who is one of you.*

His name means *profitable* (or *useful*), but had been unprofitable to his master Philemon for he probably robbed the master and fled to Rome. There he was converted through Paul's ministry, and now Paul was sending him back accompanied by Tychicus.

The cross unites what the world would keep divided.

EXAMPLE. The gospel turns useless sinners into valiant co-laborers in God's kingdom. [He had been completely forgiven, reconciled and commissioned].

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [2 Cor 5:17]

An Onesimus became bishop of Ephesus by the early second century.

How has your life been changed by Salvation in Christ?

3. Aristarchus: One Who Perseveres (v10). *My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings,*

He was a native of Thessalonica, and was seized at the Ephesian riot probably to extract information about Paul. *"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."* [Acts 19:29] Since they were Greeks, nothing further was done to them.

Aristarchus was one of those faithful companions of the apostle Paul who was willing to expose himself to peril and dangers for the sake of accompanying Paul to Rome.

Archippus assumed Epaphras' place as pastor at Colosse during his imprisonment with Paul.

Are you one who perseveres or do you give in easily?

4. Epaphras: One Who Agonized in Prayer [v12-13]. *12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant [slave] of Christ “He is always wrestling [agonizing] in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”*

Unable to be with his church he prayed like Jesus did in the garden for the churches he was kept from visiting.

Epaphras founded and pastored the church at Colosse that met in the home of Philemon. He was used to be the answer to his own prayers.

He prayed that they would “..stand firm in all the will of God...”

Do you pray that Christians would “stand firm in all the will of God?”

5. Luke: the Physician.

He was a compassionate physician. Luke has left us an impression of himself by his emphasis on Jesus’ compassion.

He was a careful historian [Lk 1:3-4] *Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

He wrote the Gospel of *Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles* while with Paul in Rome.

He was the only Gentile writer of the early disciples. The Gospel penetrated through people of all races, classes, and religions.

He was originally from Antioch but adopted Philippi as his home, to lead the church while Paul went on to Corinth during the second missionary journey (Acts 16:40).—Holman Bible Dictionary

An early source supplied a fitting epitaph: “He served the Lord without distraction, having neither wife nor children, and at the age of 84 he fell asleep in Boeatia, [Gr. *Be-O’-tia*] full of the Holy Spirit.”

6. Nympha: A Lady Who Offered Hospitality. [v15] *Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.*

There were no church buildings in apostolic times. The word "church" always designates an assembly of believers wherever they met.

The location of Nympha's "house-church" was in the vicinity of Laodicea. Nympha was the hostess.

Paul, in his chapter on spiritual gifts says “....*Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*” [Rom. 12:13].

Our Baptist churches couldn’t survive if we didn’t have the Christian women.

Nympha shared her house because that is what she had.

Do you share what you have to minister to others?

If Jesus Came to Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two
If he came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there
That serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.
But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing,
and read the books you read,
And let him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go?
Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends?
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do?
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.