

YOU ARE
COMPLETE
in
HIM.
COLOSSIANS 2:10, NKJV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Paul's Condition in Rome

Back in New Testament times, there was no Facebook or any such posting to let others know of their condition. Travel was slow, by comparison, and communication was therefore as slow as travel. The result was that much of what was going on was unreported and known only to the individuals directly involved. So any information transmitted would be of more importance and of necessity brief in comparison to what can be communicated when information transfer is easy. Thus, if the apostle Paul wanted the brethren to know what was going on in his life, he had to find trustworthy people who could have access to him in prison, who had the flexibility and the finances to be able to travel, and who would be received as trustworthy on the other end. When therefore the scripture lists someone as bringing a report from an important individual such as Paul, many factors had to align for that to happen, and as such it was worthy of note in what would become the inspired record.

- **Tychicus** — Among the salient members of Paul's team was Tychicus. According to the record of the book of Acts, he was from the Roman province of Asia, with its capital at Ephesus (Acts 20:4). "As to all my affairs," says Paul regarding his circumstances in prison and what he can accomplish through his network, "Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information" (Colossians 4:7). Tychicus clearly was trustworthy — "faithful" — on both ends of the information transmission line; he was trusted by Paul and trusted by the Colossians. This "beloved brother" then could bring all the pertinent information, and would bring it accurately.
- **Purpose** — The brethren in Colossae clearly loved the apostle, and were hungry for news about his activities; what came was sparse and not necessarily accurate. This statement by Paul would thus be excitedly received by the saints at Colossae: "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" (Colossians 4:8). Tychicus was not only a messenger boy, he was also a preacher of the word and capable of bringing the encouragement of the eternal gospel to the Christians. This encouragement which comes through the preaching and teaching of God's word is the core of the saint's life, and never to be shunted aside.
- **Onesimus** — Coming with Tychicus was a runaway slave, as Paul informs the brethren. "With him," he states, "Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number" (Colossians 4:9). Onesimus was not one of their number when he ran away from his master, Philemon, who was a member of the congregation at Colossae. Paul describes him as one "whom I have begotten in my imprisonment" (Philemon 1:10). The apostle immersed Onesimus when the slave found him in prison; Paul taught him the gospel, including the importance of repentance. The slave who had run away was willing to take Paul's advice and willingly return to and submit to his master. Paul thus called him "faithful and beloved," and wanted the congregation to receive him as one of their "number."

The apostle was in no sense wanting, in Onesimus' case, to "throw him under the bus." Tychicus, likewise, a faithful brother and understanding the worth of each man's soul — whether slave or free — was willing to let this converted runaway have equal standing with him in the Lord. "They," affirms the apostle concerning both men, "will inform you of the whole situation here." Paul was thus demonstrating his trust in Onesimus, and showing the church at Colossae how teamwork can be accomplished in Christ. The brethren would then have the whole picture of Paul's circumstances through two faithful and beloved men! What edification, and what an example for present day Christians!!

Two faithful men
— a slave and a free-
man — would report
on Paul's condition.

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