

EPHESIANS: LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR HIGH CALLING
Part II: Walking Worthy Of Our High Calling In Christ, Ephesians 4:1-6:20
G. Encouraging One Another In A Spiritually Difficult Era
(Ephesians 6:21-24 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians as an encyclical, a letter meant to be sent both to the church at Ephesus and to the churches in towns around the central hub of Ephesus, he did so in a spiritually difficult era.
- B. In closing this epistle at Ephesians 6:21-24, Paul wrote to encourage his readers, exemplifying how to encourage fellow believers in the spiritually difficult era we face. We thus view this passage for our application:

II. Encouraging One Another In A Spiritually Difficult Era, Ephesians 6:21-24 et al.

- A. In closing his circular letter to believers at Ephesus and its surrounding area, Paul wrote that he was sending Tychicus, a beloved brother in Christ and a faithful servant in the Lord, to deliver that epistle and convey to Paul's readers what he wrote were "my affairs, and how I do," Ephesians 6:21 KJV.
- B. To clarify, the Greek Testament renders this phrase literally as "the things concerning me, what I am **practicing, performing**" (*prasso*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966; Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, 1973, p. 361-364) in Paul's *regular activities*.
- C. Such activities would normally seem trivial to Paul's readers, but things were *not* "normal" to all involved:
 - 1. The last contact the recipients of this letter had had with their beloved Apostle Paul who had brought the Gospel of Christ to many of them was a hurried meeting he had called with just the elders of the Church at Ephesus at the seaport town of Miletus as he was en route to Jerusalem, Acts 20:15-18.
 - 2. In that meeting, Paul had explained to these leaders that the Holy Spirit had been testifying through Early Church prophets that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23) and that they would see his face no more, an implication that he would be martyred, Acts 20:25.
 - 3. This meeting with Paul proved to be so difficult for the elders at Ephesus that they embraced him and gave him the typical parting gesture of kissing on the neck while grieving over his words that they would not see his face anymore, Acts 20:36-37.
 - 4. After that, Paul had gone to Jerusalem, he had been arrested there, and appealed to be tried by the Roman Emperor, and while being taken under guard to Rome, he was shipwrecked on Malta, Acts 21:1-28:16a.
 - 5. In finally reaching Rome, Paul was put under house arrest with a soldier guarding him until he came before Caesar and Paul's accusers from Jerusalem were to press charges against him, Acts 21:16b.
 - 6. This imprisonment was likely a first of two Roman imprisonments for Paul, the one described in Acts 28 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1672, "Introduction To The Letter Of Paul To The Ephesians")
- D. Accordingly, the believers at Ephesus and its surrounding districts would naturally be very concerned about Paul's daily activities, how he was functioning under house arrest in Rome following his many trials that had occurred after his brief meeting with the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus!
- E. Tychicus had comforting news to share about Paul with these believers as clarified in Acts 28:17-31:
 - 1. Tychicus could report how Paul had given the Gospel to the Jewish leaders in Rome on a given day, how they had come to his house and how he had preached to them from morning until evening, Acts 28:17-23.
 - 2. Tychicus could tell them of the mixed response to Paul's witness, how some of the Jewish leaders had believed and others had not, and of Paul's clarification that God was thus turning to reach the Gentiles now that the nation Israel and her leaders had not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, Acts 28:24-28.
 - 3. Tychicus could also explain that while Paul was under house arrest, he was regularly receiving all who came to him and preaching the kingdom of God about the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him, even the Roman soldier who had been assigned to guard him, Acts 28:30-31 with 28:16b.
- F. Following this delivery of Tychicus' heartwarming news about Paul's welfare and his regular activities while under house arrest, Paul added that Tychicus would comfort their hearts with his report, Ephesians 6:22.
- G. Paul closed the epistle, calling for peace to his readers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, that the grace of God might be with all those who truly loved the Lord Jesus Christ, v. 23-24.

Lesson: *To encourage fellow believers in a spiritually difficult era, Paul sent trustworthy coworker Tychicus to testify of the blessings of liberty in ministry God was still providing him even though he was under house arrest.*

Application: *May we encourage each other in our difficult era by telling of God's working in, for and through us.*