

Special Team Players Colossians 4:7-18

Intro: Are you ready for some football ? The season is just around the corner

A) Most of us will watch at least one game this yr

B) Most of us are Familiar with the Charger Stars

- 1) LT – RB / Drew Brees – QB
- 2) Donnie Edwards & Q. Jammer – Defense

C) We are familiar with those guys – they get a lot of Print – a lot of coverage – Jersey sales

- 1) But what about names like – David Binn / Drayton Florence or Leon Johnson

D) Most of us have never heard of those guys – why? **They are special team Players**

- 1) Kickoffs / Punts

E) But you cannot have a super bowl caliber football team if you don't have **good special teams players**

- 1) Guys who sacrifice their bodies to run down the field at full speed stop a punt or kick off return

Special teams Players are a key to a successful football team – Also a successful Ministry.

A) As Paul closes out this Letter to Colossians he mentions 10 men who were his special teams players

B) 10 guys who are not mentioned very much in the Bible – In fact for some this is their only reference – But guys who made an impact

- 1) **Consider each of them today – their impact in the Body of Christ**

1st up is Tychicus The Man with a Servant's Heart

A) **Tychicus** means “fortuitous,” or “fortunate.” he ministered with Paul for many years.

B) He is mentioned five times in the NT. Starting in the book of Acts

1) In Acts ch. 20 Paul is in Ephesus near the end of his 3rd Missionary trip

C) His plan was to return to Jerusalem via Macedonia where he would pick up the collection that the Gentile churches had put together for the persecuted Jewish believers in the **mother Church in Jerusalem.**

D) Paul wanted to deliver this offering himself, but he also wanted some the Gentile Believers to come with him.

- 1) **Tychicus was one of those Gentile believers.**

Now This was not an easy journey!!!!

A) Today you could hop on a plane in Ephesus, fly down to Jerusalem for lunch and a visit with the saints, and be back in time for dinner.

B) Not so in Paul's day- **this was a long, difficult, trip.** It would be mostly on foot, with some sketchy boat trips in between.

- 1) It would be weeks of hard and dangerous travel. For Tychicus to under take this was a huge commitment.

C) Plus, at almost every stop along with the way, people were warning Paul about what would happen to him once he got to Jerusalem.

- 1) Aggabus, the prophet came to Paul and tied himself up and said *“Paul this is what they are going to do to you once you hit the city”*

D) So there was this dark cloud that was hanging over the whole adventure.

- 1) **The cloud turned into a full blown storm once they hit Jerusalem.**

E) The end result- Paul arrested / taken to Caesarea to be tried – eventually sent to Rome which was another Long dangerous Journey

- 1) **Tychicus stayed w/ Paul that whole time & thru his release 2 yrs later!!**

Now in 2 Cor 11 Paul wrote these words describing his Journey's

v.25 three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the

wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness

A) What we need to consider is that Tychicus could have written those same words –

1) Tychicus was right there by his side as he went through those things.

B) Someone once said that the greatest ability in all of the world is availability - That is what Tychicus was

1) **He was available to Paul, at all times, for all things.**

C) And most of them I'm sure were not big things, or even noticeable things, but Paul couldn't have done what he did without him.

The last recorded thing that Tychicus did for Paul was to take this Epistle, the Book of Colossians & the Epistle to Philemon & the Epistle to the Ephesians, & deliver them to their destinations.

A) Now again, we could hear that & think, that is a nice thing but no big deal.

B) But to get from Rome to Colossae, Tychicus had to **cross Italy on foot**, sail across the Adriatic sea, traverse Greece on foot,

1) **sail across the Aegean Sea**, to the coast of Asia Minor, where he still faced a journey of almost a hundred miles on foot to get to Colossae.

C) You couldn't talk someone into doing that today for a Million dollars

1) And yet Tychicus did it for his love of Paul and his love for the Church and his Love for God !!!

Now In the scope of the overall ministry of the Church it was a little thing, but think about this ~~~~~

A) The letters that Tychicus delivered outlasted the Roman Empire.

B) They outlasted **even the churches they were delivered to**, and they have made it all the way to us here in Vista where they remain a blessing to us.

C) The life of Tychicus teaches us that there is greatness in the smallest things that are done for Jesus.

1) **Do not despise the days of little things**, those little things could ultimately have a huge impact.

D) Did Tychicus have any idea that what he was doing way back then would be touching our lives today? No !! – **But he was faithful**

1) He is mentioned as part of one of Paul's special team Players

E) And Paul refers to him as a **Beloved Bro/ Faithful minister And Fellow Servant – One who was able to comfort their hearts**

1) You can be a Tychicus – a Beloved Bro/ Sister / faithful minister and fellow servant – Love the body – be faithful in the little things

Next on Paul's List Verse 9 is Onesimus –

A) Onesimus is the man with the sinful past. – He was a runaway slave whose return to his master was the occasion for the book of Philemon.

B) Ran away – Ripped off – went to Rome – Trouble Jail – Paul – Saved

1) Paul sends him back – receive him as a brother & whatever he has done however ripped off – **CHARGE THAT TO MY ACCOUNT**

C) Although Onesimus was a runaway slave, Paul describes him as **our faithful and beloved brother.**

1) When a person comes to faith in Christ, the **past is no longer an issue.**

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

D) Paul tells the Colossians that the man who left Colossae as a runaway slave now returns as one of your number.

1) He was to be treated as a member of the church.

E) Paul shows his regard for him by having him, along with Tychicus, **inform** the Colossians **about Paul's whole situation**

1) **Onesimus was a testimony to the power of God to transform a life.**

Next is **Aristarchus: V.10 The Man with a Sympathetic Heart**

A) **Aristarchus we are told in v.11** was a Jewish believer - though like many Jews of the Diaspora, he had a Greek name.

B) According to Acts 20:4 He was a native of Thessalonica

1) Aristarchus first appeared during Paul's three-year ministry at Ephesus.

C) He was seized by the rioting mob, who recognized him as one of Paul's companions (Acts 19:29).

1) He accompanied Paul on his return trip to Jerusalem and on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:4).

D) As Paul writes Colossians, **Aristarchus is still beside the apostle.**

That he chose to make Paul's lifestyle his own speaks of his sympathetic, caring heart.

A) He gave up his own freedom to minister to Paul's needs.

B) Any leader would be enriched to **have a faithful Aristarchus** at his side through all his trials.

1) The Lord's work would not be done if it were not for people like Aristarchus.

C) People who are just called along side to help - who humbly bear hardships without the fame of those they serve.

1) Gal 6:2 **Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**

After Aristarchus is Mark – The man with the surprising Future

A) Mark was the cousin to Barnabas – he joined Paul and Barnabas on their **1st missionary journey** – mid way thru change of heart – went home

B) This bothered Paul – **he looked at Mark as being a Flake**

1) When it came time for Barnabas and Paul to go out on their **2nd missionary Journey** – Barnabas – **Son of encouragement** - Mark a **2nd chance**

C) But Paul was not into that at all. The whole matter turned into a dispute between Paul & Barnabas – **that led to their splitting up.**

1) Paul went out with Silas and Barnabas went somewhere else with Mark

D) Mark Proved himself with **Barnabas and ended up ministering** with Peter who also was no stranger to failure (Denial) & Knew about **2nd Chances**

Now what is really cool about Mark's story is that his relationship with Paul also eventually was restored

A) **IN Philemon 24 Paul names Mark among his fellow workers**

B) **And in 2 Tim 4:11 Paul tells Timothy to "pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service."**

C) Paul told the Colossians that if Mark came to them, they were to obey his **instructions** and **welcome him.**

1) They were not to shun him because of his previous failure.

Now If the story ended there it would really be great, but it doesn't.

A) Mark continued on in the ministry and was used by the Spirit to do what only **three other men in history were called to do, write down an account of the life of Jesus, the Gospel of Mark.**

B) **The great lesson of Mark's life is that God heals and restores and He uses those whom He does restore.**

1) His life was a testimony to God's ability to use failures that God is the God of the second chance, even in ministry.

C) Maybe you have had some failures in life or in ministry – Mark's life is a testimony that you can be used again.

1) God still has a place for you on his team –

After Mark comes Jesus also called Justus – The man with the Strong Commitment

A) Nothing is known of **Jesus who is called Justus** apart from this verse.

B) But according to this verse **Justus / Mark and Aristarchus** were the only fellow workers that Paul had who were Jews – part of the circumcision

C) The lack of response from his fellow Jews must have grieved Paul's heart.

1) The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem rejected his message, plotted to kill him, and denounced him to the Roman authorities.

D) Much of the opposition he received on his missionary journeys was from his fellow countrymen – **but these 3 guys stayed the course.**

That Jesus Justus was willing to leave his people to identify with Paul demonstrates his strong commitment.

A) He was willing to take a stand alongside Paul for Jesus Christ no matter what the cost.

B) **We learn from Justus – what an encouragement it can be to Just be there**

1) Paul says of Justus that his commitment to be there was a **comfort to him**

C) There is no mention of any mighty things that he did – any great sermons that he preached – or people he led to Christ

1) **He was just around – His Presence was a comfort to Paul**

Next up is Epaphras – The man with a Devoted passion

A) We were first introduced to him in Ch. 1 Col 1:7 *as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.*

B) There are several things in these verses here and in Ch.4 that stand out to me about Epaphras

1st He gave a good report

A) I like Epaphras. He goes around speaking good things. He says, *'I have good news about great things happening with those guys in Colossae.'*

B) I want to be like Epaphras — talking about how great someone is behind his or her back, 1) for not only does this please the Lord, but it has an impact on me as well. How?

C) **Our words are powerful** – You say something about someone – to someone else – it affects their outlook about that person.

1) Epaphras gave a good report – although there were problems going on in the Church in Colossae he took the time to Highlight the Good.

2nd Dear fellow servant: – The word is Dulos = Bond servant

A) Bondservant – a willing servant who attached himself to his master

B) Church was having problems w/ false teachers Epaphras - didn't bail on it but attached himself to it

C) But Paul refers to Epaphras as a Dear fellow servant.

1) I suggest to you the reason Paul referred to him in this way – **was his attitude was refreshing**

D) His heart was encouraging – He was a man who just loved to serve the Lord !!!!

3rd Faithful Minister of Christ Under row – Unseen —

A) Guys laboring underneath the surface in order to get – the people to their Destination

B) It was a thankless Job: See People on the top of the boat didn't come and say thanks to those under-rowers –

1) It was a thankless Job – So too in the church: Need to watch that you don't get bitter

C) **He was faithful minister** – faithful to the Body served them lovingly

1) Dependable available & trustworthy to God and man –

D) He had a **Passionate Devotion to the Body of believers at Colossae**

1) Every Church needs a lot of people like Epaphras

Here in Ch. 4 Paul Highlights what was one of his main Ministries v.12

He is *always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

A) He was a PRAYER WARRIOR – always Laboring Fervently – in the Grk it is Agonizing in Prayer

B) It is used in 1 Corinthians 9:25 to speak of the grueling competition endured by athletes in the games.

C) In John 18:36 it is translated, “fight.” Related words appear in Romans 15:30, to speak of fighting in prayer,

1) and Luke 22:44, in reference to Jesus' agony in Geths.

D) Epaphras was a **living example of Paul's command to the Colossians in 4:2 to “*devote yourselves to prayer.*”**

E) The goal of Epaphras's prayers was that the Colossians **stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.**

1) **Perfect** = means “complete,” “mature,” or “fully developed.” That they would be all that God desired them to be !!!!

After Epharas is Luke – The man with the specialized Talent

A) **Luke** was Paul's personal **physician**, as well as his close friend.

B) He was a Gentile believer who traveled frequently with Paul on his missionary voyages.

1) It may, in fact, have been Paul's recurring illnesses on the first missionary journey that prompted him to take Luke along on the second.

C) Like Paul, **he was an educated, cultured man**, as evidenced by the literary quality of his Greek in his gospel and the book of Acts.

D) He used his specialized Talent not for his own gain but for the furtherance of the Gospel. That is to be admired – Haman / Harper /

1) Luke teaches us that God has given each of us gifts, talents and abilities that go beyond taking care of our own Physical needs

After Luke is Demas - The man with the Sad Future – Demas is the stain on the group

A) He had made a substantial commitment to the Lord's work, and was with Paul in both his imprisonments.

B) Unlike Paul's other companions, however, his future was sad. Paul records the tragedy of Demas's desertion in 2 Timothy 4:9-10: *“Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”*

C) The pull of the world system eventually became irresistible to Demas, and he abandoned both Paul and the ministry.

1) **The life of Demas reminds us of our need to be on Guard and to stay accountable**

Then He mentions Nymphas v.15 – the Man with the gift of Hospitality a person who's is mentioned no where else in Scripture.

A) He is mentioned simply because he allowed a Bible study to take place in his house

B) That should be a great encouragement to all of you who are hosting Home Groups

1) All this guy does is open up his house and he gets his name mentioned in the Bible

Finally Archippus – The man in need of Encouragement : He is also mentioned in Philemon v2 – as a Fellow Solider of Christ

A) Here takes a minute to just encourage him to be faithful to his calling

B) SO there you have it – **Paul's special teams Players** – Guys who were not ministry Super stars –

1) Men who's spiritual exploits are not Splattered all over the pages of Scripture

C) No one has written any books about these guys – But they were still guys who were used by God – Guys who made impacts

D) Guys who did the little things and God took notice of their hearts / their commitment – their Zeal .

You can fit into that same Category: Being a Beloved Brother / Faithful Servant and Fellow Minister –

**A) Open your house – Be committed to Pray – Be a faithful Friend
Using your gifts and talents to bless the Body**

Heb 6:10

10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister