



## **Tychicus: The Marks of a Faithful Disciple**

Selected Scriptures

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What I want to do today is study a Bible character that you don't know about, but I think that he will encourage you in your own service to Christ. We are going to be talking about the marks of a faithful disciple as we study God's word together today.

As I have prepared this message, one thing you have to understand is that I carry with me throughout the week a mental image of this audience, and I can picture where different people usually sit and I mentally picture you throughout the week as I pray for you and as I prepare to preach especially.

As I prepared this particular message, beloved, and thought about the people that we have here in GraceLife, I have honestly been staggered by the recognition of the vast quantity of quiet faithfulness that is represented in this room – from the weekly volunteers at Grace to You to the musicians who serve here every week, from the nursery to our group events, from the sound board to our Bible study leaders, from those who work in our CD ministry to those who do our counseling, from those who support ministry with their resources to families who get their children ready for church on Sunday morning and somehow get here on time.

Through all of that quiet faithfulness in the face of responsibilities that God has given to you, this message today is for you; this message is to show you that the Bible affirms your faithfulness and promises God's reward to you, even if what you are doing here is of a nature that it gets overlooked by men.

Hebrews 6:10 says:

*For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.*

As I was preparing this message today, the question came to me: what Bible character do we study to learn about that kind of faithfulness that most of us can identify with? Now typically, when a character study is done, it is of some brave and prominent figure in the Bible, and that's perfectly appropriate. Today we could study the apostle Peter, but most of us are not going to preach a sermon in which 3,000 souls get saved – there is a certain distance there. We could study the apostle Paul, but his authority and leadership are roles that are outside the experience of those of us in this room.

Yes, we could rightly focus on such men and many others, but today, beloved, I want to call your attention to a man whose realm of activity probably more closely approximates our own – someone whose very lack of prominence perhaps gives us something unique to learn from.

So today I am going to introduce you to such a man. I am speaking about a faithful companion of Paul by the name of Tychicus. Tychicus – that’s right, how many of you have ever heard a message on Tychicus? After today, you will no longer be able to say ‘no’ to that question.

Here is the point, beloved: the apostle Paul did not minister alone. Yes, he is rightly the focus of so much of New Testament’s attention, particularly after Acts chapter 12. Thirteen epistles bear his name, and the impact that he has had, not only on the church but on the course of world history, could scarcely be overstated. But beloved, the apostle Paul did not minister alone.

The apostle Paul had faithful men around him who assisted in his ministry and who enabled his ministry to take place. And that is the role that so many of us fill in the church – it is that one that assists alongside the one who has the more prominent role. One of those men was a man named Tychicus.

Tychicus is mentioned in five passages of the Bible, and I want to run you through those real quickly and then help you assess what we can learn from his life. Believe me, there is a good take-away for you today. It was kind of interesting the way I happened to prepare this: I was simply reading through the book of Ephesians and at the end of the book, Paul tells the audience of that letter that he was going to send Tychicus with the letter and he would report to them.

Now normally when you get to the end of Ephesians, you say, “Okay, the important stuff is over, let’s just blow through this and get on to something else.” But it struck me that here is Paul in a Roman prison, getting ready to send out a man who is going to bear the message that he had for all of the world. There is something significant about a man in that position and it prompted me to look into it and I found things that I wanted to share with you this morning.

So we are going to start in the book of Acts, chapter 20. Like I said, I am just going to quickly survey the passages that talk about Tychicus, and then from there we will talk about the marks of a faithful disciple. But in Acts 20, beginning in verse 3, Paul is on his third missionary journey and Luke is telling us about one aspect of the journey, and in verse 3 it says:

*And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. And he – meaning Paul – was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.*

This is the first biblical mention of this man. We have no record of anything that he said anywhere in the Bible. He is kind of functioning in the background. But here in Acts 20, we learn that he was part of a traveling group with the apostle Paul. And at this time, Paul was taking an offering from the Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem; he was en route to Jerusalem with an offering that had been collected from the different churches. And these men that were with him were likely the official representatives of their respective churches who were going to accompany Paul as he took this offering to Jerusalem.

Even there, beloved, we see something interesting about Tychicus: He was obviously a man of faithfulness in his local congregation, so much so that they selected him and Trophimus to go out and to represent them with the Apostle Paul.

While the name Tychicus is not familiar to us, and up until now has not been very important to us, put yourself back in time to the circumstances and just use a little bit of filling out with your imagination the situation that is quite obvious from the text – that the people who knew Tychicus respected him enough that they would entrust this collection of money to him and say, “Tychicus, you take this and represent us with it.” They knew him to be a faithful man.

Now this passage in Acts – I want to give you some dates; I want you to take mental note of these dates because it is going to become important later – this passage in Acts takes place in about A.D. 57. That’s what we see about Tychicus in Acts chapter 20.

Now with that in mind, with that introduction of Tychicus, turn over to the book of Ephesians chapter 6. This is the passage that I was going through that was the seed of this message today.

Ephesians chapter 6 – this great epistle where Paul lays forth such great doctrinal truth in the first three chapters and then applies it and shows what the implications are for believers in the last three chapters. Paul wrote this when he was imprisoned in Rome. He was not free to move about; he was not free to go and deliver this message personally – he needed someone trustworthy to carry the letter for him. And look at chapter 6, verse 21, where he says:

*But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

Turn over to the book of Colossians if you would. Colossians and Ephesians were two letters that parallel each other in themes, and the reason for that is that Paul wrote them at the same time. And he was going to send Tychicus out, carrying both the letter of the Ephesians and the letter to the Colossians, and have him deliver them to the churches.

Now look at Colossians 4:7 – it is a very close parallel, with a lot of verbal similarities to what we just read in Ephesians. Paul says:

*As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bondservant in the Lord, will bring you information. 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; and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.*

We are going to come back to those passages – at least the one in Ephesians – but Paul wrote these letters, Ephesians and Colossians, in about A.D. 61, four years after the events in the book of Acts. They provide the fullest information that we have about Tychicus and it is expressed through Paul’s high estimation of him. And so he gives these letters to Tychicus and sends him out.

Now beloved, in our media-saturated culture, in a culture like ours that worships at the altar of glamour and prominence and power, Tychicus’ job might not seem too impressive. But think with me, it may seem like a menial task, but consider this: *the distribution of God’s word in its original autograph was entrusted to this man.* The letters that you have in your Bible titled Ephesians and Colossians are in your Bible because this man, Tychicus, was faithful to the small task that was entrusted to him. He was handling key New Testament letters that we are still reading today.

The ministry of those letters is traced back in part to the faithfulness of this man to a seemingly small task. Now, is the driver who carries the gold bars to Fort Knox insignificant? No, you need someone trustworthy. The value of what Tychicus was carrying shows the value of the man who was entrusted with the task.

That was A.D. 61; now, turn to the book of Titus, written in A.D. 65. Titus 3:12 – Paul is writing to Titus who is in Crete, setting in order what remains in appointing elders in every city as Paul directed him to do. In Titus 3:12, Paul writes this:

*When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.*

Titus in this prominent role, overseeing the churches in that area, trying to establish some order – Paul says to him, “I need you to come and be with me for the winter.” They had things that needed to be discussed. Paul needed to see Titus and work with him.

And there is this crucial work that Titus was doing that was so important that Paul wrote three chapters to him to reinforce and to strengthen him in what needed to be done – crucial work. Paul says, “But – I need to see Titus – who can I send to fulfill the role? Who can step in to Titus’ role and free him up so that he can come to see me?” He says, “I know: it is either Artemas or Tychicus; I’ll send one of them to be able to do the work.”

And here again is Tychicus in a servant's role – get this beloved – following instruction so that someone else can be free to do the work that God has given to them: that's the role of a servant. *Every time you see Tychicus in the New Testament, he is going somewhere at the instruction of somebody else.* He is always under orders; he is carrying out instructions that someone else has given to him.

That's the role of a servant – a role, beloved, that is at a great discount in our society; a role that is at a discount in the western church; but in the Bible's eyes, an important role; in God's eyes, an important role: the role of the servant, the role of following instruction, of providing a service so that someone else can do their role.

Listen, beloved: ministry in the church does not happen without people like that. Paul did not do it alone, John MacArthur does not do it alone, and the things that happen in GraceLife don't happen because of the two men that stand in front here most of the time. It requires faithful people, everybody playing their part so that the totality of the work can be done – that's what Tychicus points us to.

Now, Paul wrote Titus. Another three years passed; now it's A.D. 67 or A.D. 68. Turn to 2 Timothy. This is Paul's swan song, chronologically the last letter that we have from him, and now he is facing execution. He knows that his time is about over and he wants to see Timothy; he is eager for Timothy to see him. If you look at 2 Timothy 4:13, he is anticipating Timothy's coming. He says:

*When you come, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.*

Who is going to take care of things while Timothy is away, with Timothy's responsibilities? Look at 2 Timothy 4:12:

*But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.*

It was Tychicus who would take over for Timothy so that Timothy could join Paul in Rome – again, the role of a servant, the role of one following orders, following instructions. Not a word in the New Testament recorded from the lips of Tychicus, but beloved – and I know we read past these verses; I've read past all of these verses dozens of times and never given Tychicus a thought, just like you – but if we stop and think and put ourselves in the position of the apostle Paul, we get a picture of how crucial this man was to our beloved apostle.

Think about it: Paul knows the end is near; he is writing out his final wishes. He is conscious of death lingering over his head. And that time in Paul's life speaks to how faithful Tychicus was, how reliable he was, because listen, beloved: when the urgency of death is on your mind and you have a job that needs to be done, you don't send a man about whom there is any question to fulfill your dying wishes. You choose a man and you say, "I know *this* man will get it done."

“Tychicus, I have another assignment for you, brother: Ephesus, that’s where I want you.” Tychicus says, “I’m on my way.” You want someone faithful at a time like that. You want someone who will subordinate their own interests to the greater interests of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the greater interests of the one that God has installed in authority like He did the apostle Paul.

Those are the five passages that we have about Tychicus. You say, “You’re going to get another half-hour out of this?” Yes, beloved, trust me, I will, because we are going to reflect on the life of Tychicus and try to bring some practical application to it as well. Because if you are here as a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you have repented of your sins, you have put your faith in Christ for salvation and say, “I want to follow you as Lord,” what does that life look like that follows? What is it that a faithful life looks like to the One who died for our sins?

For most of us, it is not going to be in a position where a lot of people see what we are doing. For most of us, it is going to be in the shadows; it is going to be where there is not much recognition. What does it mean to be faithful at a time like that?

Beloved, think about it; let’s start from this point – wherever you are at in life, this applies to every one of you; all of us have responsibilities, all of us have duties that life has given to us, some of us many, some of us few, but there is a responsibility in front of you – what does it mean to be faithful? It means that you fulfill the duty – this isn’t complicated. *Faithfulness is marked by recognition of duty and doing it.* You say, “That’s so simple; did you study Greek to tell us *that*?”

Listen, beloved, if you are around Christian circles for too long, you realize that the simplicity of that is not always marked by the execution of it, the following-through, the faithfulness to do it, so that the people who actually see their responsibility and fulfill it stand out from the crowd because the standard set by most is lower than that – you can’t depend upon them.

And so, when I look out and I see people that I can trust, I see people I know what they are supposed to do and I know they are doing it – that stands out; that, beloved, is an encouragement to your part-time pastor’s heart because so many of you are like that. It is remarkable that the Lord has brought so many in to this room who are like that because you meet your responsibilities.

What does it mean to be faithful? The word itself, the word “faithful” here means to be trustworthy; it means to be reliable or dependable. It is a word that is applied to *a person who inspires trust.*

And as we consider the life of Tychicus and look back over these passages that we’ve surveyed so briefly, we are going to see four marks of a faithful disciple that can encourage us in our labors and also beckon us to excel still more.

Most often, it is probably true to say, the Lord puts us in areas of service where the fruit does not seem too abundant – it seems a little bit sparse. And you look about at your life and you look at the fruit of your hands and you say, “What is the point of this?” Beloved, you don’t look at the fruit – you look at the responsibility and take courage and take comfort in the fact that “I’m doing what the Lord has put in front of me today,” and you are encouraged in your heart to continue on even if the fruit and the prominence is not there. What can we say about a faithful disciple?

### **1. He Is Faithful with His Love**

Look back at Ephesians – I think we will probably park here for most of the rest of our time today. Ephesians 6:21 – again, put yourself in the shoes of the apostle as he wrote this letter – Paul says:

*But that you also know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother...*

Stop there, don’t run through that. There is a wealth of relationship that is built in to those words where Paul ascribes to Tychicus this praise: “the beloved brother.” “The beloved brother” – that phrase communicates the idea of a close relationship that exists between two people who share a common love for Christ and for each other.

Paul had – if I could use this term – Paul had a kindred spirit next to him with Tychicus. He looks at Tychicus and says, “Here is a man who is sympathetic to my interests. Here is a man who understands my circumstances and wants the best things for me.” Remember, he is writing this from imprisonment in Rome. “Here is a man who is with me in my chains. Here is a man who is not ashamed to be alongside me when I am under Roman guard, chained to a Roman guard. This is a beloved brother, O Ephesians, that I am sending to you.”

Tychicus here, GraceLife, was a man who is faithful in his love. He and Paul had a spiritual communion that was based on a sincere appreciation and high regard for one another. Listen, if you had the opportunity today to have a man of the stature of the apostle Paul look at you and say, “Ah, there’s a beloved brother; there’s a beloved sister,” you would float out of here with gratitude with the affirmation.

Beloved, here is what I want you to see about this. Tychicus’s – try to say that; trying to use that possessive with Tychicus is not easy, but I’ll try to be faithful to what needs to be said here – the faithfulness of Tychicus started with a personal affection toward the Apostle Paul. What I want you to see is that when we talk about Christian faithfulness, we are talking about more than the performance of outward duties, of external things, of going through the motions.

Christian faithfulness, the marks of a faithful disciple, includes one who develops warm and affectionate relationships with other Christians. There is a personal warmth, a personal affection, that went between these two that tells us volumes about what

Tychicus was like. We might not know Tychicus very well, but Paul did and Paul considered him an integral part of his ministry.

Beloved, your faithfulness starts with those cultivating that warm and affectionate heart toward other Christians. Jesus said in John 13:35:

*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

A faithful disciple is marked by being faithful in his love. And GraceLife, I want to tell you: the affection and the love that you show toward your leadership on such a consistent basis is a blessing to our hearts. The kindness and the warmth that we consistently receive from you is sustaining, it is marvelous. You demonstrate the marks of the faithful disciple to your leadership in this group – part-time pastors and you love us. Phil and I are grateful and we thank you for it. My only exhortation would be to keep your hearts warm and affectionate toward each other so that you can excel still more. You show the marks of a faithful disciple with your love – this is a special place to be.

There is a second mark of a faithful disciple that I want to point out to you. The faithful disciple is not only faithful with his love:

## **2. He Is Faithful with His Labor**

Look at verse 21 with me again; Paul says:

*But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord...*

Paul calls him a faithful minister in the Lord. That word “minister” comes from the word that means “to serve;” it includes the idea of giving assistance, of helping, of performing duties that are needed by the ones around you. Tychicus was a servant. There was a practical dimension to his faithfulness.

You see, a faithful disciple manifests more than simply on Sunday saying, “Nice sermon, pastor,” and then going out and going away. To tell you the truth, speaking only for myself, that’s not that significant after a while. What really blesses the heart of a pastor is to see people like you who do your duties and who fulfill your responsibilities, and he can say, “You are a faithful servant. I know that the responsibilities *you* have are done; they are taken care of;” and it frees the mind of the pastor to focus on the other things that he has to do.

And here is the key, beloved – this is what is so important for you to embrace in your heart: That kind of service that Paul is describing about Tychicus, always sending him out and knowing that Tychicus will go – that kind of service is often menial, it is often of a humble nature. And here is the thing: that kind of service doesn’t appeal to the pride of



our fallen hearts. There is no applause from men waiting for this kind of service; they are not attracted to give attention to it.

But the faithful disciple is oblivious to that, it is not even important to him because that is not why he is doing it. He is motivated by a love for Christ who died for his sins. He is motivated by a desire to serve Christ, just as Christ took the towel and wiped the feet of the disciples, saying, “This is not too menial for Me; I did not come to be served but to serve and to give My life a ransom for many.”

Tychicus, and the faithful disciple today, says, “If there is menial work to be done, I’m there; I’m happy to do this, and the fact that men don’t notice is irrelevant.” That’s the mark of a faithful disciple. Every time you see Tychicus, he is doing something for someone else. He was humble enough to carry out the instructions and free others to do their tasks for the Lord.

And beloved, what I want you to see and remind you of is that the church, especially at a church of the size of Grace Community Church, the church is built on people like that. This church is built on people like you who are faithful in those seemingly small things, those who receive an assignment and fulfill the job even when it seems outwardly unimpressive. Beloved, we have to remind ourselves that in the kingdom of God, the perspective is different. Jesus said in Luke 16:10:

*He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful in much.*

It is the principle of faithfulness, not the task itself, that is of such priority. And so beloved, as you contemplate the ministry that the Lord has given to you, don’t focus on the fruit from it; don’t focus on the outward prominence of it. The Lord is evaluating you by faithfulness. Commit your heart to be reliable in what you have been asked to do and trust the Lord for what unfolds in the future – that takes a lot of extraneous, distracting stuff off the table. “What have I got to do today, Lord? It’s done.”

Tychicus was faithful with his love; he was faithful with his labor. He knew Paul’s needs and he met them; he supported his spiritual leader even at the price of personal sacrifice. Those qualifications were important because they set the stage for another aspect of the task that Paul entrusted to him, third mark of a faithful disciple:

### **3. He Is Faithful with His Lips**

Look at the end of verse 21 and again, think with me from the perspective of the apostle Paul. Paul said, “Tychicus, the beloved brother... this one that I have such fond affection for, this faithful minister in the Lord who does his labor and does it well, *that* Tychicus” – end of verse 21:

*Tychicus, the beloved brother will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

You see, Tychicus was more than simply a messenger, carrying letters in his robe, as it were. When he arrived at the churches, he was going to speak to the Christians that were there. He would tell them about Paul's condition. He would speak words that would comfort their hearts. He was going to stand and represent the apostle Paul to the Christians that were there.

Think about it, beloved: that is a big deal. Tychicus was so sure and so steadfast and so reliable and so trustworthy that Paul could send him out miles away and know that Tychicus would be a faithful representative of him and of the gospel in everything that he said. He authorized Tychicus to speak on his behalf. And so Tychicus had to deal with people like Paul would deal with them, in order to comfort them and to represent the apostle to them. Paul could trust this Tychicus to advance the gospel when Tychicus spoke to the church.

Turn back to Ephesians chapter 4 and you will see what Tychicus was like in this regard. In the same epistle, Paul talked about what the lips should look like – or sound like, depending how you want to express it. But in Ephesians 4:29, Paul wrote:

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

And just a few lines later, he says, "I'm going to send Tychicus and have him speak to you." He was faithful with his words.

Beloved, let me ask you: Are your words faithful? Are your words a faithful representation of the gospel? Beloved, do people walk away from conversations with you encouraged and strengthened in grace? Are they encouraged to be more faithful with Christ after they have interacted with you than before the conversation started?

One of the marks of the faithful disciple is that he is faithful with his lips and he carries that about with him. And Paul could know that this was true about Tychicus because it was not a staged aspect of Tychicus' life. This is what filled and flowed through the veins of Tychicus' spiritual life, and therefore, what he spoke simply was the overflow of what was in his heart. Measure a faithful disciple by what comes out of his lips – beloved, let us examine ourselves.

A faithful disciple is seen through his love, his labor, and his lips. Finally – I like this last point... not that I didn't like the other ones – but last point, what can you say about a faithful disciple?

#### **4. He Is Faithful for Life**

For the totality of the existence here on earth, he is faithful. Now, I told you the timeline of these different references to Tychicus and I want to pull them all together for you here. Think with me: there is a significant chronological progression that takes place in what

we have looked at today. Acts 20 – A.D. 56. Ephesians and Colossians – A.D. 61. Titus – A.D. 65. 2 Timothy – A.D. 68. Beloved, do the math and extrapolate what Tychicus must have been like. He was faithful in 56; he was faithful in 61; he was faithful in 65; he was faithful in 68. There is a golden rope of faithfulness that runs throughout the Bible’s testimony about his life.

Do you see the pattern? The sweep of his life showed him faithful in his labor, faithful with his love, faithful with his words. Beloved, look at Tychicus and see a pattern for your own life. Tychicus did not start and flourish for a while like a flower out in the field and then shrivel up and go away and he was not to be found again. He was there, being faithful through out the years that we know him from the Bible – he was faithful for life. Paul met him; Tychicus was alongside him to Paul’s dying breath – that’s the mark of a faithful disciple.

Now beloved, let me pull this together for you. Let these things motivate you if you have been discouraged lately, wondering if it is worth it. Let this life of Tychicus motivate you and point you back to spiritual reality. Put your eyes on Christ and persevere. Beloved, let God’s word from Galatians 6:9 refresh and encourage your hearts. Paul said:

*Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.*

There is a reward to this kind of faithfulness, beloved. And when Paul says that Tychicus was a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, understand this: that affirmation is far more significant than it might seem on first glance. Because remember this about the Bible: the apostle Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He was writing God’s word when he wrote these letters. And so when he said that Tychicus is a faithful minister, a beloved brother, he was really expressing God’s assessment of a faithful disciple.

Forget what men see, forget what men think, beloved, and train your eyes on the Lord who places great value on your faithfulness. Remember the value that God places on it in His promise to reward you for it, and find the encouragement that you need to persevere and to continue in your faithfulness because I have no doubt, beloved, that when Tychicus left this earth, he heard these words:

*Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Master (Matt. 25:21).*

Those words will be your inheritance as well, my friends. Those of you that faithfully serve even when no one is watching, those of you that are faithful to the responsibilities that the Lord has given to you, take heart – your heavenly Father sees; your heavenly Father rewards that faithfulness.

And beloved, more certainly than I am standing here at this moment, your heavenly Father never forgets. The reward of your faithfulness is sure, is certain, and it will be more abundant and more glorious than anything that you can imagine. Your faithfulness matters, beloved. Your faithfulness is a matter of eternal significance. Your faithfulness has a great reward.

What is our takeaway this morning? We will give the apostle Paul the final word to all of us as we face our duties in the coming week. 1 Corinthians 15:57-58:

*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil in the Lord is not in vain.*

Let's pray:

*Our Father, we serve a Lord who Himself was a servant. We serve One who knew what it was like to stand over a carpenter's bench through most of His life. We serve a Lord who did the menial things and washed feet. He took on the humiliation of the cross on our behalf. Father, we look at our lovely Lord Jesus Christ and we see what You think of humble service – despised and rejected by men, now glorified and standing at the right hand of the Father.*

*O God, would You take these words and encourage weary hearts, those that have been serving and laboring and wondering if it is worth it. Whether it is here or someplace around the world, O God, serving through sorrow, serving through difficulty, serving through seemingly countless obstacles that never seem to go away, O God, would You take these marks of a faithful disciple and lay them before our hearts.*

*And to those that have been serving You faithfully without much sign of success, Father, would You impress deeply on their understanding and deeply upon their heart the assurance that says, "My child, I see this and I acknowledge it and I will reward you for it; simply be faithful and you will know the joy of your Master."*

*Father, may that rich encouragement – as we live in a media-saturated world that is just so full of glamour and fluff with no significance – Father, would You help Your true disciples see through all of that and look to the hand of our heavenly Father who blesses that kind of faithfulness and will bless it through all of eternity. Father, may we go forth encouraged to be steadfast and immovable, knowing with certainty that our toil for Christ is not in vain.*

*In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

*This transcript was prepared by Shari Main.*