

Colossians 4:7-9 | Jeffrey Smith

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the New Testament book of Colossians.

We're going to be looking at Colossians 4, 7-9, and we're going to hear the story of two individuals. Does it feel like there's a really bad echo or feedback there?

If I lower that, does that help at all? Okay. He's working on it. All right. So we're going to read the story of two individuals, and I've titled the message, People Matter.

And part of the reason why is because it's... We're going to read about just two regular people, two normal guys, hopefully two people that you can relate to in some way, but probably two people that you may have never heard of before.

So we're going to just start by reading the passage here. Let's see if I can get the clicker to work. If you can just click it once forward. And one more time.

[1 : 15] Leave it there. Okay. So Colossians 4, 7-9, and I have two four-leaf clovers up on the screen. And I wanted to just tell a quick story about this. So last week, I was at a school meeting for the kids' school, and the interim head of school, the interim principal, told a story.

This is a story that she shared as a devotion, and it was about how she had developed this skill to find four-leaf clovers.

And this lady is older now, a very godly woman, one that I respect and look up to in many ways.

And I said, well, she said she could be anywhere.

She could be in her backyard. She could be in a field. She could be walking along a trail. But she just had this ability to spot a four-leaf clover, and sometimes tens of them, just patches of them.

And she said she would almost get upset when the long guy would come over and mow over her patch of four-leaf clovers. And I was like, wow, this is a weird obsession you have with four-leaf clovers.

[2 : 22] But I said, Ms. Sue, how did you train your eye to identify and spot these four-leaf clovers? And she's like, well, the first thing I would ask you is have you ever even looked for a four-leaf clover?

And I was like, not really. And she's like, well, you've got to start by looking for a four-leaf clover.

And she said how it relates to Scripture is this. She was encouraging the middle schoolers just to be intentional in studying God's Word and looking into God's Word.

Don't just expect God's Word and a biblical perspective to just be absorbed in you by osmosis. Like, you need to be intentional in looking for it.

But as it relates to this passage, oftentimes we study passages that are bigger themes and bigger topics and maybe passages that you have memorized or speaking on or Bible studies over.

And we often overlook these little patches of four-leaf clover passages because maybe they just don't jump out at us initially. And maybe there's something there that we can learn from.

[3 : 35] This is one of those passages. I'll be very honest. It's three verses in Colossians that I had probably never read more than a couple times in my life. And the two individuals that we're going to read about here, one kind of vaguely sounded familiar, one I had really not heard of before.

So let's jump into it. If you want to click one more time here, let's read Colossians 4, 7 through 9. It says, Tychicus will tell you all the news about me.

And let me just stop there for a second. This is Paul's final greeting. This is the home stretch. He's giving kind of his final instruction, his final farewell. And he says, Tychicus will tell you all the news about me.

He is a dear brother, a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. Let's open in prayer.

[4 : 47] Heavenly Father, we just, Lord, as I said in the beginning, we just thank you for so many things this morning. We thank you for another chance to study your word here in Colossians.

Lord, we thank you for just a chance to get together as a body of believers. We pray that you just encourage and instruct our hearts into how we can, and what we can learn here, and how we can apply to our lives, Lord.

I pray that you help us glean from the examples that you've given us in Tychicus and Onesimus. Thank you for just the reminder that people matter to you, Lord.

In your son's name, Amen. I'm going to try the clicker here one more time. Nope. Okay.

If you want to just click once, just going back to the intro slide, people matter to the Lord. People matter to the Lord. People are saved from an eternal separation, an eternal damnation, when they put their trust in the finished work of Christ.

[5 : 54] God uses people to further the gospel. He uses people in a variety of different ways.

Would you guys agree with that? He uses people in a variety of different ways. He uses people with a variety of different gifts, from a variety of different backgrounds, and different locations, and a variety of different personalities and stories.

People are different. And people matter to the Lord. This morning, I want to introduce you to these two individuals in this passage that matter to God.

Tychicus and Onesimus. They're not household names. You're not going to find them in the Hebrews Hall of Faith. But hopefully, their story is still important and relatable to you.

And I'll tell you why here in just a second. One guy is, you would describe him as a devoted friend. Someone that is going to really, really stick with you.

I was hoping to have, you know, a big younger audience here. I was going to say, this is your BFF. This is your bestie. This is, you know, this is the person that sticks with you.

[7 : 08] The other guy, Onesimus, is different. He is, he's kind of the rebellious one. You know, he's got the one, he's the one with the checkered past. And so, hopefully, as we're kind of going through this, you say, yeah, you know what, I can kind of relate to Tychicus a little bit in his background.

Or maybe it's Onesimus. Or maybe it's somewhat of a combination of both. Or maybe you say, I can't really relate to either, but there's still something to learn from these two. So, if we want to go forward one, let's just kind of break this down for you.

I thought I'd give you the, the spelling phonetically, just to kind of know how to, say it with me. Tick, or Tick, K, Kiss.

Tick, K, Kiss. It took me like, it took me a long time to get that. But, I was almost about to shorten it to Ty, but let's just go with Tychicus. And Paul describes him as a beloved brother, which is a common term that Paul uses, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant.

A beloved brother, if you want some definition, is an esteemed or dear brother. Paul used this to describe Timothy and Philemon. He uses this to describe various different churches.

[8 : 22] And then you have faithful minister, and faithful is just, you know, as we know, it's someone that is worthy of our trust, someone that can be relied upon. And a minister is one who, who carries out or executes on the commands of another, especially that of a master.

So, Tychicus was a beloved brother, a dear brother. He was a, a reliable, um, person to carry out the instruction that Paul would give him. But he was also, and this is an interesting one, he was an, he was also a fellow servant.

Meaning, a fellow, as in he was almost a peer with Paul. And that's interesting. He was, he was a fellow peer with Paul, but he was also serving the same master.

The Lord. And as we read, the purpose was, uh, so that, um, um, Paul would send out Tychicus and Onesimus to, to share how Paul was doing with the, the, the various recipients, but also to encourage them.

So, uh, uh, Tychicus was a bit of a, uh, Paul's errand boy delivering, and obviously there to encourage as well. And then if you want to click once more, we have Onesimus, um, and Onesimus

is described in a similar way.

[9 : 43] A beloved brother, and, uh, a faithful individual. Now, like I said, these two, these two individuals are different, right? Tychicus is going to be more, as we'll see here in a second, more of this, uh, fully devoted, fully committed individual.

And then Onesimus is more the person that went through this full transformation, right? This, this 180. Um, but while their, while their stories are different, they are similar in a lot of ways.

They both at one point were unsaved individuals. Uh, we, we know that for a fact. Um, we don't know much of Tychicus's early life.

We'll, we'll kind of get into it in a second, but he, he does get saved, and he becomes this very, very devoted person to Paul. While Onesimus takes a very different path, and he is a very rebellious one, and he is, he is, um, honoring in his actions, but they both, while they both start out in a similar way, unsaved, they take somewhat of a different path.

They are together right now, and, and they are peers in, in their, um, in their work with Paul and delivering this letter. And so, you know, it's just an interesting kind of, um, cycle that, that takes place where, where people are, say, unsaved, uh, they, they get saved, the paths are different, and then, um, coming together, ministering together with Paul.

[11 : 06] So, I, uh, I went to Tick, Tick, Tick, Tick is, uh, I'm going to mess this up. Tick, assist it, ties, Facebook page.

And, and here's the, here's his Facebook profile picture. Um, it's Tick, a kiss hanging out with Paul. Obviously, this is an artist rendering, uh, no Snapchat back in the day, but Paul is there.

If you can see closely, he's got chains on his, on his hands and his feet, and he's writing this letter. And Tick, a kiss is there with them. And, and so let's just talk about him for a second.

He, as I said, he is one that you would describe as, as full service, as, uh, fully committed and devoted to, uh, the work alongside Paul. And, and he's mentioned, Tick, a kiss is mentioned five times.

All right. Five times in total. And I'm going to narrow it down into two different buckets. One is he's mentioned four times as it relates to Paul, I kind of at the end of the letter saying, Hey, I'm going to send Tick, a kiss, uh, to deliver this message and he's going to encourage you.

[12 : 14] Okay. So, so five of those are four. Out of those five times, it is, it is a, you know, here comes Tick, a kiss. He's going to deliver the message. Um, you see that in Ephesians six, you see that in second Timothy Titus, uh, and obviously here in Colossians, uh, the one remaining, um, statement, uh, where Tick, a kiss is mentioned is an acts 20.

And again, it's, it's not, uh, there's not a whole lot there. It's just kind of Tick, a kiss. His name is mentioned. Um, amongst a bunch of others. But if you want to write down acts 24, um, Paul, Paul mentions Tick, a kiss.

But here, here's the thing that we can draw. Tick, a kiss was from the providence of Asia. And one of the major cities in Asia was Ephesus.

So I'm going to make a couple assumptions and I'll tell you what I'm assuming just so you're aware. Uh, it's likely that Tick, a kiss was born and raised in Ephesus.

Um, so if you kind of follow that assumption, it's likely that he met Paul and was either saved or greatly influenced, discipled, whatever you want to call it, by Paul when he was in Ephesus.

[13 : 35] So if, if you kind of assume that's the, um, that's the timeline of events and how Tick, a kiss gets connected with Paul, you then start to see, okay, if, if that's when this, this partnership starts, you know, kind of what happens in Paul's life after that.

And if Tick, a kiss is with Paul every step of the way, uh, that would mean that Tick, a kiss truly was this very devoted, thick or thin, I'm committed to the ministry type, type of, type of person.

It means that he probably witnessed the, the silversmith ride against Paul where Paul has to leave. Um, Paul decides to return to Jerusalem where he was ultimately arrested.

Uh, Tick, a kiss was one of the seven that accompanied him as a traveling companion. Um, there was imprisonment, there was dramatic appearances before kings and judges and, and, and authorities.

Um, there's a, there's a miserable voyage that includes a shipwreck en route to Rome. There's, there's trials, there's a lot of really bad stuff that's going on.

[14 : 56] And Tick, a kiss is, is with Paul. It's assumed to be with Paul along the way. There's a, uh, there's a passage in second Corinthians 11. If you want to turn there, second Corinthians 11, 25,

where Paul states, where Paul states, um, or, or kind of tells his, his brief story and kind of tells, uh, of what he's been through.

And I only want to read through 27 now because you'll see, I'm going to come back to 28 and 29 here in a minute, but it says in second Corinthians 11, 25, this is Paul speaking.

Three times. I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times. I was shipwrecked a day and a night. I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers in toil and hardship through many a sleepless nights and hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure.

That that's, that's the life Paul was going through. And Tychicus was this fully devoted partner to Paul. Paul. So what can we learn from Tychicus?

What, what are some of the lessons that we can take away? I would first just say simply be like Tychicus. Be like Tychicus. Be fully devoted to, to ministering to others.

[16:27] You know, it's a respectable thing when a guy like this is so fully committed and so fully devoted, but he's not seeking the spotlight. Had anyone really heard of Tychicus before this morning?

I had not before studying him. Tychicus didn't, he didn't pass along in any of his own writings. Like I said, he's not mentioned, you know, in the Hebrews Hall of Faith.

He's, really, really, Paul mentions him just kind of casually at the end of a few letters, saying, hey, I'm going to send Tychicus. And so, but, but it, it reminded me still of how important someone like Tychicus is to the local church, and how important someone like this is to ministry.

And, and you think about how this applies to other things like sports, and you have, uh, the, the star athletes that get a lot of the attention. But there's oftentimes a, a supporting cast around them that if they were not there, that star athlete would be, would be nothing.

And so here, here's a picture that we'll probably get very, a very nostalgic picture here. Um, it'll bring back some memories, but who's the guy throwing the ball there?

[17:43] Kurt Warner. Okay. So this is, you know, in the St. Louis Rams days and Kurt Warner and the greatest show on turf and, you know, Hall of Fame players, Kurt Warner, Marshall Falk, Torrey Holt, Isaac Bruce.

Um, you can kind of go up and down the lineup, you know, and, and you think about, um, just how great they were. But look at this picture here. If, if number 60 for the Rams isn't blocking that guy, does Kurt Warner probably get that pass off?

Probably not. Um, if Kurt Warner has no offensive line, he gets, I guarantee he gets like no, almost no passes off. He, I mean, I guarantee the team loses probably almost every game.

The importance is, it's some of these supporting cast members that, that, that drive the success of, you know, someone like a Paul or someone like a Kurt, Warner. Obviously we know some of Kurt Warner's offensive line.

Orlando Pace was a Hall of Fame player, but who's number 60? Does anyone know? I had to look it up. My number 60 was Mike Gruda Daria.

[18:49] I had never heard of Mike Gruda Daria. Uh, but obviously he played for the Rams and he played in the NFL for, you know, a number of years. Mike is like a ticket.

He's like a ticket. He's like a ticket. He's like a ticket. He's like a ticket. Not someone that, that, that carried the spotlight, um, but a very, very key player to the team. So if we want to go back or go to the next, uh, slide, if you, here's just a couple of points that I'll make.

Um, I said already that, that we should be like Tychicus, be, be fully committed to, um, to what you're doing, to the ministry, to, to ministering to others. Let me just talk briefly about the relationship between Paul and Tychicus.

Uh, if you find yourself more in someone like Paul's shoes, where, where maybe you are kind of on the front line there, I would say look for the support and the friendship of someone like Tychicus. You're not going to do it on your own. Look for that support. Uh, on the other hand, um, if you feel like you can relate more so to Tychicus, I would say that, uh, look for someone like Paul to really come alongside of and, and to be, uh, disciplined by and to help support in a lot of ways.

[20:03] You know, there's a big misconception that people like Paul, church leaders, um, have everything, have, have it all together. You ever feel like that?

You know, you look, you look at someone like that and hey, if they're in that position, they have it all together and they don't need, um, the encouragement, the fellowship that someone like Tychicus can bring. That, that is, that could not be further from the truth.

And Paul is a good example of this. Following those verses where, where he says that he had been shipwrecked and that he had been beaten and all these bad things. He goes on and he says in verse 28, if you still have it open to second Corinthians 11, he says, and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Who is weak? Am I not weak? Who is made to fall? Am I not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast on the things that show my weakness.

And Paul was very, very honest about the insecurity and the shortcoming that he had and the weakness that he had. And he appreciated someone like Tychicus there to help deliver these letters.

[21 : 18] If, if, if someone's not there to deliver them, these letters don't get, don't get sent. So, again, look for that, that, that dynamic in a relationship.

If you feel like you're in one, one, if you're on one side or the other, look for the support that you would get from someone like Tychicus. Look to, to disciple and pass on what you have learned to someone like Tychicus. On the other hand, if you're in the shoes of Tychicus, look for someone like Paul to, to disciple you.

Look, look to ask how can you help them? People do not have it all together. They need this, the support of other people like this. So if we want to go to the next one, Onesimus didn't have Facebook, but Onesimus had Instagram.

And so this is a, a selfie that he posted, uh, the other day. And, um, I, I, I took a screenshot of it just so I could, maybe a Snapchat. You know, I didn't want it to go away.

I took a screenshot. I took a screenshot. And Onesimus, you know, while we describe Tychicus as someone that was fully devoted, Onesimus was one that was fully transformed. Fully transformed.

[22 : 25] And again, just as a reminder, he was considered a, uh, a, a faithful person, a beloved brother. But if the name Onesimus sounds somewhat familiar, he was highlighted in the book of Philemon.

So Paul wrote this letter to Philemon. Philemon's a short book. If you want to turn there, it's just one chapter. Uh, I bookmarked it because I knew I wouldn't find it on the fly here. It's just before Hebrews.

If you're looking for it. And, and Onesimus was Philemon's errant slave. He ran away from Philemon.

Um, if you want to look with me in Philemon, uh, let's see here. Let's look at verse 10. Paul says, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment.

And this, these are, these are strong words. Formally, he was useless to you. He was useless to you. If you fast forward to verse, uh, let's go to verse 17 of Philemon.

[23 : 33] It says, so if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. So Paul is sending Onesimus back here. And he says, if he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

And he goes on to say that I will repay it. That's interesting because, uh, like I said, Onesimus is a bit of a rebellious one.

He, um, he ran away as a slave. You know, it's probably assumed that he was a somewhat difficult person. He was working for, uh, uh, a Christian master in Philemon, who you would like to say that maybe he was a little bit less overbearing and a little bit less insensitive than your standard non-believing master.

Um, and like I said in this passage in Philemon, Paul calls Onesimus useless. It's all, it's likely that he probably stole something from Philemon if Paul's willing to say, hey, I'll, I'll pay it back.

And so after fleeing from Philemon, Onesimus goes to, to Rome and he's hoping to kind of get lost amongst the crowds and, and, and kind of run away from his master.

[24 : 46] But instead he finds the one true master, Jesus Christ. And Onesimus becomes a believer. And this amazing transformation takes place.

It's, it's, it's an, it's an interesting kind of case study here because Onesimus, there's not a whole lot of detail. You just kind of know where he was and where he is now. And, and so you're, you're kind of left to wonder, you know, what that, what that looked like as far as the change in between.

And while we don't know, we just know that this amazing transformation took place from this runaway, errant, difficult, probably stealing slave to this, this believing, faithful, as Paul describes him, beloved brother who is now delivering, uh, Paul's letters.

It's a good reminder that God is still in the life changing business.

He, he has this, God has this specialty where he takes these sinful people who either feel like they've done so much bad that they could never get to heaven, or they feel like they've done so much good that they don't need anyone else.

[26 : 00] And he, and he, and he breaks their heart and he, and he shows them their sin. And then he provides a savior in Jesus Christ. In second Corinthians 5:17, it talks about if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old has gone. So the lesson here is just simple. You know, uh, many of us are believers here. Many of us are, many of us are, have been believers for a very long time, and you can kind of lose sight into what it looks like to see firsthand someone gets saved, and the, and just the transformation that can happen.

You may be thinking about family, you may be thinking about friends, you may be thinking about, um, people you casually know, or, or, or run into. Maybe you've been praying for the salvation of that person.

Uh, continue to pray for that. The Lord can, the Lord can save that person. God has a perfect plan for those that he has chosen to save.

So if we want to go to the, the last slide here, just in, in kind of wrapping things up, people matter to God.

[27 : 19] This, this was just a brief story about two individuals, Tychicus and Onesimus, and people matter to God. These two individuals matter to God. You matter to God. And God wants a relationship with you.

You know, put your trust in, in the good news of Jesus and become his child if you have not done so. If you are a Christian, consider what we can learn from Tychicus.

Consider what we can learn from Onesimus. Would you be called a beloved brother? Would you be called a faithful minister? A fellow servant?

One of the commentaries pointed out that there would probably be a number of well-known Christian leaders and speakers, in today's world, that, that may not be called dear brothers by Paul. And it's not necessarily something that is, that is given by position, as we saw with Tychicus.

There's a quote that says, the greatest ability in the world is dependability.

[28 : 25] And in this, Tychicus was a very, very gifted man. He was, when he was doing the smallest things, like delivering a letter and sharing an update on how Paul was doing, he was serving Christ.

Tell me if you, if you agree with this statement, but often in, in culture and in, in my own life, and, and I think this is probably relatable, but we like to kind of divide things up into two different buckets. We say, this is, uh, an activity that we do that's church related or, or religious related or something like that. And this is kind of a secular, non church related activity.

Uh, this is something that is a big, you know, important ministry mission type work. And this is not. Um, so we start to kind of compartmentalize our activities and someone like Tychicus is a reminder that it's not that way.

The delivering of a letter can be done for the glory of God and can be done for, uh, his service.

There's, there's a, there's a quote in John eight where Jesus says that he always does what pleases the father.

[29 : 43] And you may say, well, of course he is Jesus. Everything he does pleases the father. But the interesting thing is, if you think about that, while Jesus did spend a large amount of time praying and teaching and healing, there was a lot of time where he probably wasn't doing that.

Right. There was probably time where he was sleeping and eating and, and bathing and doing the everyday things that we all do. Right. Do you think Jesus ever folded clothes?

Maybe, you know, I, I think about just, just the routine that we all live in. Uh, my point is that, you know, even in these small things, like Tychicus delivering a letter, even in the routines of our own life, God can be worshiped and glorified.

if the musicians want to come on up, um, I'll just close by saying that it's an encouragement to, to see and hear Paul refer to these two individuals as beloved, dear brothers, faithful, and faithful,

reliable, reliable, trustworthy ministers, and then fellow servants in the Lord.

So I would just, I would just pray and encourage us to think about Tychicus and Onesimus and what we can learn from them and how we can, um, apply those things to our lives as well.

[31 : 13] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just, uh, again, thank you for this morning, Lord. And, uh, what, what a small example of two people that, uh, I didn't know very well, Lord, but, um, two people that made an impact, uh, for the gospel, for your kingdom, Lord.

And, and we think about just, just the letters delivered by someone like Tychicus. And while the church at Colossae, I don't believe exists today, but that the impact that that has made, um, you know, across the world, Lord, that, that is so profound.

And we just think about the small things that we are doing here. Father, I just pray that you would encourage, um, anyone in that work, Lord, if anyone is, is feeling like, hey, this work is just not, um, it's just not making the impact that I would like to see, Lord.

Just may we be encouraged that even in these small things, um, we can look at someone like Tychicus and Onesimus and know that, uh, even though small things can be, uh, bringing you glory, Lord, and being, uh, uh, of, of servanthood to you, Father.

So we just thank you for these, these two men that, that you've given us as an example here. In your son's name, amen. Thank you.