

**Leadership Tip!**

Evangelism is a scary word to many Christians, but it does not have to be. Living our lives, the best we can in Christ is one of the greatest ways to Evangelize.

**Letters  
“Hope from Afar”****STARTER QUESTION:**

**When was the last time you received a hand written letter from a friend and how did it make you feel to receive the letter?**

**MAIN IDEA:**

Hearing about how God is at work in other cities, states or even counties helps us understand how big God’s church really is and what part we play in the larger church.

**Colossians 4:16 (NIV)**

*“After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.”*

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians while he was imprisoned in Rome, some 1300 miles away from the people the letter was for. Many of the Colossians had never been to Rome, and probably never would get a chance to travel there. Yet, Paul knew his words would bring encouragement to the people who would hear the letter. Not only because Paul’s words brought instruction, but also because it brought word on how God was at work even in a far off land.

**If Paul had use of the internet like we do today, do you think he would have still hand written letters?**

**How is the impact different when you hear something personally, even from a personal letter, versus anything else? (Internet, email, news, etc)**

Sending a letter in Paul’s day was no easy task. Rome had a postal service but it was really only meant for government use. Sending a letter also meant you had to send someone to deliver the letter. In many of Paul’s letters, he wrote an introduction about the messenger in order for the people to know that the messenger could be trusted.

### **Colossians 4:7-9 NIV**

*“Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.”*

### **Ephesians 6:21-22 ESV**

*“So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts”.*

**Reflect on this for a minute: if someone was to write an introduction about you to a church in a far off land, what would it say?**

As the messenger, wouldn't you be a little nervous looking at the above introductions and seeing words like "beloved", "fellow servant" and "faithful minister?" Would you think that there would be no way you could measure up to such standards? But that is far from the case. Tychicus was a common man from Ephesus and Onesimus was a former slave. What made them worthy of such high praise from Paul is that they were willing to go and tell people about the love of Christ. They didn't need to be as educated as Paul, all they needed was to be able tell their story of what Christ did in their lives and what they saw in other people as Christ worked in their lives. No one can tell your story better than you.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

The church is not a place, or a building. It is people around the world who have made a commitment to follow Christ. Learning from them on how God is working in their lives, highlights how He is working in ours and helps us understand how we can support the church worldwide. It also makes our story better.