

II Timothy, Sermon #6

II Timothy 2

At the heart of freedom and patriotism is the soldier

This book of II Timothy was written during the time of the Romans and the Roman military! Most of us can picture in our minds what a roman soldier looks like?

“. . . the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod [sandals – straps went up to the bottom of the knee] with the preparation of the gospel of peace; . . . the shield of faith, . . . the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
(Eph. 6:14-17)

That is a picture of the Roman soldier, but it is also a picture of us as believers – from
Ephesians 6

And God uses the metaphor of a soldier to help us understand our responsibility as a
believer

I have entitled today's message “A Good Soldier”

II Timothy 2:3

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

II Timothy 2:3-4

Let us pray

You may be seated

A Good Soldier

According to this Bible and in 3:1 – dangerous times – fierce, savage, violent, wicked

The child of God needs to understand that he is a soldier in this world

And we are to recognize that the Christian life is not a playground; it is a battlefield.

- It is a battlefield where battles are being won, and where battles are being lost.
- There is a real battle going on for the souls of men and women.

The Bible clearly calls on us to be soldiers in the Lord's army and to serve the Lord –

vs. 3 – as a good soldier – there are good soldiers and bad soldiers

- Good – worthy
- A Christian soldier does not simply do minimum duty for his Lord, but serves Christ with everything he is and has.

God describes in these two verses the characteristics of a “good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

I. First, a good soldier endures hardness – vs. 3

Many people have the idea that Christianity is a soft religion.

- The Bible does not say that or teach that.
- Jesus said – in this world we shall have tribulation – He promised us trouble – John 16:33.
- We are called on by Jesus to lay down our life for His cause.

The Bible says – vs. 3 – to endure hardship – this same word is found in

- 1:8 – be thou partaker of afflictions
- Means to endure afflictions; to suffer trouble

The first mark of a **good soldier** is His willingness to **suffer hardship**.

(Valley Forge)

General George Washington – 11,000 troops in December – over 20 miles west of Philly – 2500 died due to the harsh winter – frozen to death, starvation, disease

Trail of blood

It is difficult for Christians in most of the Western world to understand what suffering for Christ means.

We think of suffering as having no air conditioning, no electricity, or no cushions for our seats.

We are not faced with loss of job, imprisonment, or execution because of our faith— not yet anyway.

But as time marches on, the ungodly environment in our society is becoming more and more hostile toward us, causing at least two reactions from believers: either compromise or conviction.

Become like the world

Become like Christ – that's it

Because the more faithful a Christian becomes, the more roadblocks, hardships, and rejection he will encounter.

With these tough things, what are we to do? "Endure."

- That is an emphasis on steadfastness, being unmovable – enduring
- It means to bear with, bear under.

We are spoiled – it's made us weak and lazy as believers.

We will jump ship and quit over small things.

A soldier needs to be tough:

- He doesn't run and hide
- He can be counted on; dependable

What is it to endure hardness? It is to be longsuffering under fire, pressure

3:10e-11

But, notice – who else is going to suffer persecution? Vs. 12

The good soldier, the faithful believer will suffer.

This is the reality of the Christian life

In the Book of II Timothy, there are two sources that caused the suffering for the Apostle Paul

First, it came from lost people – we expect this

- Chapter 2:8-9 – Paul was imprisoned because of being a follower of Christ.
- 2:9 – He was labeled as an evildoer – We will have titles, names given to us because of what we believe
- 3:11 – In Antioch – Paul was persecuted and driven out of town; at Iconium Paul was to be stoned but he fled, and in Lystra – Paul was stoned and left for dead.
- 4:14-15 – Alexander the coppersmith injured the Apostle Paul.

Secondly, another cause of suffering came from weak soldiers (believers) who forsook Paul, but ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1:15 – deserters
- 4:10 – Demas deserted -
- 4:16 – Paul was forsaken

The Apostle Paul is not asking Timothy to do something that he is not already doing himself.

What does it mean to endure as a good soldier?

- It means not to bail out or to throw in the towel

★There is always a comfortable brand (kind) of Christianity that has found a way to accommodate the world so there's no suffering involved★

First, a good soldier endures hardships

II. **Secondly, a good soldier avoids worldly entanglements** – vs. 4a

A good soldier is totally committed to his commanding officer; his loyalty is not divided.

- Our commanding officer is Jesus Christ; we answer to Him first and foremost.

A **soldier in active service** is a **soldier** 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

- His body, his health, his skills, his time, treasure—all that he is—belongs to the Lord whom he serves.

The believer is to establish his priorities

Fall in love with the things of the world – hold on to them too tightly

The Bible is talking about being entangled in worldliness that one is not able to live the Christian life fully

This is what happened to Demas.

II Timothy 4:10

God is not speaking about things that necessarily are wrong in themselves.

As believers, we are not to become caught up and distracted with things that take us away from our most important tasks.

A good soldier of Christ Jesus refuses to allow earthly matters to interfere with the fulfillment of his duty to his Lord.

★Many Christians, pastors, special ministries, and doctrinally sound churches have been undermined by concerns and activities that are innocent in themselves but have been allowed to crowd out the primary purpose of serving Jesus Christ in the advancing of His kingdom against the forces of darkness.

Luke 9:57-62, *“And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him [Jesus], ‘Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever thou goest.’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.’ [There is going to be difficulty.] And He said unto another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ Jesus said unto him, ‘Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”*

Jesus is telling us that His cause is more important.

Matthew 13:22, *“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”*

Bogged down with worldly goods and things – we get all tangled up.

The faithful Christian will deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Christ (Matthew 16:24)

Acts 20:24, Paul said, *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”*

Now,

III. The third mark of a good soldier is a genuine desire to please the one who enlisted him as a soldier – vs. 4b

A good soldier exalts, he magnifies Jesus Christ

A Christian’s deepest desire should be to please the Lord Jesus Christ, his Commander in Chief, **the One who enlisted him.**

We must be loyal to our Master:

- First, loyal to Him as a Person – He is our Captain – He is worth dying for.
Amen.
- Second, be loyal to His Word
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4:3-4

Be loyal to the Word of God

This is the place of contention

- People don't mind if we believe in Jesus – in fact, it is quite popular to believe in Jesus and wear a cross
- The thing they dislike is when we insist on being loyal to something He said.

The Word of God constrains and restrains.

And many of God's soldiers want to escape and be free from the Bible.

A good soldier is loyal to the Word of God, the marching orders of the Commander.

A major reason to be loyal to Christ and His Word is for the sake of the lost.

2:10

It is for the sake of these people

The people that are yet to be saved

The strong desire to please other people is an integral characteristic of sinful man.

Even Christians are tempted to be men-pleasers.

Pleasing the world demands compromise of God's truth, God's standards, and personal holiness

Our purpose is to bring honor and glory to Christ, and we do that by being a good soldier:

- Enduring persecution
- Avoiding the distractions of this world
- Pleasing our commanding officer

What an encouragement Jesus Christ is to a suffering Christian soldier!

Jesus was victorious, proving that suffering leads to glory, and that seeming defeat leads to victory.

The important thing is that we not “disown” our Lord; for if we disown Him here, He will disown us before the Father

2:12

Soldiers of the Lord, *‘take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.’*

Let us bow our heads.

How do we stand today as a soldier on the Lord’s battlefield?

- Are we tired, weary, worn and need encouragement to fight on?
- Are we lazy and a poor soldier – failing to fight and failing to stand for Jesus Christ?
- Are we pleasing everyone but Christ?

We are soldiers of the Lord

One day, our Commander-in-Chief – Jesus Christ – will call on us to give an account of ourselves.

Pensacola Christian College Drama Team – “Judgment Seat”