

A GOOD SOLDIER

BIBLE TEXT : II Timothy 2:1-26

LESSON 415 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Timothy 2:1-26

1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Bible References:

Notes:

A Servant

Jesus said that He had come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28), meaning that He had come to serve others. In Luke 22:27 are also recorded some words of Jesus: "I am among you as he that serveth"; and in Philippians 2:7 we read that Jesus "took upon him the form of a servant." Those who follow Jesus do the same.

All Christians, whether or not they are ministers, are really servants. First of all, they are servants of the Lord and do His bidding. Writing to the Philippians, Paul called Timothy and himself "servants of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:1). The Law stated that God required the Children of Israel to "serve the LORD" with all the heart and with all the soul (Deuteronomy 10:12). The Psalmist said, "Serve the LORD with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

In the second place, followers of Jesus like to do things for other people, because they have the love of God in their heart. Christians pray one for another, as well as for those who do not know Jesus. They bear one another's burdens (**Galatians 6:2** *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*). Paul said: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Jesus said, "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11); so those who do service to God and man are counted great. It is a wonderful privilege to be a servant of the Lord. God has promised: "On my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:18).

A Soldier

One who serves God is in the Lord's army. In the Bible much is recorded about Christian soldiers. Satan is our enemy, but we do not fight against him with guns, tanks, planes, or A-bombs. Our weapons are not seen but they are "mighty through God" (II Corinthians 10:4). Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10), and leads us to victory "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Shortly before Paul died he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). Paul had experienced the spiritual warfare and had kept true to God. He told Timothy to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." The army is not the place for one who wants an easy life. Soldiers today are trained to make their bodies physically fit. They learn how to survive in time of hardship. They practice and drill, using most of their energy, because that will make them fit for the hard places.

Training

They must learn to work together as a team because the big guns and other machines nowadays are manned by a crew — each doing his part to secure the success and safety of the whole

14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

crew. Paul said, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

There are specialty schools for the soldiers so that they may become experts. God's soldiers study to show themselves approved of God, workmen who need not be ashamed, "rightly dividing the word of truth." Not only do they study the Bible but many also study music and other subjects that will help them to be useful in God's army.

The Lord has a training for His soldiers, too. He prepares them by small tests and trials so that they will trust Him in times of great distress. God's soldiers prepare themselves by praying, by reading and memorising the Word, by consecrating their lives to Him, and by working for the Lord. There are different kinds of work for soldiers. Some who are faithful and diligent are advanced and have authority over others. As a soldier works hard and studies he is given a higher rank. Paul told Timothy that the things he had learned from Paul he should give out to others and they in turn would be able to teach still others. How thankful we are to God that He gives us a chance to do something for Him, and to tell others the story of the Gospel. There is a learning period, and then He calls some to be teachers and ministers to help others to be good soldiers for Jesus.

Obedience

One of the first things a soldier must learn is to obey commands and rules. If these are broken he may receive a cut in his pay, his liberty may be cancelled, he may be assigned to more work, or perhaps he may suffer all these things combined.

The Lord is just as strict about His soldiers being obedient, too. In the Law given to the Children of Israel, it was stated that there was set before them a blessing and a curse — a blessing for obedience and a curse for disobedience (**Deuteronomy 11:26-28** 26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known). The Lord promised, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: . . . that it may be well unto you" (Jeremiah 7:23). In Hebrews 5:9 we read that Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

If a soldier is not obedient to the commands and rules in the army today, he may receive a dishonourable discharge. Also those who disobey God are no longer in His army.

Provision

When young people are drafted or enlist in the army they leave their things and take up those provided for the army. All their clothing and needs are issued by the government. They dress in army clothes, eat army food, sleep in army quarters, ride in army vehicles, and are permitted very little else.

God has provided for His army, too. In a spiritual sense, His soldiers are clothed in white garments, which are the "righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). His soldiers eat the spiritual food, which God has provided. Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:51).

Equipment

The equipment given to soldiers of our nation is government-issued, and people in the Lord's army are given God-issued equipment. One would not consider a soldier without equipment

26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

QUESTIONS

1. How does one become a soldier in the Lord's army?
2. Who is the Captain of our salvation?
3. Who is our enemy?
4. What does one do to prepare for the Lord's army?
5. What kind of equipment does God have for His soldiers?
6. Name the six pieces of the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:14-17).
7. Why does a soldier keep himself from being entangled with the affairs of this world?
8. How can one study to show himself approved of God?
9. Finish this statement of Paul's: "I have fought a . . ." (II Timothy 4:7).
10. Explain what this means: "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits."

an efficient soldier. Neither is a soldier efficient in the Lord's army unless he has God's equipment. In Ephesians 6:11 we read, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." In the same chapter are listed some pieces of the armour that God has available for His people: "loins girt about with truth, . . . breastplate of righteousness; . . . feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; . . . shield of faith; . . . helmet of salvation; . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17).

The government issues equipment for the soldiers, not only for their protection but also that they may do good work. For the same reasons God wants His soldiers to watch and pray and to receive the things that God has for them. Paul put the same thought in other words: "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." How can one tell of the beauties of the Gospel and of the wonderful equipment if he has not possessed them himself?

Hindrance

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." The word "entangleth" is an important word for a soldier of the King. It is a warning, and means a hindrance. A young person who is considering his life's work must choose one, which would leave him a portion of time to work for the Lord. One cannot do his best work as a soldier of the Lord if he is so much involved in other business that it consumes his thoughts, time, and energy.

Victory

When the Children of Israel were about to cross the Red Sea, and were afraid of Pharaoh's great army, Moses encouraged them by saying, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:14). When they obeyed they were victorious. God did fight for them many times and always won the battle.

Perhaps when he volunteered to fight Goliath, David was remembering how God fought for the Children of Israel. The men of the army were afraid of the Philistine's boastful words, but David said, "I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, . . . the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S" (I Samuel 17:45, 47). You remember how God did fight for David and directed the stone to Goliath's forehead so that he fell down. David slew Goliath because God helped him when he trusted God.

Today the Lord wins the battles for us, too, and how grateful we are for His help and His promises! He knows those who are His and who are trusting Him. His promises are sure, and "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). A soldier of the Lord knows that he can do nothing without the Lord, but he has a praise in his heart for the victory. He can say with Paul, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).