

A GOOD SOLDIER

BIBLE TEXT : II Timothy 2:1-26

LESSON 415 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be asha-med, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

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.

¹⁴ Of these things put *them* in

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Qualities of a Good Soldier

1. A good soldier of Jesus Christ must be strong in grace, II Timothy 2:1.
2. A good soldier must teach others also, II Timothy 2:2.
3. A good soldier must endure hardness, II Timothy 2:3.
4. A good soldier must keep himself free, II Timothy 2:4.
5. A good soldier must strive lawfully, II Timothy 2:5.

II Results of Soldiership

1. The husbandman must be first partaker of the fruits, II Timothy 2:6, 7.
2. The soldier of the cross often suffers, II Timothy 2:8, 9;

Hebrews 11:25

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

3. The good soldier has the promise of great reward, II Timothy 2:10-13;

Hebrews 10:35

³⁵ Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

III Duties of a Good Soldier

1. The people must be reminded of God's truth, II Timothy 2:14.
2. The good soldier must study to show himself approved unto God, II Timothy 2:15.
3. Unsound doctrine must be shunned, II Timothy 2:16-18, 23.

IV Honour or Dishonour

1. The foundation of God stands sure, II Timothy 2:19.
2. Some vessels in a great house are to honour and some are to dishonour, II Timothy 2:20, 21.
3. Calling on the Lord out of a pure heart is the way to honour, II Timothy 2:22.
4. Emphasis is placed upon gentleness and meekness, II Timothy 2:24-26

NOTES:

This second Epistle of Paul, written to his younger co-worker in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the last Bible-recorded letter written by the Apostle. In this letter the great Apostle, who knew that the time of his departure from this earth was near at hand, again reminded Timothy of some of the responsibilities that rested upon him as a young minister in the Gospel and as a worker for lost humanity to win them to Christ.

Consistent Christianity

The text of this lesson points out the necessity of a Christian soldier living a consistent Christian life. Consistent Christianity is a quality rarely found in this world, but if we are truly in God's army as we should be we are living a consistent Christian life. We will not be free from persecution, slander, tribulation, and various other things that Jesus said would follow all who live godly in Christ Jesus; but we will make an impression upon the hearts of the honest and sincere persons whom we meet in the world.

God purposes that the soldiers of Jesus Christ be equipped and qualified for service for the Master: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The Christian's armour

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;

²⁶ And *that* they may recover

is the Word of God. If the Word of God is in the heart and life of one who is fighting the good fight of faith he has a sure defence.

The Lord instructs His soldiers to teach others also. In the physical army the officer in charge does not have time to instruct and drill each new recruit in all the intricacies of the army, but he entrusts this detail to the experienced men of his command. The officer in command is responsible that the men of his command know the rules of the army, but the older, experienced soldiers do much of the actual teaching. "The things that thou hast heard of me . . . the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The good soldiers of the Cross learn and practice the things of the Gospel, not only for their own benefit, but that they might be helpful to others also.

Endurance

Basic training in the armed forces is for the purpose of hardening soldiers, getting them into physical shape and trim for what they are to face in battle. Timothy had been through a course of Christian basic training, but the Apostle wanted the young soldier of the Cross to know there were harder things ahead.

The Bible does not depict the Gospel way as an easy way, but God promises grace and strength to those who endure. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Paul did not lay before Timothy a bed of roses, but a path of thorns, difficulties to be faced, persecutions to be expected. However, the Bible contains many promises of great reward to the faithful soldiers of the Cross: "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23); "Great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:11, 12); "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy 2:12); "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:8); "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

Volunteers

When a man volunteers to become a soldier in a physical army, his life as a civilian ceases for the term of his enlistment. Of necessity he leaves his friends, his business, his former way of life in order to fulfil the requirements of being a soldier. It is said that the Roman legionnaires of the Apostle Paul's era were not permitted to engage in farming, commerce, or any other kind of trade that would hinder them in their soldierly calling.

In like manner the Word of God calls upon Christian soldiers to keep as free as possible from the entanglements of this life in order that they might be more useful in Christian service. The Apostle Paul often laboured with his hands in secular employment to provide the necessities of life, but the foremost aim and ambition of his life was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all men everywhere. He did not allow the things of this life to entangle him or to impair his work and calling in the Gospel. We are safe in using the Apostle Paul's life and example as a pattern for our own.

Rewards

The soldier who does his duty well, going even beyond the call of duty at times, is sometimes honoured by the award of a medal. These medals are often much treasured by the soldiery. Some soldiers are aroused to greater activity by the thoughts of winning a medal than they otherwise might perform. In order to win one of his army's medals, the soldier must keep himself within the rules and regulations set by his army.

Soldiers progress in ratings as they learn the fundamentals and requirements of soldiery; but again, they must keep within

themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

the regulations set by the army. Similarly, the Christian soldier must strive lawfully, keep within the instructions of the Word of God, if he is to be rewarded by the King of kings. Faithful service will be rewarded in this life as well as in the life to come. Consistent Christians are often called to positions of honour and authority among Christian people. However, even if we seemingly are passed over in this life and never reach the position that we desired, faithful service will be rewarded in the life to come. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26, 27).

Right and Wrong

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The study of the Word of God is the right and best kind of study. When Joshua led the Children of Israel into the Land of Promise, he was commanded to meditate in the book of the Law day and night (Joshua 1:8). God commanded that each king of Israel should write a copy of God's law and read therein all the days of his life (**Deuteronomy 17:18-19** ¹⁸ And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which* is before the priests the Levites: ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:). Paul wrote to Timothy: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Timothy 4:13, 15).

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." The world is full of such things today, often in the guise of higher education and greater learning and so-called science. Unproved theories and opinions of men, which are in opposition to the Word of God supplant God's truth in the heart of many students, weakening or wrecking their faith in God. However, the supplanting of God's truth by worldly wisdom need not happen to anyone. If we take the Word of God in its fullness, with implicit trust and faith, we can go through anything that we have to face in this world unshaken and unmoved. We will know when we meet these profane and vain babblings what to do with them: shun them.

Sure Foundation

From the standpoint of the natural man, the outlook of the Apostle Paul could have been dark and gloomy. He knew that the time of his departure from this life was near at hand, and he saw some of his former fellow workmen forsaking him, and others teaching unsound and false doctrine. However, his faith remained tremendously high: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." Men may and do change, but God's Word never changes. The more deeply we feel the imperfections of religious societies and the threatening inroads of false doctrines, the more we should take our stand upon this one truth: that what God has founded is sure and indestructible. That is a foundation that cannot be moved. That is a mighty cornerstone, a Gibraltar to the faith of the people of God who will stand by the truth of His Holy Word.

"The Lord knoweth them that are his." God not only knows them who are His, but He owns them. It is wonderful to be owned of God. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:3,

5). There are many strange voices in the world today, but the true sheep will not follow a strange voice but will follow the voice of their Master. He has established them in the way of righteousness. He has put a disposition in their heart and soul to follow Him, to ignore the siren voices of this world, and listen with keen ear and interest to the still, small voice of the Master.

In Meekness

The instructions given in II Timothy 2:22-26 are plain. They explain what the duty of one child of God is toward another. It is our business to be a helper, an encourager, to be one who is filled with the Good Samaritan spirit, to do all in our power to lift up one and get him back on his feet spiritually if he has fallen.

There is no greater joy in the human heart and life than that of rescuing some soul who has fallen by the wayside. It means something to lend a helping hand. Bringing help to the helpless, raising the low, the fallen, the weak, putting a confidence into their heart that somebody has faith in them and a sincere desire to see them make the portals of Glory, bring joy and blessings into one's own life. If we would all do that, we would be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What may a good soldier of Jesus Christ be called upon to endure?
2. Why should a good soldier keep himself free from the entanglements of this life?
3. What is the right and best kind of study?
4. What is to be done with profane and vain babblings? Why?
5. What stands sure, regardless of what men say or do?
6. How does one reach the place of honour in God's plan?
7. Complete the quotation: "Flee also youthful lusts: . . ."
8. What brings great joy to the human heart and life?