

“The Good Soldier”  
2 Timothy 2:3-5  
(Preached at Trinity, March 13, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **verses 1-2** Paul told Timothy, because of the great affliction you are facing in the gospel, the affliction that has put me in prison and has caused many to turn away, “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and commit these truths to faithful men who will be able to teach others.”
2. Now in **Verse 3** Paul again refers to **Chap. 1** - because of the great affliction you are facing in the gospel, the same affliction that has put me in prison and has caused many to fall away, "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."
3. Christianity is often described using the metaphor of a soldier in a war.  
**Ephesians 6:12-13 NAU** - "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."  
**2 Corinthians 10:3-4 NAU** - "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,<sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."
4. This has been Paul's continued reminder to Timothy  
**1 Timothy 1:18 NAU** - "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my son*, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,"  
**1 Timothy 6:12 NAU** - "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."  
**2 Timothy 4:7 NAU** - "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"
5. This morning I want lay before you the qualities of a good soldier, especially a soldier of Christ.
  - I. He is courageous to endure the hardness of war  
"Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."
    - A. War is not for the faint of heart
      1. Ancient warfare was face to face, hand to hand – swords clashing. Terrible wounds would have been common. We read many cases in Scripture.
      2. During the Civil War double rank battle lines were the custom. The front line fired their shot followed by the rear. Casualties were great. Amputation was the accepted treatment for gunshot wound to the arms and legs, often without anesthesia.

3. During WWI trenches were dug into the ground where soldiers would spend week upon week. They were muddy and unsanitary and rodents of various sorts were common. A condition where the feet were kept muddy and wet for extended periods was given the name, trench foot. It was a serious condition that killed over 75,000 soldiers.
  4. The life of a soldier during war has always been difficult. He cannot turn back. Desertion today can result in a dishonorable discharge or imprisonment. During war it can result in the death penalty.
- B. Christianity is not for the faint of heart
1. We are in a state of war. The Christian life is difficult!
  2. Discipleship demands courage. The Bible describes it as playing the man.  
**1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU** - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."  
This includes the ladies = it means standing firm, being courageous.
  3. We are to be bold and courageous.  
Joab before the Assyrians:  
**2 Samuel 10:12 NAU** - "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight."
  4. Spurgeon – "be of good courage' A soldier's motto. Be it mine. Courage we shall need, and for the exercise of it we have as much reason as necessity, if we are soldiers of King Jesus."
  5. William Barclay – "As a sentinel, be ever on the alert. When under attack, stand fast in the faith, and yield not an inch. In time of battle, play a hero's part. Like a well-equipped and well trained soldier, be strong to fight for your King."<sup>1</sup>
  6. Matthew Henry – "Religion tends to make men, not cowardly, but truly valiant. The righteous are bold as a lion. The true Christian is the true hero."<sup>2</sup>

II. He is actively engaged in the war

**NAU 2 Timothy 2:4** – "No soldier in active service"

**NKJ 2 Timothy 2:4** – "No one engaged in warfare"

- A. I've often said that the difference between a true believer and a mere professor is that the true believer has entered the war
  1. The false professor knows nothing of our battles, nor of the wounds the Christian sometimes receives
  2. The true believer is in a two-fold war
- B. The believer is in a defensive war – from the attack of our triune enemy
  1. Satan –  
**Ephesians 6:12 NAU** - "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

<sup>1</sup> Barclay, William, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956) page 185.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 38.

- a. Satan attacks us with lies and deceits.  
**John 8:44 NAU** - "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
  - b. He strives to tempt us to sin against God – to sell out for this world’s kingdom. To go AWOL.
  - c. He strives to cripple us with fear  
**2 Timothy 1:7 NAU** - "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."  
 KJV - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear"
2. The World –
- a. This world system has its own rules and ways
    - (1) It presents its pleasures – intoxicated with hedonism
    - (2) It presents its values and standards of morality
  - b. Its ways are opposed to God.  
 The world is in warfare against God and all who represent Him.
  - c. God opposes the world and will crush its rebellion  
**James 4:4 NAU** - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
3. Our own flesh that continually draws us back to sin  
**Romans 8:5 NAU** - "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."  
**Romans 8:13 NAU** - "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."  
**2 Corinthians 7:1 NAU** - "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."  
**Galatians 5:16-17 NAU** - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."
- C. Offensive
- 1. We are taking the battle to the enemy as we preach the gospel  
**2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NAU** - "for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup> *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing

raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,"

2. Jesus has already plundered Satan's stronghold  
**Matthew 12:29 NAU** - "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."  
**Ephesians 4:8 NAS** - "Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men."

- D. The good soldier of Christ is careful to properly equip himself  
**Ephesians 6:11 NAU** - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."  
**Ephesians 6:13-17 NAU** - "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil *one*. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

- III. The good soldier is focused - not distracted by things not pertaining to the war  
**2 Timothy 2:4 NAU** - "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."  
The Roman Code of Theodosius: "We forbid men engaged on military service to engage in civilian occupations."

- A. The good soldier is committed to winning the war – he will not allow himself to be distracted
1. See Uriah - **2 Samuel 11:8-11**  
**2 Samuel 11:10-11 NAU** - "David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" <sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing."
  2. The good Christian soldier is in the battle 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for his entire lifetime – no time off, no furloughs, no weekend passes.
  3. In the Parable of the Sower our Lord describes the temporary believer  
**Matthew 13:22 NAU** - "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
  4. Lukewarmness toward Christ and His kingdom is a dangerous thing

**2 Peter 2:20-21 NAU** - " For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup> For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them."

B. What are some of the affairs of this life that can entangle us

1. The pleasures of sin

**Hebrews 11:24-26 NAU** - "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, <sup>26</sup> considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward."

a. Materialism – leads some to rob God, to maintain the standard many abandon church, family, Christ.

b. Hedonism

**2 Timothy 3:4-5 NAU** - "treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these."

2. Family – not wrong in itself, but a dangerous excuse to keep one from Christian service – the danger of paedolatry – the worship of children. They are more fearful of offending their children than offending God.

3. Our occupation – remember this is our calling through which we manifest our allegiance to Jesus Christ, never shall it become a hindrance to our Christian service.

4. General Apathy – even while we are conducting ministry – we lose our zeal and love for our Savior – He ceases to be our burning passion.

**Revelation 2:4-5 NAU** - "But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup> 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent."

IV. The good soldier strives to please his Commander

"so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

A. This is our chief motive for all of our life.

1. The Christian soldier strives after obedience – it is the outward expression of our love.

**John 14:15** – "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

**1 John 5:3 NAU** - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

2. The Christian soldier strive to please Christ first

3. The lost man is a man pleaser  
(his fellow-workers, neighbors, friends)

4. The Christian desires to please Christ above all which sometimes brings the displeasure of others – this is part of the war

B. A pastor's first duty is not to please the congregation

1. The man who told me how difficult it must be for a pastor – he has 300 bosses. I have only one Boss.
2. Pleasing Him must be our highest ambition

**Conclusion:**

1. Are you in the war – do you know the Christian battle? A battle against Satan, this world, our own flesh and the struggles against sin?
2. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by the things of this world. Do you see yourself as a soldier of the King!
3. May we strive to do all things for His glory, to please and honor Him above all things.