

# *Bryan Station Baptist Church*

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MISSIONARY

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## **A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ**

BY THE LATE: C. D. COLE

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

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" (II Tim. 2:3,4).

The practical side of the Christian life is represented under various figures; as running a race, sowing a field, building a house, and fighting a battle. All of these figures indicate activity and hardship. They preclude the thought of a Christian reclining upon a couch of ease, or sitting upon the stool of do-nothing. With many in this money-mad, pleasure-pursuing, ease-loving age the motive of church membership has degenerated to the level of the political and commercial spirit. With many, the determining question is: "Will it help my business, or will it give me prestige in the social circle?" How unworthy of membership in the body of Christ are all those who entertain such motives.

The figure for timely meditation and consideration is that of warfare. The Christian life is a warfare. There is an enemy to be opposed, there are battles to be fought, there are hardships to be endured. The enemies of the Christian soldier are not mere figures of speech or vanishing ghosts, but are very real, and are denominated the devil, the flesh and the world, as well as spiritual powers in the heavenlies.

Timothy was a young man of Lystra, probably converted under the preaching of Paul. He was not ashamed to show his colors, for immediately

he takes his place in the ranks of those who stood for the "testimony of the Lord." This places one in a position to be attacked, for "the testimony of the Lord" is ever rejected by the world at large. Paul, the aged veteran of the cross, and for the truth, is cheered to see this young man so valiant for the truth, and writes him words of encouragement. He instructed him as to the necessary qualifications of a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

1. There must be strength. To be a good soldier, one must be strong. A weak and sickly soldier is a burden to his country. In camps where soldiers are trained, the food and exercise is to give strength for the day of battle. The soldier of Christ needs strength. He has terrible enemies to meet. The world is an enemy to him, the flesh is an enemy to him, the devil is against him, and the demons are against him. The church is a training camp, where he is to get food and exercise for the day of battle. His food is the Word of God, and he is to exercise himself unto godliness: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:7,8). Human strength will not avail in the Christian's warfare. We are to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." This is supernatural strength. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). To the tried

and persecuted apostle Christ said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Wonderful words! Blessed sufficiency! When we came to Him as a poor lost sinner, we found plenteous grace to cover all our sins and we could sing:

"I do believe, I will believe  
That Jesus died for me;  
That on the cross He shed His blood  
From sin to set me free."

His death on the cross settled the sin-debt, but how is the child of God to get along in this world? When the storms and stress of life's journey breaks over thy head? Oh, look up! There is a blessed man on the throne. All power in heaven and earth is His. Then let us sing:

"I do believe, I will believe  
That Jesus died for me;  
That on the throne He intercedes  
And gives the victory."

2. Faithfulness. The good soldier is faithful. "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" (II Tim. 2:2). The soldier's only standard of duty is his commander's will. With a good soldier, the highest reward is His commander's praise. Soldiers have gladly flung away their lives for a smile or a "well-done" from some Alexander or Napoleon. O, for such a spirit among the soldiers of Christ.

3. Endurance. "Endure hardness" is Paul's command to Timothy. The soldier does not have an easy time. The Christian's path is not a bed of roses. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

4. Separation. This text may have a double application—a primary and a secondary—to pastor and layman. To the pastor, emphasis must be laid on the affairs of this life. The soldier has to abandon entirely all other occupations, because he could not both do them and fight. To the layman, the emphasis is on the word "entangleth". It is not occupation, but entangleth. When the Christian layman, in the conduct of his business, adopts the maxims of the world, he is entangled. A single step in the wrong direction may nullify our testimony against worldliness.

5. Devotion. Not only are we called upon to be separated from the world, but we are to be devoted to Christ—henceforth, to be here in His interest—to please Him. When David was hunted by Saul, there were a number of men in Israel who recognized that David was God's king. They were devoted to his person. Of them we read, that they came to David and were at his command.

Paul expressed this devotion when he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Here is our failure—lack of devotion to Christ.

6. Obedience. This is the test of our devotion. This is the most striking thing about the life of a soldier. He learns to obey. Soldiers have been shot as mutineers for doing grand deeds of heroism contrary to orders. This is the grand mark of a good soldier of Christ. Where this is lacking, nothing else is of much value. It is absurd to talk about devotion to Christ if we are not walking in obedience to His word. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." As a preacher, if I am devoted to Christ, I will preach His word and have no message of my own. In olden times, it was according to the heraldic law that if a herald substituted so much as a single word of his own for the king's, he was beheaded. If this law was enforced these days, a lot of preachers would lose their heads.

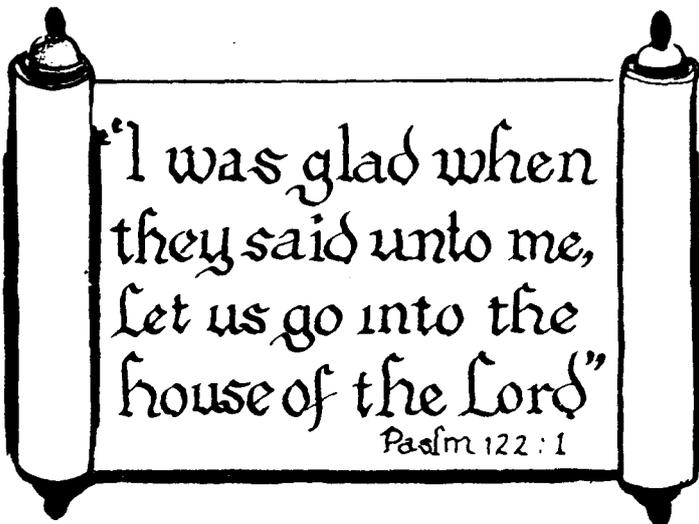
7. Patience. This implies that we will not be able to see the results of our labors for the Lord. Patience implies waiting for the fruits of our labor. The farmer, before partaking of the fruits, must plow, sow, cultivate, and wait till the grain comes up and matures. So we must be willing to sow the seed beside all waters, and wait. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccl. 11:6).

French fathers who lost sons in the late World War, assembled with Marshal Foch in Paris a few years ago. They brought with them hundreds of last letters written by their sons before they died in battle. Many of these letters were published in a book, with only a preface by the Marshal. These last letters revealed the characteristics of a true soldier. They show courage, devotion to cause, country, and comrades. In these letters we see "good soldiers" in sacrifice and suffering. These were good soldiers of France. II Timothy is a last letter by a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It is the last letter of an old soldier who said, "Be a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It is Paul's last letter from the battle-front. He says, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (I Tim. 4:6-8).



## THIS WE BELIEVE

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God without error as originally written. We believe in the Genesis account of creation and the fall of man. We believe in total depravity. We believe all are lost unless born again. We believe that we are saved by grace through faith and without works on the part of man. We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces and that all who do not repent and believe are lost. We believe in the security of the believer. We believe faith without works is dead. We believe all who have repented and believed should confess the Lord and follow Him in baptism and begin to seek to do His will. We believe that Jesus Christ organized a church while here on earth during His personal ministry (before Pentecost), and that He gave that church a commission. Matt. 28:19,20. We believe that there are two church ordinances; baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the church is local, visible, and that she has the Bible for her one and only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We believe that the way to finance the Lord's work is by tithes and offerings. We believe that all churches should be missionary. We believe in the premillennial second coming of Christ. We believe that Heaven is a real place and that Hell is a real place. We believe in the Trinity of God, and that the Devil is a person, and that there will be two resurrections, one of the just and one of the unjust.



Look unto Me, and be ye saved,  
all the ends of the earth: for I am  
God, and there is none else.

Isaiah 45:22

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