

November 10, 2019 - II Timothy 2:1-5 - “Remember Those Who Served”

Introduction:

Almost 75 years ago, my father was wounded by shrapnel while fighting at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II. The weather was so cold his feet froze and he saw his comrade's freeze to death. I saw him for years suffer from the poor circulation in his feet. Yes, thousands of other veterans carried with them lifelong, tragic consequences and the casualties of war.

Today we honor our American military veterans who deserve our appreciation for their service to our country. In the last three years our President has done a great deal to help the Veterans. He signed into law a pair of bills aimed at improving education and other aspects of the transition from military to civilian life. The President also signed the VA Mission Act, providing more healthcare options for veterans. Other organizations are stepping up too like the Wounded Warrior Project. They have been committed to helping wounded veterans achieve their highest ambition. It is estimated that more than 600,000 veterans live with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The challenges associated with repeatedly reliving traumatic experiences can be crippling to these veterans. We have a responsibility to pray and to support them to the best of our abilities. They need our prayers! The average number of veteran suicides according to the Department of Veterans Affairs is now 17 a day.

Every veteran who lived with the physical and emotional scars of battle is a testament of their sacrifice to achieve peace and liberty. The men and women who fought for their country are to be honored with gratitude. These soldiers are examples to us as believers according to Paul's writing here and ...

I God Desires We be Good Soldiers -II Timothy 2:1-2

1. Every-day as a Child of God, we are going to be in a Spiritual Battle that will last until our Lord returns. We need to be ready and equipped for the journey that lies ahead of us. We are fortunate enough to have a message from God in the letter from Paul to Timothy on what the character of a Christian Soldier should be. Here are special characteristics of a good Soldiers.

2. They are Strong (v.1) they receive their strength from the grace of God. (Phil 4:13) / Ps.70:1 They do not rely on their own strength. Paul likened the Christian to a soldier. That implies we are at war--a picture used in the Scriptures such as **Ephesians 6:11-12**. Too often we Christians forget that we are at war. It is a war with God's adversary Satan.

II. Soldiers work hard and fight (2:3-5).

1. Paul gives us three illustrations of what it means to be a strong Christian. He begins with the illustration of a soldier by writing: **Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2:3)**. Paul didn't want Timothy to have any illusions. In this world we have to endure hardness, which includes persecution, being misunderstood, and opposition. Jesus told his church in John 15:18 - **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you**. Paul knew what it meant to suffer hardship. - **2 Cor.11:24-28**

2. Paul explains what it means to be a good soldier. To be "good" (Gk. *Kalos* means excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends, honourable. We are not to be soldiers simply in terms of function and duty--we are to be active, noble, and heroic soldiers. Those are the kind of soldiers who earn medals of valor and honor. 'No man that warreth' implies we are at war. The Greek word is (*strateuōto*) to do military duty, be on active service as a soldier. Christians are "in active service" of the Lord's army. (v. 4).

Illustration:

**I may never march in the infantry, Ride in the cavalry. Shoot the artillery
I may never shoot for the enemy. But I'm in the Lord's army! Repeat**

Dr. John Mac'Arthur tells of his experience when he came to realize how real this warfare was; He writes, "I will never forget a battle with a demon-possessed girl one night at church. She was in one of the rooms of the church kicking, screaming, and throwing furniture around. When I walked into the room, she said, "Don't let him in!" But the voice that said that wasn't her-own. My first response was, "Fine, I'm leaving!" But I realized that if the demons didn't like me, it was because I was on God's side. I went in and the girl attacked me, kicking me in the shins so violently I began to bleed. In the power of God several of us spent hours there until she confessed her sin and accepted God and His grace in Jesus Christ. As I left that night I realized for the first time the extent of our warfare against demons.

3. The Christian army does not have any members on rest and recreation. All are on the front lines of an active battle. (2 Timothy 2:4a) We are not to get too entangled with the affairs of this life. He writes, we should be involved in our community and family but not become entangled to the point that things eat up our time and energy, hindering our service as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

He knows he must avoid entanglements. The Greek word translated "entangles" (*empleko*) means "to interweave." A believer's life is not to be wrapped up in the non-essentials of this life. Because we live on the battlefield, all things are to be subservient to winning the battle. Paul knew much about the Roman soldier of his day.

4. A good soldier also wants to please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier (2:4b). By refusing to get entangled in outside involvements, a good soldier is ready and anxious to follow the orders of the one who has chosen him to be a soldier. This requires being able to distinguish between doing good things and doing the main thing. As someone has once said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." We must be men and women on a mission, refusing to be distracted. Occupy until the Commander the Lord Jesus returns and stay at our post knowing that we are engaged in spiritual warfare. – 2Cor. 10:4

(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5. Paul uses an illustration of an athletic: (2:5). The crown probably refers to the wreath given in Greek Olympic Games. The word translate crown (*stephanos*) is the Greek word from which we get our English names "Stephen" and "Stephanie." This crown was a token of honor for distinguished service or accomplishment. This crown reveals that our goal should be to attain Christ's approval.

III. Soldiers make great sacrifices

1. Dover First Baptist has and had many good soldiers and we do well to remember them that served. As Christians, we ought never to overlook our heritage because our spiritual heritage is rooted in the sacrifice of many spiritual soldiers both men and women alike. Our church has a proud heritage and a family history of faithfulness that goes back many generations. Allow me to give you just a fragment this morning before we close in honor of them and our 262 years of longevity.

2. In relationship to our church beginnings we find a man living at the time of the Great Awakening named Thomas Marsh who lived in Mansfield, CT. He had a very strong connection with the Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", in Enfield. It was part of the Great Awakening revival that struck New England in the mid-18th century and spread throughout this area. There are court records of three instances in which he was arrested for so called disorderly preaching. In each case, he was found "not guilty" but was not entirely exonerated by the court and was required to pay court cost. His good friend Shubael Waldo could not pay the fine and he was beaten.

3. In May of 1745 Thomas Marsh, and others of the North Church, Mansfield, were cited to appear before the society on a charge of being separatists, non-conformers. They appeared before the authorities and were formally excommunicated. Among those that were excommunicated was Shubael Waldo. These Christians formed a Separatist Church on Oct 14, 1745 and Shubael and Abigail Waldo became the first members of this new church in CT. Thomas Marsh was their Elder or pastor. Thomas and his wife Eunice had a number of children one of whom was William Marsh who was a member in his father's church in Mansfield. Shubael Waldo and his wife Abigail had six children including Samuel. So Samuel Waldo and William Marsh were young men when both their families went through this ordeal of religious persecution and became very close friends.

4. Morgan Edward, the Baptist historian, says: "William Marsh was ordained among the 'Separate' branch of the Congregationalists. In 1756 he founded a Separatist church in Wantage, NJ. A year later Samuel Waldo moved to this area of New York because of the open nature and freedom given to the Baptist. According to our records he then called upon William Marsh in 1757 to help him to organize this church and to get them into the First Baptist Association in America.

5. The Newton Historical Society records in New Jersey state that William Marsh went to Wyoming Valley, PA where he was killed by the Susquehanna Indians. The first known English Baptist preacher on the Susquehanna was the first person named as slain in the first Wyoming massacre, on October 15, 1763, with some twenty others.

Conclusion:

Thank God for our Soldiers and thank him for the Spiritual ones too. --- gospel