

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Metaphors of The Christian Life ~ A Steward & Soldier”*

#### *2 Timothy 2:1-4*

*May 25 – May 31, 2014*

**MONDAY** – As we continue our study of **2 Timothy** we now come into **Chapter 2**. I looked at many ways to tackle this text and attempt to break it down but I have chosen to leave it as one whole (which it is) and just work our way through as time allows breaking where necessary. The reason behind this is because although there are many truths in this chapter we could and will look at individually, it is important we see them all in the big picture or as a whole if you will. As chapter one ended the Apostle Paul was expressing sorrow over an apparent widespread defection among Christians in the Roman province of Asia (**1:15**) apart from one wonderful exception (*Onesiphorus* and his house). Now the Apostle urges the man Timothy to stand firm in the midst of the landslide. He exhorts him to live differently as he several times uses the expression of *su oun* or *su de* meaning *But You therefore, my son...* Timothy had been called to leadership in the church of Jesus and in spite of his natural tendencies and weaknesses was to be strong as he carried out this duty, a duty not merely of Christian leaders **BUT** all of us as Christians. This chapter will contain 6 or 7 metaphors of the Christian minister and every saint of God. So we will move through the text and Lord willing learn these valuable lessons and put them into practice for The Lord’s glory and our good. Read the entire text of **2 Timothy 2:1-26** for context but for our study we will list only **2 Timothy 2:1-4**:<sup>1</sup> “*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>2</sup> *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*”<sup>3</sup> *You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*”<sup>4</sup> *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*”

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, teach me this week from Sacred Scripture how I need to live as a Christian and give me strength to do so for Your names sake, Amen.*

**TUESDAY** – **2 Timothy 2:1-2**:<sup>1</sup> “*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>2</sup> *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*” As we begin this chapter I would like to mention that this serves as a major reality check to the Christian populous. The Christian life is not a “bed of roses” but a call to suffer and endure for the glory of the Lord Jesus and His gospel. It is quite often a bed of thorns. I said that this chapter contained 6 or 7 metaphors of the Christian life; six are clearly defined as they are specifically mentioned but

the first one, or seventh if you’d prefer, is the one that leads of the chapter and we find it by reference; it is the metaphor of a **Steward**. What we see in these verses is the handling of the truth and its reception and transmission. We see here what one could call “true Apostolic succession”, not Peter’s Papacy passed down to the current Pope but instead, Jesus Word passed through and to the Apostles and down the line to us through a long line of faithful men. Here; Jesus to Paul, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to his people and faithful men and down through the ages to us; all of it being contained and consistent in the pages of Sacred Scripture. Before I go any further with this thought let’s look at the text’s opening; *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* Paul calls upon his *son* to *be strong in the grace*. What grace? Not the grace in him but the grace that *is in Christ Jesus*. This is a very important and precious distinction. The grace that is in you or I is given by the Lord, it is *from* the LORD, and it depends on Him for continuance and to be kept alive as it is drawn from the “bountiful supply” in Jesus. As the spring sends forth the water, the creek stays running. If we truly understood this we would learn a valuable truth for everyday use. We don’t live on what we have had or what we have done in the past. The grace I had from Jesus the “first” day, I need every day, and until the very last day. My spiritual strength is in Jesus; not in what I feel and not in what I have. And I persevere in this life by daily, constantly receiving by faith from Him “fresh grace” if you will; from Him, in Him, to Him, and on Him. Timothy, *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus* because there is no other strength. Timothy, you and I may be weak and timid but we are to find our strength and power for service not in ourselves alone but in the *grace* that God supplies. His *grace* saves us, keeps us, and provides us with the inward motivation and strength to carry on God’s work, even when we feel like giving up.

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, help me understand that I need You every minute of every day in order to survive and live a life that is obedient and glorifying to You. I praise You for such fresh grace. Thank You Jesus for being sufficient for my every need.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **2 Timothy 1:1-2**<sup>1</sup> “*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>2</sup> *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*” Now we get back to the point of Timothy passing on the truth or transmitting it to future generations. We saw last chapter that Paul referred to a deposit of truth that Timothy was to both guard (**1:13-14**) and proclaim in the face of any opposition he might encounter in his ministry at Ephesus. But now Paul goes further as he tells Timothy how to prepare for this deposit to be passed on to future generations. Paul is about to face death and he knows it; he has carried the torch or the baton and now it is time as in a relay race, to pass it on. There is, as it were, a chain of transmission by which the revelation of God’s truth in the Scriptures has come down to us. It always starts with God Himself, truth incarnate, Jesus Christ. As Paul said in **Galatians 1:11-12**, “*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*”<sup>12</sup> *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came*

*through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Having received it, he now says he has passed it on to Timothy in *the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses*. Timothy must now teach and train *faithful men*, by teaching the gospel to these reliable men from among his people at Ephesus who are qualified to become links in the chain. We see similar thoughts in **Revelation 1:1-2**, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.*” The word of truth comes from God through Christ to the Apostles in these cases, who in turn wrote it down for the benefit of the church. *Faithful men* are men qualified to *teach others also*. This fact has been stressed in **1 Timothy 3:2** in the qualifications for Elders and he will mention it again in **2:24**. Why is this so important? In the words of Peter Williams, “Because a man may have other gifts of leadership in the church, but if he does not have the ability to expound the doctrines of Scripture, and be able to communicate those truths in a way people can understand, then he has no place in the preaching ministry. Sadly, this piece of apostolic counsel is all too often ignored in the church today, and there are men in the pastoral office who see themselves first and foremost, not as preachers, but as administrators, counsellors, and social engineers.” We need to be reminded that the primary duty of the pastor is to preach and teach the Word and we are all to learn it and pass it on as well to those in our circle of influence.

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me live with an understanding of how important it is to hear the Word of truth received from the preaching and teaching ministry of the local church. Thank You that we can trace sound teaching from Scripture back to Jesus.*

**THURSDAY – 2 Timothy 2:3:** <sup>3</sup>“*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*” The next Metaphor of the Christian life which we see after **Steward** is that of **Soldier**. I mentioned earlier that these metaphors are first given to the Christian minister but they are also applicable to all of us as believers whatever position we find ourselves in. We are all **Stewards** of God’s gifts of grace to us and most importantly of the gift of the Gospel and truth He has given us. The Minister as well as all of us are also now called to be **Soldiers**. In summary of these next two verses we could say that the call to Timothy is to be a dedicated **Soldier**, first in dedication to suffer and then to concentrate and be focused. The picture of every individual as a soldier and of life being as a war or campaign is one which both the Romans and the Greeks knew well. Even those outside of Scripture even see life like this. The Roman Philosopher Seneca said, “To live, is to be a soldier” and the Greek Philosopher Epictetus said, “The life of every man is a kind of campaign, and a campaign which is long and varied”. Scripture here uses this picture as it applies it to Christians in general and leaders and servants of the Church in particular. In **1 Timothy 1:18** Paul calls Timothy to “*wage a good warfare*”. He calls many in Scripture, “*fellow soldiers*” (Archippus - **Philemon 2**). He calls Epaphroditus, “*my fellow soldier*” (**Philippians 2:25**). Clearly, in a soldier’s life Paul saw a picture of the Christian life. The first quality of a soldier Paul listed is *endure hardship*.

Learn to suffer well Christian; this is Scripture’s call. Jesus knew it and taught it (**Mark 8:27-38**). Soldiers are conditioned to suffer and sacrifice and Christians must always be ready to sacrifice themselves, their wishes and their fortunes for God and others. The *good soldier of Jesus Christ* is as Jesus Himself taught, a loyal Soldier. William Barclay, from his *New Daily Study Bible* comments, “Soldiers are conditioned to *loyalty*. When a Roman soldier joined the army, he took the *sacramentum*, the oath of loyalty to his emperor. A conversation was reported between the French commander Marshal Foch and an officer in the First World War. ‘You must not retire,’ said Foch, ‘you must hold on at all costs.’ ‘Then,’ said the officer aghast, ‘that means we must all die.’ And Foch answered: ‘Precisely!’ The supreme virtue of all soldiers is that they are faithful even to death. Christians too must be loyal to Jesus Christ, through all the chances and the changes of life, even down to the gates of death.” The Christian life is not safe or easy but rather often a life of hardship, risk and suffering. These things are part and parcel of a soldier’s calling. As the early church father Tertullian put it in his *Address to Martyrs*: “No soldier comes to the war surrounded by luxuries, nor goes into action from a comfortable bedroom, but from the makeshift and narrow tent, where every kind of hardness and severity and unpleasantness is to be found.” Similarly, the Christian should not expect an easy time. If he is loyal to the gospel, he is sure to experience opposition and ridicule. He must ‘share in suffering’ with his comrades-in-arms. Thankfully, we are equipped with armor for the war (**Ephesians 6:11**).

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, “To this I was called, because Christ suffered for me, leaving me an example, that I should follow in his steps.” 1 Peter 2:21.*

**FRIDAY – 2 Timothy 2:4:** <sup>4</sup>“*No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*” Finally we see the soldier is to be dedicated to focus and concentrate at the task at hand and not *entangled with the affairs of this life*. With his whole heart a soldier must focus on the war not a business on the side, or anything else that would absorb his interests. These things will draw him in and pull him from the battle. The soldier has one purpose; namely, *please him who enlisted him*. This task of Timothy’s in the words of the hymn writer, “demands his soul, his life, his all.” The soldier must devote himself completely to his Lord who “enlisted” and qualified him for his task. The Roman code of Theodosius said: “We forbid men engaged on military service to engage in civilian occupations.” A soldier is a soldier and nothing else; Christians must concentrate on their Christianity. There is so much more that we’ll discuss on this issue this Lord’s Day and the application of this verse is wider than to merely pastors. Every Christian is in some degree a soldier of Jesus and can’t avoid the conflict. *Good soldiers of Jesus Christ* must be dedicated to the battle, committed to a life of discipline and suffering, avoiding whatever may “entangle” us and so distract us from it.

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, please help me hear and obey these difficult words. Give me strength and fortitude to engage the battle. Give me dedication to both suffer and live focused to please You.*