

~2 Timothy~

Lesson 6 – The Discipline of the Word of Truth

Last week we learned about the importance of teaching the Word of Truth. To keep the Word pure without compromise. To guard it and hold fast the pure words of Jesus Christ

- Today we will be studying 2 Timothy 2:3-7 that will continue from what we learned last week.
 - In these verses, Paul gives us 3 examples of faithfulness and discipline
 - 1) **Soldier** 2) **Athlete** 3) **Farmer** – Lets read our text today- **2 Timothy 2:3-7**
- These three metaphors in our text today are examples of the commitment Paul was entrusting Timothy with.
 - To hold fast the pure Word of Truth and being diligent and disciplined to maintain the excellence of the Words of Jesus Christ unto the end even in suffering evil affliction and persecution.

SOLDIER

2 Timothy 2:3-4 †³ You therefore must endure hardship † as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. †⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, † that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

† *You therefore must endure hardship...*

- “therefore” because you are holding fast and guarding the pure Words of Truth and committing these Words to faithful men so that they can teach others...
- **You must endure hardship** – kakopatheo, κακοπαθέω, imperative command saying, “you must suffer evil afflictions”
 - Paul gives Timothy this command three times in this epistle, and all 3 are imperatives
 - 1:8- **you** (must) share with me in the sufferings, sugkakopatheo, συγκακοπαθέω,
 - 2:3- **you must** endure hardship, kakopatheo, κακοπαθέω
 - 4:5- **you** (must) endure afflictions, kakopatheo, κακοπαθέω
- This is not optional. If you live Godly and hold fast and teach the pure Word of God, you will, kakopatheo, κακοπαθέω, suffer evil afflictions, 2 Tim 3:12
 - but rejoice! For Great is your reward in heaven, Matt 5:11-12; Count it all joy, James 1:2-3; We glory in tribulations, Rom 5:3-4; In this we greatly rejoice, 1 Pet 1:6-7
 - Why? Because we lay hold of eternal life, 1 Tim 6:12;
 - Because our dokimion, δοκίμιον, is strengthened when it is tested, James 1:3
 - Because we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name, Acts 5:41
 - Because we esteem that to suffer reproach for Jesus Christ is worth more than all the treasure in the world, Heb 11:26
 - Knowing that there are rewards laid up for the faithful in heaven, Phil 3:11-14; 2 Tim 2:11-12; 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Cor 9:25; Col 1:5; 1 Pet 1:4
- I want to read you one of my favorite chapters in the Bible, **John 17:6-26**
- This is the purpose behind these 3 examples,
 - Pursuing Jesus unto everlasting life and a oneness in Him
 - This is why we are willing and joyful to suffer reproach for His sake so that the world might believe, Jn 17:21

†... *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

- To serve Christ as a good soldier requires commitment, single-minded devotion and discipline. This is a lifetime walk of sanctification and commitment to His Word and gospel.
 - Having a no compromise mindset, rightly handling His Word, keeping it pure, all to the glory of God and to please our commander, Jesus Christ.

- This is why Paul chose the example of a soldier. They are dedicated, and have unwavering discipline
 - A good soldier is not part time, but rather one who lives and breathes being a soldier, 24/7. Roman soldiers had no other duty than to fight the fight. This was their occupation.
 - The same is for Christian soldiers.
 - As Christians soldiers, we are fighting in a war, but who is the enemy?
 - **2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Ephesians 6:10–12; 1 Timothy 6:12**
 - This is a good soldier, he who fights the good fight of faith with the Word of God

†... ⁴ *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life,*

- Paul continues telling us what a good soldier looks like.
 - We are in the world, but not of the world, John 17:16.
- We are in the world, but we do not entangle ourselves with the world. We preach the gospel to sinners, but we do not yoke ourselves with their way of life.
 - The Word of Truth sanctifies us and separates us from the world even though we are in the world- ambassadors for Christ, citizens of heaven.
- The word “entangle”- is empleko, ἐμπλέκω, to intertwine, to tangle. This comes from the root word, pleko, πλέκω, to braid. This is a combination of ἐν + πλέκω,
 - empleko, ἐμπλέκω, is not just a nice even braid; it is an intertwined mess with knots and tangles
 - This is how our life is when we get entangled in the world.
- We have to be in the world to proclaim the gospel to the world. But we do not entangle ourselves with the world. We do not braid and intertwine ourselves with the affairs of this life.
 - This doesn’t even have to be sin. When we think of entangling ourselves with this world, we immediately think of being engaged in the sin of the world.
 - This does include that, but it is not limited to it. This compares to the sower sows the word among thorns. The cares of this life choke the word, Mk 4:18-19
- 2 Tim 2:4 changed my life about 1-1/2 ago. I had intertwined myself into the affairs of this life. It wasn’t that the things I was doing were sinful. But they were keeping me from the calling that God had for me.
 - Through this verse, God helped me rearrange my life and now I am standing in front of you teaching you the Word of Truth
- This is what Paul is saying in this verse. Be a good soldier, who is dedicated, single-minded and unwavering in his discipline and do not entangled yourself in the affairs of this life

†... *so that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

- We do this all to the glory of God. To proclaim His Truth.
- Our focus must be on pleasing Jesus Christ, the one who enlisted us.
 - If we start to please men rather than God, this begins a spiritual decline and will result in compromising the Gospel.
 - This will then distort the Truth and lead to a falling away as we have seen in the church of Ephesus.
 - In all things we must put Christ first place and please Him, even when this results in persecution.
 - This was Paul’s mindset. If he wanted to please men, he would have stayed a Pharisee, Gal 1:9-10

ATHLETE

2 Timothy 2:5 †And also if anyone competes in athletics, †he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

† *And also if anyone competes in athletics,...*

- Paul uses the example of the athlete to illustrate the importance of complete devotion, self-discipline and stamina in the Christian life.
 - It was a common thing for Paul to use the metaphor of an athlete to portray the Christian life, 2 Tim 4:7- I have finished the race; Heb 12:1-Let us run the race; Phil 3:14- I press toward the prize;
- The phrase “*competes in athletics*” is one word- althleo, ἀθλέω- used twice in this verse and nowhere else in the Bible. It means to contend, to strive, to be a champion in public games.
 - It portrays combat or a struggle and conflict.
 - Paul uses a similar word in Phil 1:27, sunathleo, συναθλέω, *striving together for the faith of the gospel*.
- Just like the single-minded devotion and discipline of a soldier Paul now likens this to an athlete.
 - Running the race, striving for the faith of the gospel, all the while staying focused on Jesus. Being empowered by God to finish the race. This is what carries us through the suffering.

† *...he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

- Paul makes a specific reference to the purpose of why we run the race; it is to be crowned, to receive a prize. The prize of the upward call, Phil 3:14
 - In **1 Corinthians 9:24–27**, Paul had in mind the Isthmian games that were held in Corinth every two years. The crown, stephanos, στέφανος, for the winner was a perishable crown made of celery.
 - Our prize as the imperishable crown, stephanos, στέφανος. This is a crown given according to our faithfulness, 1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:7; 1 Peter 5:4; James 1:12; Rev 2:10;
- The athlete will not receive a crown unless he competes “*according to the rules*”
 - There were special rules that the Greeks had to follow to even enter the Isthmian Games, and if they didn’t do this, they were disqualified¹.
 - Paul’s statement. “*according to the rules*” probably had these in view
 - In **1 Cor 9:27** he says he disciplines himself lest he himself becomes disqualified, adokimos, ἀδόκιμος, un-approved as genuine, Titus 1:16; Rom 1:28; 2 Tim 3:8
- It is an everyday struggle and choice to deny the flesh and live a sanctified life and this can only be done through the power of God, but we have to deny ourselves, **Matt 16:24-27**
 - Paul is striving toward the eternal rewards of faithfulness
 - Paul was so intent on earnestly seeking Jesus. He wanted to obtain everything Jesus had to offer. Not for selfish gain, but to please God and have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe.
 - He is aiming for the prize. He wants to win the race and obtain Jesus as his reward.
- These are the “*rules*” to run the race of Christianity and receive the reward: **discipline and faithfulness**
- single-minded devotion, discipline, a separation from the world (sanctification), enduring sufferings, and holding and keeping the pure words of Jesus Christ, and rightly handling the Word of Truth, 2 Tim 2:15-18; 1 Tim 1:3-4, 6:3-5, 4:7-8; 1 Jn 2:15-17, 3:13; Jam 1:27, 4:4; 1 Pet 4:12; 2 Pet 1:4

¹ Archaeologist Oscar Broneer, “The Apostle Paul and the Isthmian Games,” in Biblical Archaeologist 25 (1961), 2-31

FARMER

2 Timothy 2:6 †The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

† *The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.*

- So far in these examples we have seen attributes of commitment, single-mindedness, and self-control and discipline. These describe both the soldier and the athlete, and we can also apply these to the hardworking farmer.
 - This word “**hardworking**” is a present participle of kopiao, κοπιᾶω, to labor or toil, **1 Tim 4:10, 5:17**;
 - The idea of a farmer, and the principle of sowing and reaping is depicted throughout the entire NT. It is an excellent metaphor to the Christian walk.
 - The word farmer is georgos, γεωργός. The farmer shows the characteristics of commitment and discipline like the other examples, but in addition, a characteristic of the farmer is love and patience, James 5:7-11; John 15:1, 9-10;
 - The farmer sows the Word in discipline, love and patience, Mark 4:14.
 - Those who are teaching and preaching the Word of Truth are sowing Words of eternal life into the hearts of those who receive them.
 - Teaching and preaching the Word of God is the entire focal point to this epistle
 - And those who teach the Word are being continually taught by His Word, **John 8:28-32**
 - Look at the progression- The Father taught Jesus, Jn 8:28, Jesus taught the Apostles, Jn 8:31, and His Word, the logos, λόγος, the Truth teaches us, Jn 17:20; Psalm 25:4-5
 - Now take this thought and apply it to our text, **2 Tim 2:6**
- *The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.*
 - The hardworking farmer, the sower of the Word, the teacher of the Word is like a man sitting at the fountain of God’s logos, λόγος, His Word, and he is the first to partake of His life-giving Words, these Words bear fruit, the teacher shares in this fruit and then he teaches it to others.
 - Every week when I am studying and preparing for our lesson, I am learning from the Word of Life and then sowing this Life to you and then, in turn, I reap more Words of eternal life and as long as I abide in the Word, this cycle continues.
 - Being the first to partake of the crops is the reward of being tapped into the source of life and being first to partake in the fruit of God’s Word

2 Timothy 2:7 †Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

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- **Consider**- noeo, νοέω, imperative command to understand and perceive
- Paul gives Timothy this command, but then follows with encouragement that God is with him.
 - He says, “I command you to understand what I am telling you and (by the way) the Lord will give you understanding in all (that I am telling you)”
 - We cannot do this by our own strength and power, but only through the power of God.
 - 2 Tim 1:8- share with me in the sufferings...“according to the power of God
 - 2 Tim 1:14- keep what was committed to you... “by the Holy Spirit”
 - 2 Tim 2:1- Be strong... “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”
- In all 3 examples that we just went through, Jesus is the focus. He is the one we please. He is our treasure, our reward, our prize and He is the source of everlasting life. We must always keep Him as first place. He must always be the reason in everything we do.

- If we flash forward to the end of the first century, we see that Timothy got things under control in Ephesus and he did what Paul told him, **Revelation 2:1-3**.
 - Jesus writes to the church of Ephesus and commends them of their hardwork, their perseverance through suffering, and their ability to expel the false teachers.
 - They did everything Paul was telling them
- NEVERTHELESS- **Revelation 2:4**. They left their first love. They did not keep Jesus as their main focus
 - Not intentionally. They were obviously diligent, but they didn't maintain Jesus as the prize
 - This is the entire thrust of these 3 examples in 2 Timothy-
 - we must be diligent and disciplined in our Christian life, but we cannot lose focus of Jesus
 - In all things, we must pursue Jesus unto everlasting life because He is our Lord, He is our prize, He is our reward.

In Summary...

- The **soldier** must be committed with a single-mindedness to endure the sufferings and persecution for the Word's sake so that he might please Jesus;
- The **athlete** must have the self-control and commitment to run the race according to the rules of discipline and faithfulness, keeping his eye on the everlasting prize of our oneness with Jesus Christ;
- The **hardworking farmer**, must have the discipline to sow the pure Words of God in love, patience and diligence, and in turn, be filled with the life-giving Words of the Master Himself.

These images are meant to give us hope that one day we might hear the words,
“well done good and faithful servant.
enter into the joy of the Lord”