

Soldiering for Souls

June 21, 2015 ~ 2 Timothy 3.16-17, 14-15, 2.24-26, 2.3-4

Soldiering as a Way of Life

- ❖ Paul used the military metaphor repeatedly to explain Christianity
 - ❖ Why? / Because it described his life well
 - ❖ We will use the military metaphor to express 4 points today
 - **Weapons / Training / Conduct / Endurance**
 - Our 4 portions of text roughly map to these points
- ❖ This sermon is selectively expository / Usually messages are topical or expository
 - ❖ This means I'll be selective in what I choose to emphasize and draw out
 - ❖ This is not typical / It is not always wise
 - ❖ Many are selective to avoid talking about topics that may be controversial
 - ❖ I want to speak to a broader topic that can typically be covered

1. Weapons

- ❖ **Read 2 Timothy 3.16-17**
 - ❖ **v16 ~ Scripture is “God breathed”**
 - There are millions of books, tens of millions, but there is only one Bible
 - This is God's book / It contains history, poetry, prophecy, and advice
 - It can be exciting, informative, uplifting, profound
 - Yet it can also be boring, confusing and obtuse
 - If you've not yet read through it, many times, then you are a child
 - If you lack intimacy with God, you're not reading His Word in wee hours
 - God comes to us, He meets with us, as we pore over His Word
 - “**He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.**” (Heb 11.6)
 - We diligently seek Him through His Word
- ❖ **v17 ~ “complete, thoroughly equipped”**
 - ❖ We need only the Word of God to be complete, thoroughly equipped
 - ❖ We don't need a Doctorate in Philosophy, Law, Psychology or Medicine
 - ❖ **III: Jim Eliot ~ Asked about degree ~ A.U.G degree (2 Tim 2.15)**
- ❖ **Ephesians 6** describes the Christian's armor
 - ❖ **v14-17** ~ Belt, Breastplate, Shoes, Shield, Helmet / then the Sword
 - ❖ The sword is the only offensive weapon God has given us
- ❖ **“Is wearing armor easy?” / “Is swinging a sword easy?”**
 - ❖ No... Armor is heavy and uncomfortable / Swinging a sword wears us out

Xition: That's why we move on to training . . .

2. Training

❖ Read 2 Timothy 3.14-15

- ❖ v14 ~ “knowing from whom you have learned”
- ❖ Timothy learned the truth through Lois (*grandma*) and Eunice (*mother*)
- ❖ Timothy also learned the faith from Paul
- ❖ But the Scriptures are only able to make us wise for salvation
 - ❖ Scripture may make the man of God complete .. for every good work
 - ❖ Both are conditional upon our embracing the Word and mastering it
- ❖ Paul says Timothy “must continue” (v14)
 - ❖ Soldiers cannot rest and relax whenever they want
 - ❖ Soldiers must be vigilant and watchful
 - ❖ We are never relieved of active duty ~ We never have an extended leave
 - ❖ The closest we come is when we gather here together as God’s people
 - God commanded the Israelites to gather together for periodic feasts
 - And He said that He would protect their land at those times
 - I believe the same is true of our homes as we meet here
 - ❖ The enemy never rests ~ We do so only to our potential destruction
 - **III: Terminator** ~ “Listen, and understand. That terminator is out there. It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. It doesn't feel pity, or remorse, or fear. And it absolutely will not stop, ever, until you are dead.”

3. Conduct

❖ **III: Good Conduct ribbon** (*after 3 years without serious misconduct :-)*)

❖ Read 2 Timothy 2.24-26

- ❖ v24 ~ “must not quarrel, but be gentle to all”
- ❖ Being a soldier (*or policeman*) does not give us the right to be a jerk
- ❖ We exist as an independent nation because of misconduct of English soldiers
 - The Boston Massacre escalated from the wounded pride of a British soldier
 - That led to greater hostilities, culminating in raid upon Lexington & Concord
- ❖ As a Christian believer you are first and foremost a soldier...
 - ❖ “As a soldier in God’s Army are you: ”
 - Gentle to all? ~ Able to teach? ~ Patient and humble when opposed?
- ❖ **III: Commentary** - “affable, easy to speak to, approachable, not irritable, intolerant, sarcastic, or scornful, not even toward those who err. He must try to win them.”
 - ❖ “Why ought we to be these things?”
 - Because our patience & gentleness may result in God granting those that oppose us leading to faith.
- ❖ “Who is our enemy on this earth?”

- ✧ Is it unbelievers, Muslims, liberals, BATF or IRS, policemen, an intrusive state?
- ✧ No. I don't believe Paul regarded any of these as his enemy
- ❖ "Who did Paul say his -and our- war is with?"
 - ✧ "[W]e do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6.12)
- ❖ "How does Paul describe those we're to be gentle towards?"
 - ✧ v25 ~ "those who are in opposition"
 - ✧ v26 ~ "captives .. of the devil to do his will"
- ❖ It is critical in war to know who the enemy is . . .
 - ✧ That is not always clear . . .
- ❖ When we treat unbelievers as our enemies, we err
 - ✧ They are captives of Satan, performing his will on this earth
 - ✧ Our treating them as enemies limits our ability to rescue them
 - ✧ **III: Rescuing drowning person** - difficult
 - ✧ **III: Benji hit by car** - injured and scared, nipped at me ~ throwing rocks

4. Endurance

- ❖ **Read 2 Timothy 2.3-4**
 - ✧ v3 ~ "you must endure hardship as a good soldier"
 - ✧ "What makes for a 'good' soldier?"
 - Soldiers must fight, they must shoot
 - But fighting and shooting do not occur every day
 - A few days of combat is often followed by weeks of a lack of it
 - **III: WWI quote** - "months of boredom punctuated by moments of terror"
 - ✧ "What makes for a good soldier when not fighting?"
 - One who doesn't complain .. that endures .. that remains focused
 - They're often marching, marching, marching
 - They're often drilling, drilling, drilling
 - "Hurry up and wait", "Hurry up and wait", "Hurry up and wait"
 - ✧ "Do you handle such tedium well?"
 - "Ought you handle it well, when God commands us to?"
- ❖ I mentioned Jim Elliot earlier / Martyred by the Auca Indians January 1956
 - ✧ Jim died at the age of 28 / Elizabeth Eliot died at the age of 88 last Monday
 - ✧ Met in 1947 at college / Married 6 years later in 1953 / Married only 2.5 years
- ❖ Audio tape of talk she gave to college students back in the early 80's
 - ✧ "I want to tell you a little bit about that missionary Jim Elliot. I knew him when he was a college student. As far as we women could see, he was unattainable — handsome,

popular, champion wrestler, president of the Foreign Missions Fellowship, honor student, campus clown — but alas, a woman hater. That’s what we thought.

- ✧ But we were way off. Jim Elliot was no woman hater. He had found out when he was in high school that he could spend an awful lot of time and money on girls. They were very attractive and very interesting and very expensive.
- ✧ I found out how resolute Jim was in his decision when the college year books came out. We girls would hope forlornly that the man we had our eye on might put something besides his name in the book—something sweet. It was with great trepidation that I presented my book to Jim Elliot, asking for his autograph; and very fast with his flowing, rapid hand, he wrote, “**Jim Elliot, 2 Timothy 2:4.**”
- ✧ How long do you think it took me to get back to the dormitory and get my Bible to look up that verse? I was desperately hoping for a cryptic message. But what it said was not cryptic at all. It said, “**A soldier on active service will not let himself be involved in civilian affairs. He must be wholly at his commanding officer’s disposal.**”
- ✧ They did marry / But 6 long years later after they’d each entered mission field

Soldiering

- ❖ “**Are you a good soldier?**”
 - ✧ Do you train - or do you complain? Do you wear armor? Can you wield a sword?
- ❖ “**Are you a good soldier?**”
 - ✧ Do you conduct yourself well? Are you gentle? Do you strive to save captives?
- ❖ “**Are you a good soldier?**”
 - ✧ Do you endure hardships well?
- ❖ We are soldiers . . . But are we good soldiers?

- We all know captives that we want to see rescued
- Are you doing your part to that end? Do you see them as captives - not enemies?
- Do you patiently, humbly, correct those that oppose you?
- Pray God that we all do so...
- And that He grants them repentance leading to salvation

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.
Amen ***pause*** Go in peace . . .