

Sermon Title: Training for Godliness Requires Singlemindedness

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 2:3-4

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to the practice of singlemindedness in the devotion to Christian duty.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 concepts to be practiced by a good Christian Soldier.

Introduction: The metaphors Paul uses are meant to encourage commitment, self-control, discipline, and preparedness. The only way a Christian can fulfill the faithful mission handed down to them by their Commander and Chief Jesus Christ, is by practicing these principles. This section of Scripture speaks to the single-minded devotion of a Soldier, which the strengthening of Christ is designed to produce.

- I. The **Fate** of a Christian Soldier that requires singlemindedness. V.3
- II. The **Fancy** of a Christian Soldier that results in singlemindedness. V.4a
- III. The **Focus** of a Christian Soldier that reflects singlemindedness. V.4b

I. The Fate of a Christian Soldier that requires singlemindedness. V.3

Paul wants to challenge leaders and those that follow them with single-minded devotion that reflects the Christian life in the face of opposition.

Constant training is required. This was the secret of Roman legions success. They allowed no truce from their military training. The historian Josephus reports: “Each soldier tests his strength and courage every day; thus battles are neither new nor difficult to them.” Accustomed to keeping their places, disorder never arises, fear never troubles their minds, fatigue never exhausts their bodies. They are certain to conquer, because they are certain to find enemies unequal to them and one may say without fear of mistake that their exercises (training) are battles without bloodshed and their battles are bloody exercises. (127) [**David J. Williams “Paul’s Metaphors: Their Context and Character, p.223**]

If the training was hard so was the discipline that enforced it. For example, a good soldier who failed to keep his place in the line or allowed his weapons to fall into the hands of the enemy [**Romans 6:13-14** *And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*] condemned to the (fustuarium) that is, to be set upon by his colleagues with cudgels and stones. The victim was usually stoned and if he survived he was discharged. If it was a whole legion, every 10th man was sentenced to the (fustuarium). [**Ibid. 223**]

II. The Fancy of a Christian Soldier that results in singlemindedness. V.4a

When Paul experienced a disciplinary problem with certain members of the church of Thessalonica, he remarked that they had not (as “soldiers of Christ”) held their place in the line of battle. A modern day metaphor would have called them “deserters.” The problem is they were idle, actually willfully refusing to serve. Paul writes of these dangers in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

- A. The Good Soldier is **engaged** in warfare.
- B. The Good Soldier is not **entangled** in civilian affairs of life.

G. R. Watson notes, Theoretically, an army may be more efficient if its members are celibate and wedded only to the idea of training and discipline. There is no heart searching when a unit is suddenly posted from one end of the empire to another, there is no attached civilian population to defend and to take into account in the setting and construction of camps and forts, therefore the soldiers only ties are to the army in which he serves. [**Ibid. 223**]

“Information dating from the early history of the empire states that, “a soldier should remain unmarried for the duration of military service. A man who was married at the time of enlistment was expected to sever the relationship, also a soldier was not permitted to moonlight by conducting business on the side.” Do we have this type of single-minded devotion to please and serve Christ?

Matthew 6:24-34; Luke 14; 1 Corinthians 7:14-24; 1 Corinthians 7:26-33

Philippians 2:25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; **Philemon 2** to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that *is* in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. **17** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Philippians 3:12-16 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. **13** Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. **16** Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

III. The **Focus** of a Christian Soldier that reflects singlemindedness. V.4b

Romans 6:10-12 For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. **11** Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. **12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.