

Soldier On

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[0:00] My message just now is Soldier On.! It's talking about the Christian life as being as likened to a soldier going into battle. And we read that in 2 Timothy 2 verse 3 where Paul writes to Timothy,!

So I put to you some things that this verse highlights to us as soldiers. Firstly, check your endurance. Some people obsess, is power going to win or the crowds or whatever it be? I'll tell you who's going to win, Jesus our Lord is going to win. And he already has won. And that's what matters more than any game of sport, that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to win in the ultimate. What does Paul say? Does he say enjoy softness as a sloppy soldier of Jesus Christ? No, he says endure hardness. Now the US Marines describe endurance in this way.

They define it in this way. They say it's the mental and physical stamina measured by the ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress and hardship. Paul didn't say if hardness comes, endure it.

[1:25] He just says endure hardness. There's no ifs about it. Hard times are going to come in the life of every believer. And endurance is a quality that's called for in all of us as Christian soldiers.

So be a loyal soldier. Enjoy your share of suffering. You have been chosen to serve in the glorious army of God, in the spiritual army that we are.

And being a good soldier of Jesus Christ will mean that your endurance will be tested. Being a Christian is not a Sunday picnic. For you it could mean persecution. As Paul told Timothy 2 Timothy 3 verse 12.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived.

Friends there's need for endurance. Be enduring. The US Marines describe endurance for the soldier facing combat as this. Killing the enemy that is trying to kill you is only half the battle.

[2:26] Endurance is the other half. So the individual Marine enduring discomfort and fatigue and the other hazards and stresses of combat is what must be done. So that he can succeed in combat.

The quote goes on. The individual Marine must be physically strong and capable of perseverance. He or she must know that fatigue causes the behaviors that we have described.

The loss of concern for survival. The erosion of will to fight. And a general apathy. These must be resisted with self-discipline. And the reservoir of strength that is deep within every Marine.

When necessary we can and will endure as Marines have done before. And that's just talking about an earthly soldier. But we are really spiritual soldiers.

And God encourages us to endure. And so being encouraged in this. It is worth the fight and the test. And there is a reward for the Christian soldiers. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy verse 12.

[3:27] He says, If we suffer we shall also reign with him. Many Christians want softness and ease and comfort. But we are meant to be a military force.

We are at war after all. As believers we will face offenses. Friendly fire at times. Malicious talk. Evil speaking. Hurts. Attacks.

It's been said it takes the storm to prove the real shelter. When the battle rages a soldier's loyalty will be tested. So friends condition yourself to the toughness.

Let us get ready for all the possible attacks of the enemy. For the warfare. For the fighting in the trenches. For the hand to hand combat. Maybe we need a recruit camp experience.

Boot camp involves the hard slog. Tough training. Fatigue. Discomfort. Wariness. It means developing fitness and obedience. Cooperation.

[4:24] And motivation. Soldiers at boot camp develop attitude change. Resolve. And stamina. And a soldier. Even a soldier in training.

Undergoes at times the rigour.

The severity. The harshness. The hardships. And the discipline. So. Let us enter into if you like that training camp. Let us overcome the obstacle course.

Let us learn. How to get proper training. Learn how to use our spiritual weapons. Take part in the daily strain and challenges. So that you can prepare. For the day of battle.

The training will make you tough and hard. In mind and body. Ready. For the battle front. As we face the enemy of our soul. And spiritual forces of wickedness.

That are arrayed against us. Let us get ready. For the battle front. Ready. For the mud holes.

Ready for sleeping in the dirt. Effort be. And the church is a training centre. That is what we are meant to be.

[5:21] It is a training centre. It is meant to be challenging and demanding. A place where we can learn together. And if we are in war. It means bloodshed. It means casualties.

It is not something light. It means the savage or dangerous. The savage ordeal. The intense danger. Of combat. Of conflict. Of battle. Of being under fire. And friends spiritually so.

This is true. For we that are Christian soldiers. So be willing. To endure hardness. It has been said that. The richest chords require. Some black keys. Also it has been said.

It is the roughness of the grindstone. That sharpens the axe. It is the storm. That hardens the fibre. Of the oak. It is the work day. And not the holiday.

That makes the muscle. So hardness for you could mean discipline. And discipline is not pleasant. We cannot be slack about keeping ranks. In God's army. It has been said that.

[6:19] The rigidly trained soldier. May regard the exercises as unkind. And unnecessary. But on the battlefield. He will know the reason. For his pains. In training.

The drill sergeant. Who eases up on training recruits. Will send them to their deaths. And endanger the nation. They fight to preserve. The soldier who is unwilling to draw blood. Is no better than a traitor.

These are hard facts. We must fulfill our task as a soldier. So let us be fighting Christians. Armed and dangerous. To be a good soldier. Of Jesus Christ. Check.

Number one. Your endurance. And check. Secondly. Your entanglements. It reads further. That no man that warth. Entangle himself. With the affairs.

Of this life. So avoid entanglements. Don't get entangled. In civilian pursuits. In other words.

Secular business. The affairs of this life. The world's business. Let not that consume you.

[7:16] As Wesley said. Anything that cools my love for Christ. Is the world. As someone has put it. Living without God's plan for our life. Is like sewing with a needle. Without a thread. Or writing one's biography. With a pen empty of ink.

Paul says that the fighting man. Realizes there's a war on. And he urges him. Don't get distracted from the fight. Don't get tangled up. With the business of this life. Beware of trivial pursuits. Put your life on the line for the cause. Booth says this.

You must do it. You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough.

You've had pleasant feelings. Pleasant songs. Pleasant meetings. Pleasant prospects. There's been much of human happiness. Much clapping of hands. And shouting of praises.

Very much of heaven on earth. The quote goes on. And tell him you are prepared. As much as necessary. To turn your back. To turn your back. To turn your back. To turn your back. To turn your back.

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[8:11] To turn your back. To turn your back. To turn your back. and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes. Whatever it may cost you, you must do it.

With the light that is now broken upon your mind, and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative.

To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.

So said General William Booth. Here's another quote. The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to say just where the hands will stop at late or early hour.

Now is the only time we own to do his precious will. Do not wait until tomorrow, for the clock may then be still. Friends, the Christian soldier will loosen himself from the entanglement.

[9:16] So be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Check your endurance, check your entanglements, and thirdly, check your enlistment. The fighting man, the real soldier, is on active duty.

They have made an absolute commitment, an unswerving allegiance. And as a believer, the Christian soldier has a like solemn obligation, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

An enlisted man is at the disposal of his country. As someone put it, when you sign up for service in the U.S. Army, you become the property of the United States government.

In a similar way, when you accept Christ as your personal saviour, you sign a contract that states you belong to God. So honour your obligations to aim to please your commanding officer, to please the one who has enlisted you.

Our desire is to please him. To please him, not ourselves. Here's another quote about a wartime lifestyle. When a nation is at war, the lifestyle of that nation is affected.

[10:24] Men give up their jobs to fight for their nation. They spend hours in preparation and training. Funds are drawn from the economy to aid in the battle. Residents are alert to invasion.

And extra guards are posted at national borders. The quote goes on. In the spiritual world, many believers are totally unaware of the warfare raging around them, and have not adopted a wartime lifestyle.

Church fellowships plan programs and parties, but they do not have a battle plan. They live in luxury and ease, while their enemy is claiming the souls of unnumbered men and women without Jesus Christ.

Members of the fellowship are discouraged, depressed, and living in fleshly sins. They are victims of a war they do not even know exists. End quote. How true.

How slack we can be. As a war rages madly all around about us, and we care little, it seems, for the obligation that we have. As men and women enlisted in the mighty army of God.

[11:27] The U.S. Marines say recruit training is dedicated to preparing and conditioning young recruits mentally, physically, and emotionally to meet the experience of combat.

It's designed to instill the skills, knowledge, discipline, and self-confidence to make them worthy of recognition as Marines. To develop a sense of brotherhood, patriotism, loyalty, interdependence, and determination to be victorious.

To imbue them with the instinct of obedience. But most of all, it develops in them a sense of commitment. I realize these are worldly quotes, but there's a like application I put to you of these spiritual truths that apply to us as Christian soldiers.

Many Christians are ill-equipped for battle. They're not prepared. They're not disciplined. They're not devoted and strong. They're not ready for combat. Brothers and sisters, we need to repent. To be willing to go back to basic training. And prepare for the battle ahead. You've possibly heard me quote this quote that follows before. There's a lot of truth here.

[12:35] Let me read it to you. It's called a soldier in the army of God. I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct.

Faith, prayer, and the word are my weapons of warfare. I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this army. But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out.

I am faithful, reliable, capable, and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there. If he needs me in Sunday school to teach children, work with the youth, help adults, or just sit and learn, he can use

