

Don't Quit

2 Timothy 2:1-13

Introduction

- A. The Christian life is a war
 - 1. Ephesians 6:12—“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (ESV)
 - 2. Too often today as Christians we are soft. Our faith is about safety, not risk. We get upset when things don't go well for us or people say evil things about us. But we are at war! Soldiers never lay down their weapons in the middle of the battle assuming the war is over. Neither can we ever assume that our spiritual battles are over. We are either perpetually at war or perpetually preparing for it. We can never stop watching and praying. Every hardship is an opportunity to glorify God and His gospel. It is ridiculous to think that our Christian life and service will cost us nothing.
 - 3. At the end of chapter 1, we read about some of the casualties of that war (2 Timothy 1:15)
- B. Timothy is being instructed NOT to follow the prevailing mood of abandoning Paul and the gospel, but to draw strength from God's grace to continue his teaching ministry. Paul uses three of his favorite analogies to remind Timothy that
 - 1. The work will be strenuous
 - 2. The work will involve suffering
 - 3. The work will bring great reward

2 Timothy 2:1-13 (ESV)

¹ You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵ An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷ Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

I. The devoted soldier (2:3-4)

- A. What were some experiences Paul had with Roman soldiers?
- B. How would a soldier experience suffering while on duty?
- C. What does a soldier avoid while on duty?

II. The dedicated athlete (2:5)

- A. What experiences would people of this era had of athletic contests?
- B. What emphasis regarding sports does Paul mention here? Why?
- C. An athlete receives a fading moment of glory and a prize that will not last. But Timothy, and all of us who follow him, race for the most coveted of all prizes, the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Possibly Timothy, seeing Paul's suffering was tempted to avoid that by doing things his way rather than God's way. Paul is warning him to make disciples God's way or risk losing his reward.

III. The diligent farmer (2:6)

- A. What does Paul say the farmer is going to have to do if he is to reap a crop?
How is this a contrast to Proverbs 20:4 & 24:30-31?

- B. What do you think is the “crop” Paul is referring to here?

- C. How is Paul an example of this? (2:8-10)

IV Paul encourages Timothy to this challenging work by quoting a song (2:11-13)

“It behoves thee not to complain if thou endure hardness; but to complain, if thou does not endure hardness.” (John Chrysostom, 4th Century Church Father)

Conclusion/Application

1. Don't get so wrapped up in the business of this world that you are not engaged in the spiritual battle for souls. Be willing to sacrifice your comfort and pleasure for the sake of sharing the gospel.
2. If you evaluated your life, how you spend your time, money and energy, would it be obviously apparent that what is most important to you is the work of God and the sharing of the message of Jesus?