

2 Timothy 2:3 –13

vs 3 It's a war and we are soldiers in it. Hardship is a fact of warfare and how we endure it can win or lose a battle. God does plan good things for us – sometimes the best thing is hardship. Right now we are "in country" and though we may get R&R in prayer and times of recouping, our home is far away. 2Cor 10:3-5, Eph 6:11-18

vs 4 Roman soldiers were playing around trying to start side businesses and ventures which distracted them from the job at hand. The soldier the general loved to have in his command was the man whose heart was in his job knowing lives depended on it. Is that my attitude? Or do I play in both worlds? Lk 9:62 To get involved is to be entangled. Lk 8:14 Soldiers work as teams for certain goals. The individual is only as valuable as he is valuable to the group effort. If I fight my own soldiers I hurt the cause and myself. If I fight the wrong enemy I am useless to our cause in spite of much effort. All soldiers rejoice in the victory of any one soldier. Soldiers obey commands even when we do not understand because the General knows the plan and instructs us in our part.

vs 5 In the same way that a soldier is of little value if he has his mind on civilian affairs, so an athlete is of no value if he refuses to compete according to the rules. Paul compares the Christian life to a race. 1 Cor 9:23-27 Those who were refusing to stand with the Apostle because of fear of Rome were playing outside the rules, disqualifying themselves.

Mayans, Greeks, Romans would compete in games in which their lives would be forfeited, all for a perishable crown and the praise of men. We compete in an eternal life struggle for a crown that does not fade and the "well done" of God.

vs 6 Soldier, athlete, farmer... The farmer puts in a great effort, and the more he puts into it the more he receives. Do we work as if we were investing in an eternal harvest? Are we willing to plant and trust God? Do we know ultimately the fate of the crops are in His hand? Are we willing to go through the fields and pull weeds to encourage a greater harvest? If we have a bad year, do we sell the farm? 1Cor 3:6-8

vs 7 Think how these three occupations fit the Christian life. Is our life all about one thing or are we a part time Christian? Is our heart divided into a life for Jesus and a life for self? The Apostle tells us we need to reflect on this and let the Lord give us insight into it.

vs 8 A one line gospel. We just celebrated the resurrection. It means so much but we covered four things: Jesus conquered death, His sacrifice in my place

was accepted by God, I can die with Him and live in resurrection life in Him, Our physical bodies will be raised and we will have heavenly bodies. Descended from David, Jesus is the one that will reign forever, King of kings. All authority and power are his. That is Good News! Put those two unmatched qualities together and all that they imply and we have the best news you could ever hear. Ro 1:1-4

vs 9 Because of this news that Paul shared openly without fear he was suffering in chains. 1Pt 4:13-16 This wonderful news is a threat to all who will not submit, who love their own ways. BUT (I can see a sparkle in his eyes and smile on his face as he adds this) God's word is not chained. The Apostle was about one thing. He was a good soldier and though he is chained he is still fighting powerfully with the unchainable word of God. Our ability to serve is not limited by our conditions. If we think that is true we underestimate the power of God's word.

vs 10 Here is this paradox of the elect, yet I endure so they can obtain it. The salvation of an eternal soul was something so valuable to Paul, he would endure anything for it. Is that my vision? Look what a soul cost our Savior. No wonder he saw it as valuable.

vs 11 Here again is the Easter message: Die today with Jesus on the cross of Calvary, to your selfish ways and your own will. Ro 6:5-11 Then you can be raised to live with Him in His new Resurrected life. Can we be saved and not die with Him?

vs 12 The perseverance of the saints is that, once called, we continue in that uphill climb. He calls us over and over to persevere. Paul has mentioned several times those who did not continue, those who loved the present world. There is no retirement from the Christian life. It is something we do because of who we are. Endurance and suffering have a connection with reigning and glory. Disown – tough verse for a hard core Calvinist. Disown means to once have owned. Mt 10:33 I am of the opinion that this is what is meant by blaspheming the Holy Spirit, disowning Him, giving back the gift you freely received. This would separate you from the body of believers. This was the challenge for the Christians that were trying to fit in with the world to avoid persecution. Running the race ignoring the rules. Who is Lord? Jesus or Caesar or you?

vs 13 In spite of our failures and lack of faith, the Lord will never let us down. In our weakness we are still his body and He will not disown himself. You can't lose your salvation because you stumbled. The only man that was entirely faithful walked out of his grave.