

The Duty of a Soldier

1 Thessalonians 2: 9-12

Tomorrow we will honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our great nation in the armed forces. We ought to recognize these and the sacrifices they made. There have been many who served on our behalf, coming from different backgrounds and walks of life. No matter who they were or where they came from, when they entered the service, they all became soldiers. They were no longer farmers, factory workers, or skilled tradesmen, they were soldiers. They became one of America's finest by putting on the uniform.

There is a great parallel to the Christian life. We all come from different backgrounds and circumstances, but at the moment of salvation we became soldiers for the Lord. There is a great need in our day for true soldiers of the cross. The world needs those who will rise to the occasion, standing proudly and firmly for the Lord.

Paul was such a soldier and his life serves as a challenge for the modern day Christian soldier. Times have changed greatly, but the warfare remains. The world has tried to alter our faith, but the duty of the soldier of Christ remains the same. Today I want to consider the [challenges](#) revealed as we think on: [The Duty of a Soldier](#).

I. A Work to Complete (9) – Each of the veterans present today could share with us the work they were called upon to perform. There may have been hundreds of others serving with them, but each man had a specific task to perform and complete; he was responsible to fulfill his mission. Paul understood his work; he was called to preach the gospel. That was his specific task. Each of us, who are Christians, has a work to complete. We find we have been entrusted with:

A. A Challenging Task (9a) – [For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail](#): Much of what a soldier is called to do is not an easy task. At times the work challenges the limits of physical ability. Paul spoke of his [labor and travail](#). These are strong words. They do not reflect a casual, effortless effort. The word [travail](#) means “*a hard and difficult labor.*” No doubt there were many weary days for Paul. There were times when he was called upon to do the impossible for the Lord.

- The work we are engaged in is a challenging task. We are engaged in an eternal work for the Lord. We need those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and get in the trenches, fighting for the Lord. The work of the Christian soldier will bring challenges and there will be times of difficulty. We must learn to accept that as part of our duty.

B. A Continual Task (9b) – *for labouring night and day*. The soldier is called to serve for the duration of his call. He may be asked to be on duty day and night. Paul well understood this as he preached in the synagogues and made tents on the side. He was a bi-vocational preacher. He labored long hours in the ministry for the cause of Christ.

- The church desperately needs those who are up to the task at hand. The military has a term known as AWOL. I fear many church members have gone missing. They have abandoned their post. In these difficult days we need those who will stand at their post, come what may.
- The problem is: many have a form of religion, but not a relationship. Simple religion won't keep you in the Lord's service. There must be a personal relationship with Christ. You must have heard and answered the call. *1 John 2:19 – They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

C. A Consuming Task (9c) – *because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God*. A true soldier is committed to completing the task. He is a soldier above all else, focused on what he has been enlisted to perform. Paul's focus was to preach the Gospel. He labored long hours, so as not to be a burden, but he hadn't failed to share Christ with the church. His wasn't a half-hearted, careless attitude, but a determination to fulfill his obligation. I remember what he said to the Ephesian elders. *Acts 20:26-27 – Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* ^[27] *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

- We need those who are consumed with the work of the Lord. Many are content giving just a little of their time. Jesus and His work ought to be the desire of our hearts. If you are saved, you are a soldier above all else. Many have allowed their time to be consumed by other things, leaving little, if any, time for the Lord. Jesus must be the priority! Live your life for Him. In judgment, I fear many will realize how much they could've done, but they were not interested in the Lord. What are you consumed with today?

II. A Witness to Consider (10) – A soldier wears a uniform and represents his country. He has an obligation to represent it well. Paul knew others were looking to him for direction. You may not realize it, but folks are watching you. You have an obligation to bear a positive witness. Notice:

A. Our Lives are Read (10) – *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*. Paul called on them to bear witness of his life. He had

walked a holy and just life, one without blame and above reproach. He knew others were watching his life and he wanted to live upright before them.

- Those around us are reading from the pages of our lives. Christian what is being read from your life? What do those at work read from you? Men, what do your children see in you? Do they see a man who loves the Lord, or one that has religion on Sunday? Ladies, what do your children read from your life? Deacon, Sunday school teacher, church member, what about your life? All our lives are being read by others. They know who we are; we don't have to tell them, they can see for themselves!

B. Our Lives are Reflected (10) – *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.* Paul speaks of how he behaved himself among those who believe. He was aware that his life and behavior influenced those around him.

- A good soldier will inspire others to perform. A man of courage and strength can encourage others to continue in the fight. We are setting the standard for future generations. As they see and read our lives, they are developing their own way of life.

- That ought to challenge and convict each of us. What kind of example are we setting? Our children will likely share the same convictions we do. Is Christ the priority in your life? Do you desire to be in the house of God? Do you behave in such a way that bears witness of Christ in your life? The life we live will have an impact on those who follow in our footsteps. *Mat.5:13 – Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.* If your children possess what you have obtained, is that enough to assure their salvation and inspire their walk with Christ? It is very likely our children will live much the same way we do.

III. A Word to Communicate (11) – Paul was also aware of the need for positive reinforcement. These were trying times for the church. Much of the world rejected the message of Christ and his followers. Paul wanted to encourage fellow believers in the faith. As good soldiers we are obligated to communicate with fellow believers. This involves:

A. Words of Confirmation (11) – *As ye know how we exhorted...every one of you.* Paul had exhorted the church. He encouraged and built them up. He focused on what they had accomplished rather than dwelling on their faults.

- One of the greatest hindrances in fighting a battle is low morale. We do the church or ourselves no good by speaking against a brother in Christ. We are in this together, facing the same enemy, and we need to encourage one another in the faith. You never know what a simple word of encouragement can do. It may be all someone needs to press on for the Lord. Let me encourage you to encourage each other. There is too much tearing down going on and not enough building up. We are all part of the body of Christ and when we talk about a brother, we are in fact talking about our Lord. Friendly fire is never beneficial.

B. Words of Comfort (11) – [And ye know how we...comforted...every one of you, as a father doth his children.](#) These are words of kindness and consolation. He spoke with compassion for them.

- There seems to be a lack of comforting words in our day. We can sing “Oh how I love Jesus,” but we find it hard to speak a word of comfort to others. We all face difficulties and trials. Everyone needs a word of comfort now and then. It is good to know we do not stand alone.

C. Words of Caution (11) – [And ye know how we...charged every one of you, as a father doth his children.](#) Lastly we see that Paul [charged](#) them. He spoke to them concerning sound doctrine. He admonished them for walking outside of God’s will.

- I know there are times when the Word convicts us and causes us to search our hearts. We live in a day when most don’t want to hear the truth. Most want to hear of their goodness and God’s blessing. [2 Tim.4:3-4 – For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ^{\[4\]} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.](#) I like to preach on the blessings, but there are times when we must deal with our sin. A good soldier will stand for the truth regardless of popularity. He will obey orders from his commanding officer.

- Doing the right thing and standing for truth is not popular, but it is what God expects. I’m not advocating that we develop a mindset of becoming the judge and jury, passing judgment on others, but we must take a stand for the truth. We must stay true to the Word of God and let the chips fall where they may. We cannot give in to the demands of this world. I’m glad I had a pastor who loved me enough to preach the truth rather than please my flesh. The world is trying to pull churches into a mindset of tolerance and wholesale acceptance, while abandoning doctrine, but we must stand for God!

Conclusion: In closing let me say that there is also **A Walk to Continue**. [1 Thes.2:12 – That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory](#). Paul knew he had been called of God and saved by the blood of Jesus. He was to walk worthy of his calling.

A good soldier knows where his allegiance lies. He is proud to wear the flag on his sleeve. We need to proudly lift the blood stained banner of Jesus and walk worthy of our Lord. He is our Redeemer and we are obligated to Him. If you are saved, you've been called to serve as a soldier of the cross. Are you serving in a way that pleases the Lord or are there some areas that you need to improve? Why not come and seek the Lord for His help and will for your life? If you've never enlisted in service to the Lord, He wants to save you today.