

A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

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Matthew 16:13-23

1. Somewhere along the way the Church Militant has departed from its heavenly mandate.
2. The change is reflected to some degree, but not totally, in the music that is now popular.
3. The hymns we sang and will sing this morning were all written at a time when the church was on the offensive rather than the defensive.
 - a. "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." (George Duffield, Jr., 1818-1888)
 - b. "Onward, Christian Soldiers." (Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924)
 - c. "Higher Ground." (Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1856-1922)
4. The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy with these words found in 2 Tim 2:2-4.
3 "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
5. A good soldier must embrace hardship, avoid entanglements, and desire to please the one he enlisted under.
6. Satan, the god of this world, is not going to allow his kingdom to be plundered without putting up a fight.
7. As good soldiers of Christ Jesus you and I can have the joy of operating in enemy territory and rescuing people for Christ. Col 1:13-14
"For He (God) rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
8. This morning I want to share some insights that should encourage us to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

I. We must know and have confidence in our Commander. Matthew 16:13-23

- A. Only God can provide that revelation. 17
 - B. Jesus stated this truth clearly in John 6:44-46
44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me."
 - C. Note also that Jesus Christ declared that He, working in and through His followers, would build His church and that the gates of Hell would not be able to withstand its advance.
 - D. Jesus also told His followers that they had authority to declare on earth what was settled in heaven.
 - E. Note Jesus' stern rebuke of Peter in verses 21-23
- NOTE: If we are going to count for God His interests must be our priority.

II. We must understand that our weapons are superior to those available to the enemy. 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

- A. Our methods of warfare are not of this world.
- B. Rather the weapons we employ are divinely powerful (mighty before God) for the destruction of fortresses.
- C. Using our divinely powerful weapons we will be used by God to destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God by taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
- D. Paul declared that the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.
2 Corinthians 4:4
- E. We are waiting in vain if we think that the unbelieving will become receptive to the gospel apart from our employing the divinely powerful weapons God has made available to us.

III. We must put our faith in and employ the weapons God has provided us with.

- A. Power. Acts 1:6-8
6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- B. The Word of God. Hebrews 4:12-13
12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
- C. Prayer. Ephesians 6:18-20
18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
- D. Humility and trust in God. 2 Timothy 2:22-26
23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

APPLICATION

1. Our ultimate loyalty must be to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2. We live in perilous times; times that call for courageous and committed Christians who remain faithful and focused regardless of the trials and temptations that they face.
3. Everyday life can be a challenge, but we should not allow it to distract or discourage us.