

Second Timothy 2:1 – 13

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~ Our Spiritual Safari enters a delightful chapter of the Bible in our expedition through the entire Word of God in this report; and this chapter could be labeled *“Active in Service.”* In seven different figures of speech, the apostle Paul describes the duties and activities of a genuine, born again believer. They are (1) a son (2) good soldier (3) an athlete (4) a farmer (5) a workman (6) a vessel and (7) a servant. I wish these truths could be impressed a little stronger in the church as we draw ever-nearer the end times; but I don’t see that happening. Our first two reports from second Timothy brought us Paul instructing Timothy on the realities of the afflictions he suffered for the furtherance of the Gospel. If you have not read our last two reports, I suggest you go back and do so now. We are commanded very definitely to take a stand for Christ Jesus, friends; and that stand is going to cost us something – and that something will be everything....

1 Therefore, Timothy, my spiritual son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

~ The child of God must recognize that when he or she is born again, we are born into God’s family. The family of a believer is comprised only of those who obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but by the incorruptible Word of God, that liveth and abideth forever. Remember, the crowd told Jesus that His mother and brothers wanted to speak to Him. Jesus asked, *“who are My mother and brothers?”* Well, Mary, James, Jude, and everyone else, was absolutely shocked when Jesus went on to say, *“My family are those who obey My commandments.”* That’s strong. Indeed, it is as strong as it gets; and that’s what it means to be strong in the grace that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Selah ~

If you think you can grit your teeth and brave this world in your own strength, you’re in for a grave disappointment in life and profound personal

defeat. Merely following a few religious rules or pious regulations will lead to the shipwrecking of your faith, friends. There are so many religious gimmicks and liturgical tricks out there; set forth by racketeers who believe you are ignorant. They all have a different method of making merchandise of the Lord Jesus; and, according to them, if you follow their recipes completely, then your bread is going to come out of the oven perfectly baked, every time. Unfortunately, their legal professions are recipes for disaster! If we are truly born again, we will discern those systems only appeal to the old nature. For example, those who teach that we can lose our salvation are insecure in their own redemption. They will deny that, of course; but, if you believe you can lose your salvation, yet are not frightened to death of losing it – then you're an idiot who has no earthly idea what you are doing. Those people want a works-based religious philosophy; which Christ rejects and the Bible contradicts. Of course, they are just as saved as the next person who has trusted Christ as their Savior but, because they doubt that, God never uses them in His work. As a result, all they create is strife and contention. They never offer anyone hope in Christ – they teach an unhealthy fear – the wrong kind of fear – of the Lord. They are truly Christian Tragedies.

Well, Paul isn't giving any rules because the Word of God has no rules for the child of God to live by. The so-called Christian life is, as Paul said, "*.... all things are lawful for me....*" We are saved by grace. We are to live by, and be strong in, the grace of God – that He freely gave us – while we were yet dead in our trespasses and sins. We have all taken advantage of God's grace, and we've failed Him miserably. When we realize that, we need to confess our sins, and appeal to His grace. The mercy of the Lord endureth forever. Running from God is futile, because the long arm of the Lord will reach out and grab you; and the farther you have to be pulled back, the worse it hurts, my friends. That's not a theory – I know that from personal experience. I stay very close to the Lord these days. I am His son, and I am always going to be His son. Let's learn to be strong in God's grace today. When I hear people say, "*.... I do this and I don't do that*" – and that they follow a program or keep a law – I know immediately that person doesn't know anything about the grace of God....

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

~ Obviously, Paul was greatly concerned about the future of the preaching of the Gospel after he departed this life – and rightly so. Each of us, as we approach the conclusion of our ministry, naturally wonder about the future. Frankly, I worry as Isaiah did about who will believe my reports? I wonder if anyone believes them now. Will There be another man who will adhere to this sound doctrine of faithfulness and grace and preach it and teach it as Paul preached it and taught the Word of God? I am very candid to say I have an Elijah complex, that says, “... I think I am the only one left in the world who really believes God anymore.” I know deep down that is wrong – but, I am just being honest with you dear readers – because I always am honest with you – I feel that way. I thank God for all of you on this safari who stand strong in the grace and faith of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Word of God. I know some of you are faithful and are able to teach others, also. I suppose I just wish there were more of you.

As children of God, we are to be deeply concerned about our Fathers business. As a boy Jesus said, *“I must be about My Fathers business.”* Well, I’m certainly not Jesus, but the Word of God tells me that *“as many as received Him gave He them the authority to be called sons of God.”* So, I am interested in my Fathers business. Are you? That business is getting out the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles. I cannot repeat that too many times. That’s what Paul is talking to Timothy about. Paul never preached themes or side issues. Our main business is preaching the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Period. Only the grace of God can equip and permit us to do that properly, correctly and completely....

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

~ Many people say, *“I am disappointed in myself.”* Well, friends, making that statement reveals you only believe and trust in yourself. Christian’s walk by faith, not by sight – and, if we do that, we *WILL* experience hardness and difficulty. Even so, that should never make us discouraged because, if we become discouraged, that means we don’t really trust and

believe the Word of God. That's why ignorance of the Bible ultimately leads to insanity. Those who say "I hope to do and be better" really only expect to force some good purpose out of their old nature. That will never happen. There is a real battle going on – and that battle is between the old nature and our new nature. It's a spiritual warfare that is never going to end in this life. This is where the spiritual armor of God from Ephesians chapter six becomes imperative....

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

~ Can you imagine a soldier in the heat of the battle, saying to his commander, "... well, captain, I have to break off from the fighting because I have a date with a beautiful girl at seven o'clock." Someone says, "that's absurd!" It sure is absurd, friends; it's as absurd as some of the so-called Christian lives I see many self-professing believers trying to live today. It's half-hearted, at best; and their priorities are always themselves. Their priorities are never to esteem others better than themselves and to consider the welfare of others above their own. No, they just don't happen to do that. They are so entangled with various worldly concerns they don't have much time for the Lord Jesus Christ – if any. They might make a few minutes each week for Jesus – but it never amounts to anything meaningful. If something in your life is keeping you from total and complete dedication to the cause of Christ, then I can only recommend you sell it all, give it to the poor, take up your cross – and start actually following the Lord; because, if you don't, you are denying Him. If you deny Him – He is going to deny you. Now, some people have used verse four to argue a clerical celibacy; however, Paul is only emphasizing that our concerns should not be for the things of this world but, rather, on the life to come. If that all sounds judgmental and harsh to you – *TOO BAD!* That's what's real, my beloved....

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

~ Here we have the third figure of speech: the athlete. Interestingly, the Christian life is not a playground. Contending in this game is deadly serious

business. There is a right way and a wrong way to execute the office of an athlete. Unfortunately, the only exercise many Christians ever get is jumping to conclusions, running down their friends, sidestepping responsibility and pushing their luck! Well, you'll never set aside the weightiness of sins that way – I promise you that – and you'll never win anyone for Christ by whipping them down intellectually, either. That's why I constantly urge anyone who desires to teach the Word of God to keep it super-duper simple. Pontification pompously, piously and presumptuously yields scant comprehension by subjects otherwise inclined to assimilate. You can just write that down....

6 The farmer that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

~ Naturally, a farmer tills the soil in the field, sows the seed, and cares for it. That is the man who will enjoy a crop of one hundred fold. If you do not enter into the laboring and sowing of the Gospel you are going to end up with a field full of tares and thistles. Again, this is such serious business that I don't feel competent to convey the message to you properly. This is also one reason I specifically resist, and am uncooperative with, the so-called great movements that desire to convert the world with crusades and all that phony-bologna evangelism nonsense – because I don't feel like that is what Christians are called to do today. My position is that the *TOTAL* and *COMPLETE* Word of God must be sown – and those other programs never do much more than glorify men and generate emotions and sensationalism. So, I just do my thing the way I believe the Lord has led me to do it in this Spiritual Safari. I hope you'll join us....

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember Jesus Christ the seed of David who was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

~ We end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God talking about Paul's Gospel – the doctrine of the apostles – the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul suffered greatly to get the Word of God to us today. Let's remember the Lord Jesus Christ Who was raised from the dead. "Evildoer" in verse nine means a malefactor. Well, the apostle was in chains in a Roman Mamertine prison awaiting execution at the hands of madman Nero when he wrote this letter; but the Word of God still got to us right here and now. Paul travailed so that you and I might be born again into the family of God, friends. These are faithful sayings.

Verse twelve is faithful, but it is also very strong language – because not all believers are going to rule and reign with Christ. Only those who have suffered with Him shall reign with Him. Either way, this all reveals that Paul also firmly believed that faith without works is dead! So, let's execute those works of faith according to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ today, my dear readers. God cannot and will not accept one who is false; because that would be tantamount to denying Himself – and that would be impossible. Your unbelief won't stop the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it won't hinder the Word of God from being taught properly, correctly and completely, either – not even for a nanosecond....

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself ~

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