



SUNDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: Stay in the Fight

Passage: 2 Timothy 2:1-7

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: Paul had poured himself into Timothy, but he knew Timothy would soon have to take what he had learned and live it out for himself. Before Paul tells Timothy what faithfulness looks like, he reminds him where his strength comes from. Not from willpower or determination, but from the grace found in Christ. Paul then gives three pictures—a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer—to show what it takes to remain faithful. By the grace of Jesus Christ, stay in the fight.

I. The Soldier — Stay Focused (Verses 3-4)

A soldier understands something that the rest of us can easily forget: the mission cannot always be built around his comfort. He also understands from the beginning that hardship comes with the assignment.

Enduring hardness doesn't always mean some great persecution. Sometimes it simply means accepting the inconvenience that comes with being faithful.

The focus of the soldier is to please his commander. There will be times when pleasing Christ and pleasing everybody around you is simply not going to be possible at the same time.

At some point, the Christian life becomes very simple: What would please Jesus?



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II. The Athlete — Stay Disciplined (Verse 5)

There is an important difference between the soldier and the athlete. The soldier teaches us to stay focused when life gets hard and not become entangled with everything around us.

The athlete teaches us that desire alone is not enough. You can desperately want to win and still not be willing to do what winning requires.

There is a tremendous difference between wanting the result and being willing to live the life necessary to produce that result.

The athlete who wants to compete at a high level has to discipline himself long before anybody is watching him compete.

God has told us how He wants us to live. Sometimes His way is harder than ours and we think we have a better way. But if we are going to follow Christ, we don't get to rewrite the Bible to fit the life we want to live.

III. The Farmer — Stay Faithful (Verses 6)

There is nothing glamorous about the work of a farmer. If he wants a harvest, he has to work the field day after day. He prepares the ground. He plants the seed, waters and pulls weeds. If the farmer wants the fruit, he has to be faithful to the work.

Being faithful is vital in almost every important area of the Christian life. We want the fruit, but sometimes we grow tired of working the field.

The farmer doesn't control the harvest. He can work the ground, plant the seed, and care for the field, but he cannot make one seed come to life. He does his part and trusts God with what only God can do.



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Faithfulness is our responsibility and the results belong to God. I cannot determine what God will do through my service, but I can keep showing up and giving Him my best.

Conclusion: Which picture describes where you are? Maybe you are the soldier who has become distracted. Maybe you are the athlete whose habits need to match your spiritual desires. Or maybe you are the farmer who is simply tired and discouraged because you have not yet seen the fruit of your faithfulness. Whatever the need, remember where Paul began: “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The answer is not simply to try harder. It is to depend more fully on Christ. Stay focused. Stay disciplined. Stay faithful. And by the grace that is in Christ Jesus —stay in the fight