

Replicate – The Commissioned Soldier

4/19/20

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Sunday AM

If you have your Bible, join me in 2 Timothy 2:1-7. We're going to pick up in a series we started just prior to Easter entitled – **Replicate**.

To **replicate** – means to reproduce a close or exact copy – that is, identical to the original. Not a duplicate, but a 2nd original – and this is the heart of the G.C – ***helping people to become just like Jesus*** – an exact replication of Him who's *fully mature in Christ*.

In **2 Timothy 2**, Paul offers a simple, yet concise, commission to his protégé in the faith – Timothy. He offers him a series of faith metaphors to describe the qualities/characteristics of a true, Jesus-follower.

You, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses these entrust to reliable men who'll also be qualified to teach others. Join w/ me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete doesn't receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

2 Timothy 2:1-7

In week 1, we looked at the call to be a mentor concluding that *every Jesus-follower is called to invest the Jesus w/in them into the life another person to help them to also become an intimate follower of Jesus who helps others to become intimate followers of Jesus*.

Today we're going to look at the 2nd metaphor of a disciple-maker – to be a soldier in God's army.

*Endure hardship w/ us like a good **soldier** of Christ. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.*

I've never served in the military or fought in a war – but I did have the opportunity to serve as a missionary in Europe to military families during the 1st Gulf War. Needless to say, this privilege gave me a front-row seat to the duties of a soldier. **Bottomline** – *a soldier must always be battle-ready knowing that on a moment's notice, he/she could be called into action.*

Paul loved comparing the ministry w/ military service – and it's highly likely he would've had great insight into military protocol since he lived under house arrest being guarded by a number of Roman Soldiers.

A Roman soldier was a fighting machine. They were the toughest, well-trained, and disciplined warriors to ever live. A Roman soldier didn't know the words, *quit/fear* as they were efficient, calculating, tenacious killers – w/ a vicious reputation to proceed them.

In this text, Paul encouraged Timothy to be a ***good soldier*** by taking up arms in preparation for the spiritual battle at hand. He called him to move beyond the minimum to serve Christ w/ everything w/in him by enduring hardship, evading entanglement, and endeavoring to please his commanding authority. **The qualities every disciple must possess in the faith.**

I A Disciple/Soldier must **ENDURE** Hardship

endure hardship (*sunkakopatheo*) to suffer yet never give up even under duress; to take one's share of rough treatment. It refers to remaining faithful under great persecution.

This reminds me of Jesus' words in the **Matthew 5** in what we know to be the **beatitudes** – *Blessed are those who are persecuted b/c of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you **when** people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you b/c of me. Rejoice and be glad, b/c great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

when (*hotan*) conveys the idea of at some point **all** Christians can expect persecution b/c the light of their lives won't be received by those who live in darkness.

Every faithful believer will have some resistance and ridicule from the world, while others, for God's own purposes, will endure extreme suffering. *MacArthur*

All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2 Timothy 3:12

This doesn't mean we should seek it (*we must never choose the scene of our own martyrdom*), but neither should we be surprised when it comes.

Consider the 12 – James was beheaded – yet on his way to his death an accuser was so moved by his faith he repented and was beheaded w/ him. Phillip was scourged/crucified. Matthew was slain w/ a sword. James the Lesser was stoned. Matthias was beheaded. Peter was crucified upside down. Andrew, Thaddeus and Simon were crucified too. Bartholomew was beaten/filleted alive. Thomas was speared. John was exiled to Patmos, boiled in oil, yet somehow survived.

Point – Jesus never taught a **prosperity** gospel – but a **persecution** gospel. He never taught following Him would be easy/convenient; rather He taught following Him would require denying self/taking up your cross.

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

Point – Serving God in the midst of a spiritual war will not be easy. Yet for many believers, especially in the U.S., we have no concept of what it'll mean to endure hardship for Christ. Sadly, the vast majority of us have only experienced a "Mickey Mouse" faith where our daily walk is a like a trip to Disney World. We live in in small world and fantasy land of make believe taking our faith/freedoms for granted while a battle rages on.

A soldier in active service doesn't have a 9/5 job, or even a 60/70 hr. work week. He's a soldier 24/7/365. He's responsible to be vigilant/prepared for battle. He understands that his body, mind, health, skill, and time – all that he is – belong to the military he serves. Even when he's on leave, he's subject to recall at any time, w/out notice and for any reason. When ordered into dangerous duty, he's expected to put his life on the line w/out question or hesitation. *MacArthur*

To *endure hardship* requires that we prepare ourselves for battle – that we train our mind, body, and spirit for the battle at hand. There's a reason soldiers go to boot camp – to get prepared for war. They enter into a grueling time of preparation to prepare themselves for any/everything they might encounter including killing the enemy, being captured, tortured, and even dying.

As disciple-making disciples, we must be certain that those we're mentoring know the mission to which they've been called and the expectation of laying their lives down for something greater than themselves.

II A Disciple/Soldier must **EVADE** Entanglement

Simple truth is that as ordinary citizens, we're free agents – meaning we make our own decisions and involve ourselves in whatever extra-curricular activity we desire – **but not a soldier**. A soldier can't entangle himself in anything which might interfere w/ his duty. He must avoid anything that would prevent him from being single-minded/focused on his mission/duty.

He doesn't have the luxury of telling his commanding officer, "I'm sorry, but I can't go to war tomorrow b/c I'm going on vacation, or I have a soccer game, or I've planned a relaxing evening watching, "The Bachelor."

entangled (*empeko*) to weave or get caught up and tripped. The word picture is of a soldier whose weapon was entangled in his cloak.

Paul says a soldier isn't to get entangled/wrapped up in civilian affairs – things contrary/distracting from the mission. Spiritual speaking, it means we're not to allow the things of this world or our own personal agendas/ambitions to get in the way of our calling. We're to be whole-heartedly devoted to God's G.C.

Listen to how Jesus phrased it – *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.* Matthew 6:33

The highest priority of any believer is the Word/will of God – it's the mission of God and nothing else. And what is the mission?

The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve; and to give His life as a ransom for all. Matthew 20:28

The Son of Man came to seek/save the lost. Luke 19:10

If Jesus' mission was to give His life to seek, rescue, and redeem the lost by laying down His life to give life – then what do you think is His mission for you/me?

Yet this will never happen if our lives are entangled w/ any of the ambitions, actions, accomplishments, agendas or accolades this world has to offer. We must be focused on the mission no matter the cost.

Thus, I think it's vital we understand what Paul's saying here. As Christians, we're to be vigilant in our pursuit of God and in His mission. This begins w/ our mindset. We're to always have the mission/mandate of Christ before us. This isn't something we think about on Sunday only, but 24/7/365. As soldiers in God's army, we must be prepared for ministry on a moment's notice – constantly looking for where God is moving and join in. Also, we have to live alert to the spiritual war being waged around us – prepared to give an account of the hope w/in us. Most importantly, we must live under the influence of the H.S. and in tune w/ God's voice – prepared to obey his Word/will.

If we were in the military and lived the way we live our Christian lives – what would happen to you?

III A Disciple/Soldier must **ENDEAVOR** to Please God

When I read that a disciple wants to *please* his commanding officer – I immediately think of Paul's prayer for the Colossians in Colossians 1:9f

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you w/ the knowledge of his will thru all the wisdom/understanding the Spirit gives (why) – so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord to **please** him in every way...*

I don't have time to exegete this prayer, but I do want to focus on the phrase – *so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord to **please** Him in every way...*

Pleasing Him (*areskiea*) is the goal. It refers to one whose ambition is to satisfy the heart of God. Not as a means to gain God's favor, but show God gratitude for His favor – *to put a smile on God's face*.

To please God in such a manner requires we live each day in a manner that's considered worthy of/for God.

live (*parapateao*) **to walk** – it refers to the everyday pitter-patter of life. Paul used a word the Greeks would understand as Plato sponsored a school (*parapateao*) where his students would go on enlightenment walks – only they never acted on their insights.

This is why Paul qualifies this life/walk by calling for us to **walk worthy** (*axios*) to have balance – *able to live what we believe and practice what we preach*.

Paul wanted these believers to understand the reality of life wasn't philosophical but practical in nature. **We're to walk the walk and not just talk the talk** – we're to live an everyday life that honors God b/c it possesses a balance b/w what is professed and what is lived w/out hypocrisy.

Yrs ago, a London pastor got on a trolley, bought his ticket, and took his seat. Once seated, he realized the driver mistakenly had given him too much change. Rather than rejoicing and keeping it, he returned to the driver to point out the mistake. The driver said, "There was no mistake. I was in your church last Sunday and heard you preach on honesty; and I wanted to see if you practiced what you preached.

This is the life that **pleases** God – a life lived under the influence of the H.S. that walks the walk/talks the talk.

When you wake up, what do you aspire to achieve in the day ahead to please God? As you lay your head on the pillow at night, what determines if the day has been well spent and pleasing to your Savior?

When D.L. Moody was young, he heard a preacher say, "The world has yet to see what God can do w/ a person whose heart is fully yielded to Him." On hearing those words, Moody determined that he'd be such a man whose life would walk worthy of the Lord to please Him in every way.

This is the commission of the Christian Soldier – We are to endure hardship, evade entanglement, and endeavor to please God by walking worthy of the Lord seeking to please Him in every way.