



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1:8

**Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!**

**March 6, 2016**

## **Character Traits of the Faithful #1**

**Bryan Garlock**

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” 2 Timothy 2.1-7 ESV

While Paul prepared Timothy for his coming death, he encouraged him to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. All those who carry out the Lord’s work from day to day need this strength to continue steadfastly in the faith. We learn that part of this strength comes in numbers. Paul taught young Timothy to pass the gospel along to others for safekeeping so they might be able to teach others also. These particular men were to be faithful. Therefore, Paul gave him at least three illustrations to help him identify those who were among the faithful. In this article let us notice the first illustration.

Because he is a soldier, a Christian will not be entangled in civilian pursuits. Like all soldiers, they have a mission to fulfill and a battle to fight and win. Any distraction from their mission can mean defeat, death and/or captivity. The same is true in a spiritual sense. The Christian is fighting a spiritual warfare. Paul wrote, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm...” (Eph. 6.10-18). Any distraction from this and we are taken captive by sin and enslaved to it. We will experience spiritual death and may ultimately lose our salvation! It is necessary therefore that all soldiers of Christ stay focused and on course, always seeking first the kingdom of God in every opportunity presented (Matt. 6.33). Too many Christians have their focus in the wrong place. At the time of this writing, presidential races are ongoing. Too many would-be soldiers are upset or arguing with their neighbors and friends about who should be the next president while souls are left endangered by sin. While there is nothing sinful with a fair political discussion, this should not become our main focus. Other Christians are so immersed in sports, money, possessions and the like that they have neither the time nor the energy to fight the good fight of faith (see 1 Tim. 6.12).

Northside  
*church Of Christ*

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## Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: Judges 15-19

Tues: Judges 20-Ruth 3

Wed: Ruth 4 - 1 Sam. 4

Thurs: 1 Sam. 5-9

Fri: 1 Sam. 10-14

Paul knew soldiers were needed in the Kingdom of Christ. For instance, soldiers understand authority. One centurion said, "For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes..." (Luke 7.8). When good soldiers receive orders, they comply! Further, when commanded to repent of their sins, soldiers replied, "...And we, what shall we do?" And he [John the Immerser] said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3.14). Just as our military submits to their commanders, those who serve Christ must surrender to His authority (Eph. 5.24; Col. 3.17). How else can they please the one who has enlisted them?

The faithful are also instructed to share in suffering. A soldier knows what it means to suffer. Sleepless nights in foxholes, unpredictable weather, surprise enemy attack, hunger and thirst, time away from family, etc. Any soldier who is true to his uniform will be willing to suffer even unto death for all to be blessed and enjoy freedom. He'll even suffer to bring glory and honor to that for which he suffers (cf. 1 Peter 4.16). Christians ought to be willing to suffer for the gospel's sake in view of the same fate so that many might become free from sin and children of God. The Christian suffers with Jesus, Paul and the rest when they give up sin, their life and anything else that may prevent them from being dedicated. No matter the outcome, whether it is loss of family, friends, work, money, etc. they will suffer knowing glory has been given to God and their reward is near. Peter wrote, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2.18-21).

Another characteristic of soldiers is their dependability. A common observance throughout the book of Acts is the soldiers' duty to guard or keep their prisoners (Acts 12.4, 6, etc.). These men were to keep their criminals from escaping or forfeit their own lives! Almost nothing, save supernatural means, would cause them to lose that which they were entrusted to keep. Doesn't this sound familiar? Paul said, "...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Faithful men keep that which is entrusted to them. You can be sure they will guard the gospel with their own lives.

Are we good soldiers of Christ? Could Paul say with confidence that we are fellow soldiers? (see Phil. 2.25; Philemon 1.2) If we are to be faithful to the Lord we must put on our armor, stand firm, and always be on guard. We are the few, the proud, the soldiers of Christ. BG