**Soldiers Of The Cross**

**2 Timothy 2:1-5 KJV** Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **[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. **[3]** Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  **[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. **[5]** And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

1. **INTRODUCTION—MEMORIAL DAY**
2. **General Information About Memorial Day**

-Memorial Day is a [federal holiday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_holidays_in_the_United_States) observed annually in the United States on the last Monday of May. It was formerly known as Decoration Day. It originated after the [American Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War) to commemorate the fallen Union soldiers of the Civil War.

-It was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan. The first observation was on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873.

-It is important for us to observe as Americans and understand the true meaning of Memorial Day. The [National Moment of Remembrance](http://www.usmemorialday.org/Speeches/President/may0200.txt) resolution was passed in December 2000 which asks that at 3 p.m. local time, for all Americans "To voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to '[Taps](http://www.usmemorialday.org/taps.html)."

-The Moment of Remembrance is a step in the right direction to returning the meaning back to the day. What is needed is a full return to the original day of observance. Set aside one day out of the year for the nation to get together to remember, reflect and honor those who have given their all in service to their country.

1. **Return to Remembering**

-But what may be needed to return the solemn, and even sacred, spirit back to Memorial Day is for a return to its traditional day of observance. Many feel that when Congress made the day into a three-day weekend in with the National Holiday Act of 1971, it made it all the easier for people to be distracted from the spirit and meaning of the day. The Veterans of Foreign Wars stated in its 2002 Memorial Day address: "Changing the date merely to create three-day weekends has undermined the very meaning of the day. No doubt, this has contributed greatly to the general public's nonchalant observance of Memorial Day."

-We lose as a nation when we fail to remember the price that was paid for our freedom.

**-Oliver Wendell Holmes immortalized a fallen soldier in a poem quoted in a** [Memorial Day speech at Harvard in 1895 entitled "The Soldier's Faith"](http://people.virginia.edu/~mmd5f/holmesfa.htm)**. In fact, Theodore Roosevelt admired that** [1895 speech](http://people.virginia.edu/~mmd5f/holmesfa.htm) **so much that as President he nominated Holmes for the US Supreme Court.**

**-**[Holmes](http://people.virginia.edu/~mmd5f/holmes.html) **in the** [1895 speech](http://people.virginia.edu/~mmd5f/holmesfa.htm)**spoke of "part of the soldier's faith: Having known great things, to be content with silence." He cited this poem as "a little song sung by a warlike people on the Danube, which seemed to me fit for a soldier's last word...a song of the sword in its scabbard, a song of oblivion and peace. A Soldier has been buried on the battlefield."**

**And when the wind in the tree-tops roared,**  
**The soldier asked from the deep dark grave:**  
**"Did the banner flutter then?"**  
**"Not so, my hero," the wind replied.**  
**"The fight is done, but the banner won,**   
**Thy comrades of old have borne it hence,**   
**Have borne it in triumph hence."**  
**Then the soldier spake from the deep dark grave:**  
**"I am content."**

**Then he heareth the lovers laughing pass,**   
**and the soldier asks once more:**  
**"Are these not the voices of them that love,**   
**That love--and remember me?"**  
**"Not so, my hero," the lovers say,**  
**"We are those that remember not;**  
**For the spring has come and the earth has smiled,**  
**And the dead must be forgot."**  
**Then the soldier spake from the deep dark grave:**  
**"I am content."**

1. **A Challenge to Remember**

**-Memorial Day is also the unofficial beginning of summer. One of the greatest things you can do to remember is to read some books this summer about various wars and the commitment of the soldiers involved in them.**

**-I can recommend the following books to you:**

* **Stephen Ambrose—Anything he has written about World War II which is multiple books. In fact, I would encourage you to visit the D-Day Museum in New Orleans if you have the chance to do so.**
* **Hugh Ambrose—The Pacific—Story of the Pacific Theater covering Guadalcanal to the assault at Iwo Jima.**
* **James Bradley—Flags of Our Fathers and Flyboys.**
* **Hampton Sides—Ghost Soldiers—About the death march on Bataan.**
* **William Manchester—American Caesar—The biography of General Douglas MacArthur. From West Point to his leadership in the Pacific.**

**-Some of the more recent books that I have enjoyed were written about the war on terror in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.**

* **Marcus Luttrell—Lone Survivor—About a SEAL team inserted into Afghanistan.**
* **Doug Stanton—Horse Soldiers—An account of the first SEAL team to go into Afghanistan after September 11, 2001.**
* **Howard Wasdin—SEAL Team 6—Gives the account of the battle at Mogadishu probably better known as Black Hawk Down.**

**-There is no reason in the world that we have to fall back on excuses for ignorance in our generation. In fact, we have all kinds of opportunities and experiences to help us self-educate ourselves.**

**-Browse through the clearance sections at Books-A-Million or Barnes and Noble and you can, for about the price of a meal at the Chinese buffet. Do you want to be an egg-roll or an educated person???**

**-All of these books that give historical accounts of these soldiers who helped to secure our freedom brings a greater appreciation to me for the United States of America. Despite the fact that our nation is in very troubled moral, political, and economical times, people all over the world are still trying to immigrate to the US.**

1. **THE TEXT IN 2 TIMOTHY**

**-However all of these historical accounts concerning America causes me to remember some of Paul’s final words to his young son in the faith, Timothy. These were important words because they were his final ones.**

**2 Timothy 2:1-4 KJV** Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **[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. **[3]** Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  **[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.

-When Paul was writing these words to Timothy, there is a certainty that his exposure to Roman soldiers and centurions brought on this analogy of a being a good soldier of Jesus Christ. A centurion was one of the greatest fighting men that served the Caesar.

* His promotion only came after sixteen years of combat service.
* He knew what combat was like and had shown valor at that point of the spear.
* He was able to carry ninety-pounds of equipment and walk twenty-miles a day with it.
* He knew what it was to survive under harsh conditions of weather and battle.
* He was required to equip himself at his own expense.
* He had to pay for his food, clothing, bedding, arms, and armor also paying dues to a burial club.
* He wasn’t just a fighting man but was a skilled engineer and builder.
* He had a company of one-hundred men that were totally dependent on his leadership.
* He would serve for twenty-five years and then receive a cash payment and a small piece of land for his service.

-He was literally a “soldier’s soldier.” Death was the penalty for fleeing during the battle or faking an illness to get out of one.

-The level of a centurion as considered the highest honor that a Roman soldier could attain to. In fact his whole life represented a sense of strength, honor and virtue. It was a choice that he made to embody all of these qualities.

-Paul was writing to Timothy and he was instructing him emphatically that he had to embody these same traits. He was not implying that it would be an easy thing to do but it was understood that it would be a necessary thing for him to do!

-It is important to add that this is a place that no one is born into. . . it is developed with rigorous training. It is developed through the bumps and bruises of life. It is developed only when we are willing to let God pour His Spirit into us as He pours our own whims out.

-Not easy but it is necessary! I ask the hard question to you. . . “If you were to die right now, what kind of legacy would you leave behind?”

-You may ask the question, “How do I get to that place?” Paul left the instructions for Timothy as to how this was to take place. **Endure Hardness**. . . **Don’t Get Entangled**. . . **Please the Commander**.

1. **Endure Hardness**

-His words to Timothy were that he would be required to suffer with trouble and afflictions. It was not going to be an easy path for him just to waltz his way to Heaven. There were going to be spirits to battle with, people who wanted to oppose him and tear him down, and churches that wanted to eat him alive.

-In other places, Paul hinted at this:

**2 Timothy 2:10 KJV** 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.

**2 Timothy 1:8 KJV** Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

**2 Timothy 3:11 KJV** Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

**2 Timothy 4:5 KJV** But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

**James 1:12 KJV** Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

**2 Corinthians 1:6 KJV** And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

-But Paul also knew that by enduring hardness that the discipline involved in going through was to be highly valued after he made it on the other side of the trouble. Paul was certain that God wanted to develop qualities in Timothy that would be helpful to him. Sufficient grace from God adds things to you in affliction and difficulty:

* Endurance
* Discipline
* Self-Sacrifice
* Vigilance
* Obedience
* Cooperation with others
* Sympathy
* Loyalty

-You must understand that our foe is just as disciplined, just as vigilant, and just as unrelenting as he can be. . . therefore there must be that same tenacity in your own spiritual life. The reason that some people never can seem to get up in their battle is because they expect God to do it all for them! His Spirit empower us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Php. 2:12)!

-You must fight on through the affliction. . .

* Don’t fight like Joash and strike the ground three times when he could have wiped out the enemy.
* Don’t fight like Israel did and allow the enemies to linger around in the land that God had given to them.
* Fight like Joseph who said, “how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”
* Fight like Paul who labored to bring his body under subjection.
* Fight like Jesus told His disciples fight. . . cut off the hand or pull out the eye that hinders your walk.
* Fight like Jesus when He told the devil, “Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!”

There is a story told about a young chaplain who enlisted in the Crimean War (Oct 1853-Feb 1856). He was on the side of France as they fought against the Russians. When he arrived to the camp, he found that the sergeant was a Christian and so he asked him how it would be best to serve the men in the company. The sergeant took him to a hill above the battle and brought some lessons home to the young preacher.

He told him to look at the companies on the right and the men who were firing their guns. He told him to take a look at the men who were rapidly reloading the cannons. He told him to look all over the battlefield and he would see earnestness in the faces of those men. He said that all of the soldiers felt like it was a life and death struggle. He told him that they were not playing war games with the Russians. He then told the young preacher, “If you are to do any good, you must be in earnest! An earnest man always wins his way!”

1. **Don’t Get Entangled**

-To be a soldier of the Cross, we have to endure hardness but the second thing that Paul noted was that Timothy did not need to get entangled.

-The Greek word for entangled is EMPLEKO which literally means to weave. Paul is not speaking of things that are necessarily sinful but things that are distracting from the very purpose of our calling!

-You are a soldier! An ordinary citizen can do what he desires to do.

* He can make his own decisions.
* He can use his time as he desires to do so.
* He can get involved in sports, education, business, or politics.
* He can eat when he wants to and what he wants to.

-But we are soldiers and we are not meant to just gad about in life. There must be a purpose about what we are doing and we cannot afford to get entangled or entrapped by the distractions of this world.

**2 Timothy 4:10 KJV** For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

**Luke 8:14 KJV** And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

**1 Corinthians 9:25-27 KJV** And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. **[26]** I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: **[27]** But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

**1 Timothy 6:9-12 KJV** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. **[10]** For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. **[11]** But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. **[12]** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

**2 Peter 2:20 KJV** For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

-Timothy was to stay away from all the entanglements even though some of them may have been good and beneficial causes. Nowhere did Paul encourage him to organize marches, register voters, get involved in demonstrations, or get the homeless situated. *If enough people are saved from their sins, social reforms generally take care of themselves!*

-If you look back at the history of England the eighteenth century had horrible social conditions. In fact, if you read any of the stories the Charles Dickens wrote, *Oliver Twist,* A *Christmas Carol,* and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

-Everywhere there was corruption and crime, sinful vices and violence penetrated every level of society. The church had gotten so materialistic and spiritually dead that no one even took it seriously. It was the butt of jokes because it was devoid of any spiritual power and authority.

-The politicians and the rich ran over the common man to such a degree that it began to push toward revolution. France became so stirred up that their revolution produced the guillotine and the Reign of Terror. England also had great stirrings but instead of revolution they had a revival.

-It started with two brothers named Wesley, John and Charles. One wrote sermons and the other wrote hymns. The Methodist awakening shook England to the extent that social reform took place without the first protest or demonstration.

-I am still holding out that the same thing can happen in our days, if, and only if, we do not become entangled with the benign and curious entanglements of this world.

-Leonard Ravenhill in his classic-work, *Why Revival Tarries*, (written in 1959) said that there were some reasons that revival did not make it to many churches.

* Because evangelism is highly commercialized. . . we pay preachers to do the work of evangelism and it has not longer personal evangelism.
* Because the Gospel has been cheapened. . . Just “accept” Jesus. . . “Such a sinning, repenting ‘easy-believism’ dishonors the blood and prostitutes the altar.
* Because of carelessness. . . Altars are no longer lingering places where eternal business is done. Because of fear. . . Preachers have gotten ‘tight-lipped’ about preaching against sin and other false religions.
* Because of a lack of urgency in prayer. . . there is a ‘wrestling’ that is required in prayer.
* Because the glory of God has been stolen from Him. . . Everything but God gets the glory, the preacher, the church, the music program, the youth outings, etc.

-One startling quote that Ravenhill wrote about preachers probably ought to make it to TBN or the Inspirational Network so all the health, wealth, and prosperity boys could hear it:

*Preachers who have homes and cottages by the lake, a boat on that lake, and a big bank balance still beg for more. With such extortionists and unjust men, can God entrust Holy Ghost revival? These dear, doll-like preacher boys no longer change their suits once a day, but two or three times a day. They preach the Jesus of the stable, but themselves live in swank hotels. For their own lusts they bleed the audience financially in the name of the One who had to borrow a penny to illustrate His sermon. They were expensive Hollywood suits in honor of one who fasted alone in the desert. Today an evangelist is not only worthy of his hire (so he thinks), but of compound interest. How fearful will all this be in the judgment morning!*

-Reading that kind of stuff will jolt you into thinking about the entanglements of this world! I believe that kind of writing is what Brother Patterson cut his teeth on and then he started feeding it to me and I cannot be satisfied paddling around in the shallows of going through the motions. We must have continuous, perpetual, and a soul-consuming passion for revival and spiritual breakthrough!

1. **Please the Commander**

-We have to endure hardness, we cannot get entangled, and lastly we have to please the commander.

* **Amplified**—His aim is to satisfy and please the one who enlisted him.
* **The Message**—He concentrates on carrying out orders.
* **New English Bible**—He must be wholly at his commanding officer’s disposal.

-Paul noted in 2 Timothy 2:4, *that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*. That was the way that Paul had lived out his life and now was instructing Timothy to do the same. In another place, he said it like this. . .

**1 Thessalonians 2:4 KJV** But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

-That is the secret of our strength in our spiritual life, to please the Lord. You can live to please yourself, live to please others or you can live to please God and you will end up taking care of the first two.

-It can all be summed up in 2 Timothy 2:9-10:

**2 Timothy 2:9-10 KJV** 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.

- It looked like a certain defeat! “I suffer trouble as a criminal.” Although he had not suffered the loss of his life, yet he had gone to the length of being bound with chains. He was now in the company of Jesus Christ and would be numbered with Him. It looked like a certain defeat!

-But there was a promise of victory! “But the Word of God is not bound.” His conviction was strong that the Word of God could not be bound by Caesar. In fact there was much liberty that came to Paul because he was preaching despite the presence of a chain.

-He was victorious! “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” This salvation that we have is going to transform us either at death or at the Rapture. One way or another, faithfulness is required. Paul was victorious!

* Lock me up. . . but I am going to please God!
* Flog me with Jewish lashes. . . I am going to bless His Name!
* Put my feet in stocks. . . I will sing at midnight!
* Leave me for dead. . . I will preach another day!
* Destroy my good name. . . I will please Him who sent me!
* Let Roman rods rain down on me. . . I will worship Him!
* Immersed in the ocean after a shipwreck. . . My faith won’t let me down!
* When I have big rivers to cross. . . I will please Him who sent me!
* When I am fighting off robbers. . . I won’t complain, I will praise Him!
* When I have to battle with foes. . . I will serve the Lord with gladness!
* When I get stuck with drudgery and hard labor. . . I will look to the Lord!
* When can’t sleep because of fear and worry. . . I will still do my best to please God!

-Eugene Peterson finishes it like this in The Message:

**2 Corinthians 11:28-30 MSG** And that’s not the half of it, when you throw in the daily pressures and anxieties of all the churches. **[29]** When someone gets to the end of his rope, I feel the desperation in my bones. When someone is duped into sin, an angry fire burns in my gut. **[30]** If I have to “brag” about myself, I’ll brag about the humiliations that make me like Jesus.

-Pleasing Him is what it is about!

1. **CONCLUSION—INCIDENT AT THE FRENCH CAMP**

-The famed poet Robert Browning wrote a poem about one of Napoleon’s men reporting in to him after the victory at Ratisbon in Germany.

**Incident of the French Camp—Robert Browning**

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:

A mile or so away

On a little mound, Napoleon

Stood on our storming-day;

With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,

Legs wide, arms locked behind,

As if to balance the prone brow

Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans

That soar, to earth may fall,

Let once my army-leader Lannes

Waver a yonder wall," --

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew

A rider, bound on bound

Full-galloping; nor bridle drew

Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,

And held himself erect

By just his horse's mane, a boy:

You hardly could suspect --

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,

Scarce any blood came through)

You looked twice ere you saw his breast

Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace

We've got you Ratisbon!

The Marshal's in the market-place,

And you'll be there anon

To see your flag-bird flap his vans

Where I, to heart's desire,

Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans

Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently

Softened itself, as sheathes

A film the mother-eagle's eye

When her bruised eaglet breathes:

"You're wounded!" "Nay", the soldier's pride

Touched to quick, he said:

"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,

Smiling the boy fell dead.

-That should do it!