

Am I a Soldier of the Cross? 482

Endure hardship . . . like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 2:3

1. Am I a sol - dier of the cross? A fol - l'wer of the Lamb?
2. Must I be car - ried to the skies On flow - 'ry beds of ease,
3. Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood?
4. Sure I must fight if I would reign— In - crease my cour - age, Lord!

And shall I fear to own His cause Or blush to speak His name?
While oth - ers fought to win the prize And sailed thru blood-y seas?
Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God?
I'll bear the toil, en - dure the pain, Sup - port - ed by Thy Word. A - men.

TEXT: Isaac Watts
MUSIC: Thomas A. Arne

ARLINGTON
C.M.

CCF Study Notes Tuesday 7 AM Study 16 January 2007 2 Peter 2

Before beginning to read from 2 Peter, let us spend time in prayer, considering. Let us ask God to help us do the following:

1. **Avoid** the deception of false teaching that the way of truth not be blasphemed,
2. **Remember** that God will deliver the godly out of temptations and punish the unjust,
3. **Respect** authorities even when they seem to do us wrong,
4. **Banish** the lusts of the flesh knowing the end of those who are driven by such lusts,
5. **Beware** of promises of freedom from those who are themselves slaves to corruption,
6. **Consider** the final state of those who have rejected the truth, and
7. **Hold** always in contempt those things we left behind to follow Christ.

Peter spoke in the first chapter of how grace and peace are multiplied to us through the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he turns to the destruction that will be caused by false teaching. Peter spoke of the promise and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Now he turns to the false hopes coming from those moved by the lusts of the flesh in stead of the Holy Spirit. Peter spoke of his ministry and that of all true teachers and prophets in reminding us of God's word, speaking as moved by the Holy Spirit. Now Peter characterizes those who speaks lies in God's name, leading many astray and bringing destruction upon themselves.

(2:1-3) There were false prophets in Old Testament times. There would be false teachers throughout the days of the church. These false teachers would deny the truth about Jesus Christ. Prophecy was of no private interpretation. The false teachers brought secret yet destructive heresies. Watch out for those who teach new and mysterious truths! Peter spoke as an eyewitness of Christ. False teachers almost inevitably end up denying Christ – saying that either He didn't really come or He wasn't really God or He didn't rise from the dead. The result is that false teachers bring destruction upon themselves. Stay away from them!

Many people – perhaps even the majority of people – follow false teachers. Those who follow false teachers find the same destruction as the teachers. Worse than that, by giving credence to false teaching, the way of truth is blasphemed. We must follow the truth, not the crowd. We must recognize the fact that when we head down the wrong path others may follow us. The choices we make have consequences for others, so we must stick close to the scriptures.

How can so many good people be duped by false teachers? The false teachers use the natural covetousness of people to lead them astray. They offer a carrot – something that people want and that will attract their attention, and something that will divert their attention from the blessings they already have in Christ. Deceptive words play to the fleshly desires and serve to exploit those who follow false teachers. Just as this is a very old ploy, so the judgment of such

people has gone on for a long time – and destruction will surely come upon such people who exploit others for personal gain. Covetousness is a danger to every believer. We must not indulge covetousness. We must watch carefully to those who would play to our fleshly desires.

(2:4-9) We might think some people to be so much better than us that they could never mislead us and never be subject to God's wrath. God did not spare angels who sinned, but cast them into hell. So no creature can somehow escape God's judgment by their beauty, skill or intelligence. We must be careful not to put men or angels on pedestals.

Sometimes it seems that I am right and the whole world is wrong. Should I then go along with the rest of the world? No!! Consider the example of Noah. Nobody in all the world outside of Noah's immediate family believed God's word that there was a flood coming. The world was destroyed – except for Noah and his immediate family. So we have precedent for staying the course even when all the world goes after some false teacher.

What about the situation when I find myself almost as guilty as the world around me? Lot had spent too long among the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was barely convinced to leave Sodom before it was destroyed, bringing only his two daughters safely away from that destruction. Yet Lot was saved. We must trust God's grace and love even when world tries to claim us as one of its own.

The bottom line is that God makes a distinction. God can and will spare the godly out of temptation. God can and will punish the unjust even before the final day of judgment. Neither the godly nor the unjust can escape God's hand. This is either a reassuring thought or a frightening thought. It all depends on whether or not you are among the godly. So we believe that God will remove his own people from this world before pouring our His wrath on the world. This is a strong argument for pre-tribulation rapture.

(2:10-12) Peter again describes the false teachers so that we can clearly identify them. They walk according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit. Teachers who do not bring God's word in the fullness the Spirit soon become false teachers. There is a lust for uncleanness which is characteristic of false teachers. They provide excuses for and indulge all manner of sin so as justify their own behavior. Flashy, worldly teachers are sometimes pandering to their own lust for uncleanness.

One sure mark of a false teacher is the tendency to despise all authority. They make give commands to Satan – something even angels would not do. They may despise all government both inside and outside the church. They speak evil of anybody or anything that would restrict their behavior. They are like wild animals which soon become targets of hunters. They speak evil of anything they don't understand. They set themselves up for a fall. Let's no set ourselves up for a fall, no follow those who cannot submit to any authority.

(2:13-17) False teachers are usually proud of their sin and depravity. Their confidence encourages others to follow. Yet they receive what they have earned: the wages of

unrighteousness, even death. They stick out like a sore thumb, reveling in the error of their ways like spoiled children. They are drawn to loose women and all vice, enticing those who are similarly weak. They are lost, having left God's way and lost their own way. Like Balaam they will do anything for money. Balaam's donkey was smarter than Balaam. At least the donkey saw trouble ahead. They are wells that promise water, but yield no water. They are clouds that promise rain but give no rain. They claim to be enlightened, yet remained forever in darkness.

(2:18-19) Beautiful can be devoid of meaning, absolutely empty. The smooth speech appeals to the lusts of the flesh. But their words are a perversion of the truth set out as a trap for those who have escaped the error of the world. The false teacher promises freedom but makes slaves by causing people to be overcome by the lusts of the flesh. Beware! There is less than meets the eye in what they have to offer.

(2:20-21) There is nothing more tragic in all of the world than a person who once escaped a life of sin through coming to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, but then was drawn back into sin so that he willingly turned his back on Jesus. No heart is harder than heart that has turned its back on Christ. It would have been better if such a person never knew Christ.

Understand that these final words speak most directly to the plight of the false teacher himself. The false teachers often speak as those who once knew and followed the truth, but turned their back on Christ. Now the false teacher seeks comfort in leading others astray so that he will not be alone in his error. What a tragedy! Our heart goes out to such a man, yet we know what damage a single false teacher can do.

Those of us who know the way of righteousness must heed the warning. We must remain faithful to God's word at all costs. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be growing in our faith lest we fall away and lead others astray. We must not give place to the lusts of the flesh lest we be corrupted and bring corruption on others.

(2:22) There is something attractive about false teachings. We can develop a morbid curiosity about such things. It will get us into trouble eventually. The best way to address the heresies of our day is to become more familiar with the doctrines and teachings of scriptures. Our knowledge must not merely be head knowledge. We must work these things out in our lives. And we must always remain disgusted with those old ways from which we have escaped. If the Holy Spirit makes use of disgusting language here it is because sin and lust are disgusting subjects. Fleshly lusts must be given no place in our lives. We must reject false teaching and false teachers as disgusting and dangerous. No appeal to fleshly lusts can succeed if we are walking in the Spirit.

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