

EVANGEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

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Sunday Worship 10:45 AM

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The Walk of the Believer

In II Timothy, the Apostle sets forth seven metaphors from which he characterizes the walk of the believer who is committed to Jesus Christ. It should be mentioned that this letter was addressed to a Christian who was discouraged and to some point, was in retreat, though he was a leader in a local church. II Timothy 1:6 says, "And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

The first metaphor is that of a teacher, (chapter 2, verses 1-2). Every believer is required to communicate to others what God has shown him of His truth. This refers to the lost, (John 17:20) as well as the saved. The importance of sharing God's Word is obvious. It is the only way of salvation, (Romans 1:16) and it is the way of spiritual progress, (John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12). Further, it is the way faith grows, (Romans 10:17) and it is the way that God does His work, (Isaiah 55:10-11).

The figure of a soldier is presented in verse 3 of chapter 2. We all know some of the requirements of a good soldier. He is to be trained and disciplined. We don't want him concerning himself too much about anything other than the war and the safety of his country. We might gain something from pondering the question, "Would I feel safe if all the military personnel defending my country had the same degree of commitment to that defense that I have to the cause of Christ?" In I Timothy 1:18 Paul said, "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son... that you may fight the good fight." At the end of his life Paul could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith," (II Timothy 4:7).

In verse 5, Paul moves to the figure of an athlete. We learn here that Christianity is not for spectators. There is no need for people who are simply available, but for those who are committed to victory. Emerson said, "Nothing was ever achieved without enthusiasm." For the Christian the issue isn't enthusiasm, but solid commitment, which produces perseverance. I Corinthians 15:58 says, "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

The farmer is used in verse 6 to teach us that faithfulness to our Lord requires steadfastness all the time, not just when God's hand is obvious in our circumstances. The farmer is known for his continual hard work, which much of the time is routine and inglorious. Also the farmer meets his own needs while meeting those of others. This is also true of the believer who, "looks on the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). The farmer more than most people, must wait to see the results of his labor. Thus, the farmer speaks to us of the fact that we are to be like our Lord, who "while being reviled did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threat but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously," (I Peter 2:23). Also, note Paul's challenge in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

Finally, Paul used the figure of a workman in verse 15. The idea here is that of a craftsman who energetically pursues excellence. When he sets forth his product the workmanship is such that he need not be ashamed, even before God. The spiritual equivalent is seen not only in this verse, but also in Hebrews 5:13-14, "For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

We must always remember that we are to glorify God in our bodies. He purchased us; we are His, (I Corinthians 6:20).