



IDENTITY

SOLDIERS

IDENTITY - SOLDIERS PART 1 (SECOND LANGUAGE)

We do not look at our identity as soldiers very much. However, it is also a part of our identity. Do you think of yourself as a soldier?

2 Timothy 2:3-4 *Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (NASB)*

Or in other words;

2 Timothy 2:3-4 *Be patient through pain and suffering with me, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Any soldier who fights in a war does not become too busy with the things of everyday life. He only wants to fight well to please his captain.*

What stands out for you the most in these two verses? What draws you the most from these words of Spirit and Life? Why? **Discuss this as a group.**

Be patient through pain and suffering with me, like a good soldier – gulp! (an expression of fear or shock). What does that mean? What does that look like? Paul said he wanted to suffer just like Christ!

Philippians 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

Or in other words;

Philippians 3:10 *Yes, I want to know Christ better and better. I want to know the power which God showed when Christ rose from death. I want to suffer just like Christ did. I want to be like Him in His death.*

Suffering just like Christ did! What was Paul thinking about? Was Paul out of his mind when he wrote this testimony (statement of truth). Suffering just like Christ and being like Him in His death. This does not sound like the good news at all. This sounds like really, really bad news. Yet this statement is in the Bible. It is approved by God.

Paul keeps talking about his lifestyle of suffering in 2 Timothy chapter 3. He says

2 Timothy 3:10-12 *Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

Or in other words;

2 Timothy 3:10 – 12 *But you, Timothy, have heard my message and you know it well. You also know the way in which I have lived. You know my purpose in life. You know how I trust God. You know how patient I have been. You know my love for God and for other people. You know that I have been strong during troubles, pain and suffering. You also know what happened to me in the cities called Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. People caused*



IDENTITY

SOLDIERS

me to have a lot of trouble and pain in those places. But I was patient and brave in those bad troubles! And the Lord kept me safe in all those dangerous times. It is not only me. Every Christian who wants to serve God well in their lives will receive persecutions (trouble and pain from other people).

This problem is getting worse - persecutions (trouble and pain from other people) and sufferings (feelings of pain from injury, illness and loss). Everyone who wants to serve God well (live a godly life in Christ) will receive trouble and pain from others. We can look at this passage in two ways.

Firstly, everyone who lives a godly life in Christ will experience people disagreeing with them and trying to stop them. They will experience people giving them trouble and pain. These people live from themselves and for themselves (the flesh).

These problems can come from anyone. They can be people in your family who follow Jesus or family who do not follow Jesus. They can be friends who follow Jesus or friends who do not follow Jesus. They can even be strangers. A soldier in Christ will be persecuted for living in the Truth of Christ.

Secondly, we are not living a godly life in Christ unless we experience persecution and suffering. Paul is very clear with this statement of truth.

I am not sure which fact is more unpleasant and upsetting. The fact that you are persecuted for godliness or the fact that you are not. If you are not being persecuted, then you are not in godliness as a soldier of Christ. You only have a form (a false copy) of godliness.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are our thoughts about these two ways of looking at truth?
2. There are true sufferings for Christ. And there are false sufferings for Christ. How do you tell the difference between real sufferings and false sufferings?
3. What parts do the Spirit of humility and the spirit of pride play in real sufferings and false sufferings?
4. What is the difference between a good soldier in Christ and a bad soldier?

ACTION POINT: What do we need to do to show what we have learned from our reading and discussion tonight?