

Veterans of Christ

2 Timothy 2:1 – 7

- **Intro**

- **Children song - “Lord's Army”**
- **Two flags: American – representing our country, those who fought – even died – for our freedoms; Christian – representing Jesus Christ and the cross upon which he died to set us free from sin and death**
- **As a believer in Christ, we honor, respect and serve both God and country – God above all**
- **To become a veteran of either, must do what is required by both**
- **veteran – *one who has had long service or experience in occupation, office, or the like; person served in military force, especially during time of war***
- **We are in a war – everyday we fight against evil forces; Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)**
¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- **Look at requirements for being counted as a veteran – both of this country, but also a veteran of Christ's army**
- **READ 2 Timothy 2:1 - 7**

- **** ON SCREEN ** 1 – Must be Service**

- **Either voluntarily choose to serve, or in the past our country has required men to serve (draft)**
- **Some serve because of being recruited; promises were made if they would agree to serve**
- **Serve country: faith in American government for support, for provision of every need (weapons, tools, clothing, medical care, food); faith in fellow soldiers**
- **Serve Christ: faith in Him alone and His death upon the cross for each of us and His complete provision for all our needs and our salvation**
- **God doesn't force anyone to follow Christ; free will, our choice**
 - **2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)**
⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
 - **If we choose to serve: Ambassadors – 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)**
²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- **To serve well you must be disciplined; discipline taught and learn through training and preparation**
 - **Training and preparation**
 - **Boot camp/basic training; building up stamina, strength; learning battle strategies; proper handling and use of weapons; once mastered, then there's graduation, you're ready to put your knowledge to practical use**
 - **For veteran of Christ, we're also in a basic training, but it's continual; how to effectively fight in this spiritual battle, proper use of spiritual weapons; as we are learning, daily putting our knowledge to practical use; building our spiritual stamina and strength**
 - **v. 1: Source of strength not found in ourselves but in grace from God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ**
 - **1 Peter 4:11 (NIV)**

¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.
 - **Ephesians 6:10 (NIV)**

¹⁰ ... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
 - **v. 2: Not only are we students in this continual training, but we are also teachers – we're to pass on what we've learn to others; Sunday nights – being disciples (soldiers) of Christ who make more disciples (soldiers) of Christ; we are recruiters for Christ's kingdom**
 - **One day, there is a graduation day, for those who are veterans in Christ's army and who have faithfully served Him**
 - **2 Timothy 4:8 (NIV)**

⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
 - **James 1:12 (NIV)**

¹² Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
 - **Rewards for service**
 - **For country – medals, honor, respect, pride**
 - **For Jesus – greatest reward possible for man – crown of life, life eternal**
- **** ON SCREEN ** 2 – Must be Obedient, Faithful**
 - **v. 3: Must persevere under hardships; hardest things to do is to be**

obedient, faithful under hardship and suffering

- **READ v. 11 - 13**
- Times in world's army where the commander may not always have the soldier's best interest in mind; but, we serve a commander who is always faithful to us, even when many times we are unfaithful
- Thomas a Kempis quote (priest in Latin church during late medieval period): *"Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace."*
- Lee Strobel quote (the Case for ... books): *"... If two angels in heaven were given assignments by God at the same time, one of them to go and rule over the greatest nation on earth and the other to go sweep the streets of the dirtiest village, each angel would be completely indifferent as to which one got which assignment. It simply wouldn't matter to them. Why? Because the real joy lies in being obedient to God. For a Christ follower, the important thing isn't what God has us doing; the important thing is that we're doing what God wants us to do."*
- Being obedient is about pleasing the Lord in everything we do; **REFER v. 4, 5**
- As the church of Christ, must work together – team effort; Heard said, "What we start together, we finish together"
- For country: must follow orders – stockade; obedient to the minutest detail
- For Jesus: He requires no less; why should following Him be any different?
- True veterans of Christ must be obedient and faithful to their commander – king of Kings, lord of Lords
- John 14:15 (NIV)
15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.
- **** ON SCREEN ** 3 – Must be Loyal, willing to Sacrifice**
 - Luke 5, told Jesus was near the Sea of Galilee teaching the people about God, saw two boats left by fishermen; one of boats belonged to Simon Peter, and Jesus got into the boat and told Peter to put out a little ways because of the crowd, continued to teach; afterwards, told Simon to go out into deeper water and put out his fishing nets – Peter says we've tried, worked all night, caught nothing; they do, catch so many fish they need help hauling them in, once they got all fish in boat so full started to sink
 - Luke 5:8-11 (NIV)
8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,

10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."

11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, **left everything and followed him.**

▪ **Luke 14:33 (NIV)**

33 **In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.**

- **Question:** Want a revival? Want to recruit and bring in a haul of people for the kingdom of Christ? Want to be a veteran in Christ's army, need to begin showing true loyalty to Him and His cause and willing to give up whatever is holding you back – give it all up for Him

○ **Matthew 16:24-25 (NIV)**

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

- **Veterans to this country: Devoted, committed to all it represents at all cost**
○ **Veterans of Jesus: Devoted, committed to Him and His kingdom at all cost**
○ **Poem**

*One day I looked at myself—at the self that Christ can see;
I saw the person I am today and the one I ought to be.
I saw how little I really pray and how little I really do;
I saw the influence of my life—how little of it was true!
I saw the bundle of faults and fears I ought to lay on the shelf;
I had given a little bit to God, but I hadn't given myself!
I came from seeing myself, with my mind made up to be—
The sort of person that Christ can use, with a heart for Him always in me.*

● **Close: Invitation**

- **Question:** Have you surrendered all to Jesus? Have you freely given Him your life?
○ **Question:** If you have, how are you doing in your service to Him, in your obedience and faithfulness, in your loyalty and devotion
○ **Question:** In some way or another we've all failed, but are you doing something about it, or are you giving up in defeat?
○ **Question:** This church, this community, state, nation, and world needs true, genuine veterans of Jesus Christ – won't you be one?