

2 Timothy 2: 1 -- 8 Gonerby and Barrowby October 2011

3 Images of a Christian

Introduction

E100 -- section 18 "Paul to the Leaders"

In several of Paul's letters there are sections that are addressed specifically to those leading the churches, but Paul's letter to Timothy -- as the name suggests is exclusively written to this very young leader -- who was being asked to look after a large and important church established at Ephesus.

But although written personally to Timothy as a church leader, the principles Paul writes of, of course, apply to all Christians -- because we are all disciples and workers for Christ.

In chapter 2, Paul uses seven different images to describe the Christian disciple -- The Steward, the Soldier, the Athlete, The Farmer, the Workman, the Tool or Instrument, the Servant.

Today, we look at the First three --

1. The Steward

Verse 2 " and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men".

Stewards come up a few times in the parables of Jesus -- the parable of the talents -- expand, and of the unjust steward

A steward is someone who is entrusted with looking after someone else's things.

We are stewards of the gospel -- of God's message -- spiritual treasure if you like.. It's not just for us. We received it from the previous generation and we have to keep it uncorrupted and pass it on accurately to the next generation.

That is why evangelical leaders can sometimes be awkward -- when we see the gospel watered-down or its meaning changed -- we don't like it. We have a stewardship.

Keep God's message safe -- pass it on (don't bury it in a hole in the ground), don't let it die with you. Parents -- especially important.

2. The Soldier

Read verses 3 and 4

Soldiers -- endure hardship. Not easy to be a Christian -- difficult to go against the tide -- in a battle that requires spiritual endurance.

Soldiers avoid worldly entanglements -- read 4. In the parable of the sower , Jesus spoke of the seed that was choked by weeds -- representing those disciples who were distracted from following him by their own worldly concerns.

It may be we have not time for God's work because of pressures of children and job. Or we may have passed that phase of life, but without realising it, have filled up our lives with rather too many "trivial pursuits" and equally have allocated inadequate time to be a disciple of Christ.

3. The Athlete.

Paul often uses athletic illustrations in his writings -- wrestling, boxing, running, and exercising. The Greeks and Romans were enthusiastic about sports and the Olympic and other games were important events to them. Paul had already urged Timothy to exercise like an athlete. (1 Timothy chapter 4). Now Paul instructs him to obey the rules.

There were lots of rules that you had to follow in participating and preparing for the Greek games -- just as there are lots of rules in our modern games. Athletes have been caught out and lost their medals if they haven't kept to the rules.

So Timothy was being instructed that the important thing was to obey God's word -- live according to his rules if you want to win the race.

Our society makes up its ethical rules as it goes a long -- but God has given us his rules by which we can live happy lives.

Conclusion

About commitment -- serious commitment.