

# Approved Unto God

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## The Reading

### 2 Timothy 2:1–14 (KJV)

- 1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
- 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.
- 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.
- 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.
- 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.
- 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.
- 8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:
- 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.
- 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
- 11 *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*:
- 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:
- 13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.
- 14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that

they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

## What Did We Just Read?

The words we just read lead up to a famous portion of Scripture. It is actually this verse that not only is the title of my ministry website, but, more importantly, is what my ministry revolves around. As I have stated before, my ministry is about teaching, and teaching from the word of God.

But, before we get into the verse we did not read yet, we need to think about the context of it. The context I am speaking of here is the context of the Scripture leading up to the verse. What is it about the words we just read that define what the verse we will read? Let's investigate a few things from what was just read.

### Fact 1 - Only Christians

Paul is the writer of this epistle to Timothy, his son in the faith. I wish we had the time to spend reading all of chapter 1 and studying it first. It would be good for you to do so later on. Timothy's teacher and mentor is Paul, and Paul is telling Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He is telling Timothy this for several reasons. Timothy is being called into the ministry of Jesus Christ to carry on Paul's message to the Gentiles. In the previous chapter, Paul was exhorting Timothy in the following way.

#### **2 Timothy 1:6–8 (KJV)**

**6** Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

**7** For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

**8** Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Do not be afraid; Do not be ashamed. Be strong, be of good courage, knowing God will bless those who willingly allow the afflictions that come about because of our belief on His only begotten Son, Jesus.

The fact we see here is Paul, a Christian, was exhorting Timothy, a Christian. Only a Christian will be able to be approved of by God. The verse we will read, only applies to Christians. After all, as we read in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Faithful men can only be Christians because the faithful here are those who believe on Jesus.

## Fact 2 - Soldier of Jesus Christ

Accomplishing what we will read can only be done by a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

As Paul states here, no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. The soldier who strives for mastery will only be crowned if he strives lawfully. We have to do a couple of things. We must do things according to God's terms, his plan, his methods, etc. We do not do these things out of our own knowledge or power. Additionally, we must be loyal to our King.

Have you ever considered what things maintain our salvation. We know from what we read at the start that Jesus is faithful; that he cannot deny himself. This was said after Paul's statement "if we believe not". Think about all the times belief is spoken of alongside salvation. I think of verses like the following:

### **John 3:15 (KJV)**

**15** That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

### **John 3:16 (KJV)**

**16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

### **John 6:40 (KJV)**

**40** And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

### **John 6:47 (KJV)**

**47** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

### **Acts 13:48 (KJV)**

**48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

### **Acts 16:31 (KJV)**

**31** And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

### **1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (KJV)**

**1** Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

**2** By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

**3** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

**4** And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

### **Colossians 1:21–23 (KJV)**

**21** And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

**22** In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:

**23** If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

### **Hebrews 3:17–19 (KJV)**

**17** But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

**18** And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

**19** So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The list goes on, but it is noteworthy that our believing on Jesus always accompanies salvation. When we read our King James bible, we see the word believeth used. The eth ending on this English word refers to some grammatical constructions. To believe, in the way it is being used in the verses we read, is a verb (denotes action), is a present tense verb (it is an action that is currently in process with no realization of its completion), it is in the active voice (the one doing the action is currently doing the action). This means it is a continuous, or current and ongoing, belief. It is for this reason that I carefully state when teaching or preaching, that as long as we believe on Jesus, our salvation is eternally secure. If we don't believe, then it is not.

As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, we must be loyal to Jesus and strive to remain loyal to Jesus Christ. We are on His side!

## Fact 3 - Consider What Has Been Said

Paul tells Timothy in verse 7 to "consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

He then goes on to reiterate Jesus being raised from the dead according to the gospel.

Paul shows Timothy that because of Jesus Christ, he suffers trouble as an evil doer, but yet endures all things that those who believe may also obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

We must consider what Jesus has done, who we are without him and who we are with him. We only do this through his word.

## Some Context

Some additional context when looking at these three facts mentioned here is good.

We, as readers of the Scriptures in the current day, need to realize what was written in both the Old and New Testament was written to the people of that

time. It was written to them, but it was also written for us. It was not written to us, but was written for us.

The believers who were around during the time of the writing of the New Testament gospels and letters lived under much persecution. Things were not comfortable as they are for us these days. There was a very real danger involved with being a believer in Jesus and even more so for those who were disciples. Those who took up their cross daily, faced perils many of us cannot even imagine.

Jews who became believers in Jesus as their Messiah, were cut off from those Jews who did not believe on Jesus. They were persecuted by these Jews and persecuted by the Romans, who were no fans of Jesus, either.

Gentiles who came to believe on Jesus as Lord and God were persecuted. No longer did they hold to the gods they previously worshipped. They were persecuted by their own people, the Roman government, and Jews who refused to believe Gentiles could be a part of the promise given to them by God during the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We read from history of believers having their homes and land taken from them and facing death for themselves and their families. Nero, as is written by Tacitus, a Roman historian, even used Christians as flaming torches to light the games he hosted.

With this context we can see why it was a concern of Paul to warn Christians not to give up their faith in the face of all this persecution. We see this plea and warning in much of his writings, some of which we just read.

## The Next Verse

### **2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)**

**15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Once we consider the previous three facts, we can begin to get a much better understanding of verse 15. This is the verse that supports my ministry and is the verse that is associated with my ministry website. While there are many great verses in Scripture, I find this one to be particularly appealing. I also find it one that has become a willfully forgotten verse over the centuries. No longer do

Christians heed this command.

This verse is a command. The implied subject here is YOU. You study to shew thyself approved unto God. This verse is for you and is a commandment for the Christian believer.

Now, the word study here comes from the Greek word spuodazo. If you just go to a Greek dictionary or lexicon, you will probably find this word means to hurry, make haste, be zealous, or to do your best. While we must be zealous or strive to do our best, the word study is actually a good one considering our need to consider God's word as we heard earlier. The word in the Latin is studeo, from which we do get the word study. We should be mindful to be zealous and make haste to study, or consider what God has said. This way of looking at it fits the context surrounding verse 15 and is backed up by the rest of verse 15.

We are called to be workman; workman that needeth not be ashamed. As Paul stated earlier in chapter 1 verse 12,

### **2 Timothy 1:12 (KJV)**

**12** For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

As we study as a workman, we are not ashamed. It is only through studying God's word that we can have the faith Paul is speaking of here. Regardless of the persecution and suffering we may endure as a soldier of Jesus Christ, we have the faith and courage to believe and be fully persuaded that Jesus is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day. That day that he will call us to himself and that day that will result with the judgment against those on this earth and the wrath of God that is poured out.

As we study to show ourselves approved unto God as workman that need not be ashamed, we will develop the ability to rightly divide the word of truth. Paul backs this up with what he said in 2 Timothy 2:7, when he said to consider what he had said and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. With this understanding, gained through studying the word of truth, we are able to rightly divide the word of truth.

This is what we have been commanded to do and this is what shows God's approval on our lives.

# The Benefits

We, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, willing to suffer for Christ's sake and to go out and teach others what God has taught us, receive many benefits.

The greatest benefits are God's approval of us and the free gift of salvation we receive when we believe on Jesus. Amazingly, there's more! Our salvation and approval of God is like the cake, but there is even icing on that cake! Consider these benefits.

A benefits which I discovered early on will seem a bit confusing with what we have seen from this message. While we will suffer persecution, we also see examples in Scripture of those being persecuted also receiving kindness, if you will, from those persecuting them.

## **Proverbs 16:7 (KJV)**

**7** When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

God truly is so good to us! We, who were sinners and have made the choice to turn away from our sins and turn to God by believing on His only begotten Son, Jesus, are the most truly blessed of all individuals. We are all somewhat familiar with the idea of salvation. That is, we are as familiar as is possible for us to understand. When we put off this body of corruption and become incorruptible, then we will have the true understanding of what salvation means to us.

Proverbs 16:7 is a statement that is in place for every single believer, if he or she will accept it. We get a bit of this when we are saved, but as we allow ourselves to be further sanctified, we get even a better understanding of this principle shown in Proverbs 16:7.

There are a few words in this proverb that need to be looked at. These are 'please', 'peace', and 'enemies'

Please is the Hebrew word *ra tsah*. When our ways please the Lord it means our ways are accepted with pleasure, ways that show we are a friend of God. It also shows it is we have favor with God because our favor has been regained; regained through Jesus, and specifically the blood of Jesus.

Peace is the Hebrew word *Shalem*. The peace we have as a result of us believing



on Jesus for our salvation, produces a complete, healthy relationship with others, even our enemies, that can produce no harm.

Enemies is the Hebrew word Oyemph. Our enemies are not only our adversaries, but are actually hostile adversaries. They are more than happy to persecute us. But because of our position in the body of Christ, the same Jesus Christ who defeated death, hell and the grave, we are protected just as the Israelites were protected by God in many instances. God will take the fight to our enemies when needed and because of this, our enemies, while being a hostile enemy, will treat us peaceably rather than suffer the wrath of God!

How wonderful it is to be a child of God; to be a member of the body of Christ! He is our Rock, our strong tower, our place of refuge! Believe on Jesus and continue believing on Him and your salvation is eternally secure!