

A Good Soldier for Christ

July 29th, 2024



Greetings dear Family, today the Lord reminds us of what it takes to be a good soldier for Him. In 2 Timothy Chapter 2, verses 3 and 4 Paul writes, *“Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.”* Amen.

This letter from Paul to Timothy meant that Timothy was to suffer "as a good soldier of Jesus." Paul did not have violence in mind, but rather the attitude of a well-trained soldier. Military personnel focus on their mission, not unrelated concerns. They leave the greater planning, as well as the details of food and housing, to their commander.

Ephesus was a Roman military city during this time. The image of a soldier would have been very familiar to Timothy as well as to other believers in Ephesus. Paul was suffering in a Roman prison at the time he wrote these words. He expected Timothy to also be willing to suffer for the faith and endure hardship for the sake of Christ. This was the expectation of the believer who sought to live fully for God.

The words in 2 Timothy reminds me of Maximilian Kolbe, who was a priest, a prisoner and a saint. He sacrificed his life to save a Polish political prisoner at the concentration camp in Auschwitz.

When he was 12 years old, young Maximilian had a vision of the Virgin Mary. He later described the incident. “That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me. Then she came to me holding two crowns, one white, and the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity and the red one that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both.” And he did.

When Maximilian was a student, in the midst of his studies, World War I broke out. Maximilian's father, Julius Kolbe, joined a Polish Legion fighting against the Russians for an independent Poland, still subjugated and still divided among Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Julius Kolbe was caught and hanged as a traitor by the Russians at the relatively young age of 43. This was a traumatic event for young Maximilian.

He became a Catholic priest and a Franciscan friar who volunteered to die in place of a man, he did not know, in the German death camp of Auschwitz, located in German-occupied Poland during World War II.

On February 17, 1941, the monastery where Father Kolbe lived and worked was shut down by the German authorities. That day Kolbe and four others were arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned. A few months later, he was transferred to Auschwitz.

Continuing to act as a priest, Kolbe was subjected to violent harassment, including beatings and lashings. Once, he was smuggled to a prison hospital by friendly inmates. At the end of July 1941, a prisoner escaped from the camp, prompting the deputy commander, to pick ten men to be starved to death in an underground bunker to deter further escape attempts. When one of the selected men, cried out, "My wife! My children!" Kolbe stepped forward and volunteered to take his place in the starvation bunker.

Father Kolbe led the prisoners in daily prayer. Each time the guards checked on him, he was standing or kneeling in the middle of the cell and looking calmly at those who entered. After they had been starved and deprived of water for two weeks, only Kolbe and three others remained alive.

The guards wanted the bunker emptied, so they gave the four remaining prisoners lethal injections of carbolic acid. Father Kolbe is said to have raised his left arm and calmly waited for the deadly injection. He died on August 14th, 1941.

Jesus began speaking, "My servant, Maximilian, knew what would happen and he didn't care. His only concern was to bring someone closer to Me. He suffered willingly and without complaint. Cease to complain, My people, your sufferings are minuscule compared to Mine and those of the saints. Understand, children, that someone cannot kill My Spirit that lives within you if your will is My will. Your compassion and love for others, for strangers, will shine forth so that all will know you belong to Me.

"You are not in the secret service, you are in My army, and should be engaged in spiritual warfare against the enemy. The devil, the flesh and the world are real and are out to destroy your testimony and effectiveness as believers. The enemy will seek you out and try to dismantle the work I have done in you.

"I have called you to be good soldiers and prayer warriors. Together, we will be victorious in spiritual conflict and battles. Do not get caught up in distractions or become divided in your faith. You need to be steadfast and unwavering when hardships come your way. Do not allow yourselves to be easily discouraged. Be prepared at all times, be resilient, be willing and be joyful in the midst of trials. A good foot soldier remains watchful and stands true to the end.

"Your focus should be to let others see Me through you in all things. If you are distracted, you become vulnerable which opens you up for Satan's attacks. He wants for you to be ineffective, he wants to have influence over you, and to derail you from My plans. People should see you only as My faithful ones.

"I delight when your thoughts, words and actions are pleasing to Me. When you are diligent, vigilant at your post and remain steadfast. To be in My victorious army requires effort on your part. Remember, you are wrestling with darkness and the spiritual evil of this world. Go forward, dear ones, and wear the true hallmark of one who belongs to Me. Lift up high your royal banners of love, compassion and courage." And that was the end of His message.