

GOOD SOLDIERS, SHAMEFUL SOLDIERS

In describing those who are privileged to proclaim his gospel, God often depicts them as soldiers in the army of Christ. He would have his preachers to be good soldiers (II Tim. 2:3). Across the ages, men have found numerous adjectives to describe the qualities of good soldiers. Words such as brave, courageous, faithful, strong, stalwart, valiant, bold, aggressive, dauntless describe the true soldier. On the other hand there have always been some soldiers unworthy of their station and trust. Such men are described as cowardly, fearful, weak, timid, deserters, worthless, spineless, traitors.

Today a great spiritual conflict has enveloped the brotherhood of churches of Christ. One army is composed of false brethren. They are men who do not love the church. They despise her sacred doctrine, her worship and her spiritual mission. On every hand, in every state they now are at work. They are gathering like-minded recruits and advancing, taking unsuspecting congregations and imposing their unscriptural agenda upon them. Those in the army of change are a rebellious band of traitors. They have openly declared themselves and their intentions to make the churches of Christ into something quite foreign to what they have been. They scoff at the idea of being New Testament churches, preferring rather to be Postmodern churches fashioned after Robert Shuller's Crystal Cathedral or Rick Warren's Saddleback Community (Baptist) Church. These men have left their first love and it is unlikely they will return.

In this article I speak to those yet at work among Christ's congregations. Men who are supported by churches to be *good soldiers* of Christ. All such men I urge to consider the following characteristic

- * Faithful soldiers will arm and prepare themselves for the coming conflict.
- * They will urge their fellows to do the same.
- * They will set about preparing their defenses before the enemy launches his assault.
- * They will not flee in the face of trouble.
- * Nor will they be party to striking a compromise with the enemy.
- * They will stand fast even if they must stand alone.
- * They will be faithful unto death if need be. For them God has reserved a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).
- * They may lose a battle, but they will fight on until the victory is won.
- * They will not change their allegiance to please men (Gal. 1:10). They look to heaven for their approval and reward.

All who are enrolled as soldiers in the army of heaven and receive a soldier's pay, should ask themselves "Am I a *good soldier* of Christ Jesus?" JHW