

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2007**

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE BELIEVERS

Message Seventeen

Their Symbols—a Laboring Husbandman and a Good Soldier

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:3-4, 6; 4:7; James 5:7; 1 Tim. 1:18

I. The believers are symbolized by a laboring husbandman—2 Tim. 2:6:

- A. The most significant thing related to being a laboring husbandman, a farmer, is labor—1 Thes. 1:3; 2:9.
- B. The husbandman awaits the precious fruit with patience, knowing that he will be the first to enjoy it—2 Tim. 2:6; James 5:7.
- C. The church is God's farm, and we are God's fellow workers, working together with Him to sow the seed of life into others and to water them with the Spirit of life by healthy words—1 Cor. 3:6, 9; 2 Cor. 6:1a; Luke 8:11; John 7:38; 6:63.
- D. A laboring husbandman is one with God the Father as the husbandman in caring for the true vine as the organism of the Triune God—15:1, 5a:
 1. The picture of the vine and the husbandman reveals what God is doing in the universe and what we need to do.
 2. God the Father as the husbandman is growing Christ the Son as the vine, and we are helping Him to grow Christ.
 3. The Father as the husbandman is the source and the founder; God the Son is the center, the embodiment, and the manifestation; God the Spirit is the reality and realization; and the branches are the Body, the corporate expression—vv. 1, 4-5, 26.
 4. The organism of the Triune God in John 15 is the Triune God united, mingled, and incorporated with His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people—14:20:
 - a. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coinhere with the disciples mutually, for the Triune God and the disciples are united, mingled, and incorporated into one—15:4-5.
 - b. The goal of God's economy is this enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation of the consummated God with the regenerated believers.

II. The believers are symbolized by a good soldier—2 Tim. 2:3-4:

- A. The apostles considered their ministry a warfare for Christ—1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 4:7:
 1. The Christian life involves fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness and fighting for the interests of God's kingdom—Eph. 6:10-19.
 2. Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle; hence, we should be soldiers fighting for God's interests—2 Tim. 2:3-4.

3. To fight the good fight of the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy; in particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 6:12; 1:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
 4. The overcomers are not delivered out of the present chaos; instead, they conquer the destructive satanic chaos and triumph in the constructive divine economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4, 19-20; 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17-18; 4:7-8:
 - a. The good soldiers suffer the chaos, but instead of being disappointed or discouraged, they are strengthened and enabled to stand for and live out the divine economy according to the truth—vv. 10, 14-18; 2:15.
 - b. We conquer the chaos by the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-sufficient grace—1:9; 4:22.
- B. The Lord's ministry is the sounding of the trumpet for the army to go to war; to war the good warfare is to war against the different teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God's economy according to the apostles' ministry—1 Cor. 14:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; Num. 10:9; Judg. 7:18:
1. Differing teachings refer to teachings that are not in line with the economy of God—1 Tim. 6:3.
 2. The differing teachings in 1:3-4, 6-7; 6:3-5, 20-21 and the heresies in 4:1-3 are the seed, the source, of the church's decline, degradation, and deterioration.
 3. For the administration and shepherding of a local church, the first thing needed is to terminate the differing teachings of the dissenting ones, which distract the saints from the central line of God's economy—Titus 1:9.
 4. Paul charged Timothy, his faithful co-worker, to fight against the differing teachings and to fight for God's economy—1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4.
 5. To war the good warfare is to war against the differing teachings and to carry out God's economy concerning the gospel of grace and eternal life for the glory of the blessed God—1 Tim. 1:11, 18; 6:12.
 6. We must avoid differing teachings and concentrate on God's economy—1:4.
 7. The crucial point of the healthy teaching of the apostolic ministry concerns the Triune God processed and consummated to dispense Himself as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit into His chosen ones so that they may be brought into an organic union to receive the divine transfusion and thereby become sons of God and members of Christ; as a result, they can become the Body of Christ to express Christ, the One in whom the fullness of God dwells—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; 12:12-13, 27.
- C. To fight a good fight for the Lord's interests on this earth, we must clear away all earthly entanglements and lay hold on the eternal life, not trusting in our human life—1 Tim. 4:7; 6:12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:4:
1. Our material, physical life should not entangle us as we are endeavoring to minister Christ to others.
 2. This ministry is a fighting, and the fighting requires that we be free from entanglement.
- D. In order to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus, we need to know and experience all the matters in 2 Timothy 1:5-10, 12-14; 2:1, 7-8, 14, 16, 21-26; 3:1, 10, 13-17; 4:1-5, 7-8, 10, 14-15, 18, 22.