



THE SIGNAL

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From a damp, dark, depressing Roman prison cell the Apostle Paul penned his last letter, 2 Timothy. Written to his spiritual son, Paul sets before Timothy the imperatives of faithful service. Paul knows he is about to be executed under Nero's ruthless reign. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." [4:6] The word "offered" has the connotation of a holocaust, a complete sacrifice.

He instructs his protégé "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 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." [2:3-4] Paul has lived a sacrificial life for the cause of Christ. As it draws to a close he is practically all alone. "Demas hath forsaken me... Crescens... Titus... only Luke is with me..." [4:10-11] He appeals to Timothy to make every effort to come see him for the last time before he is beheaded. "Do thy diligence to come before winter..." [4:21]

Paul writes to pass on to Timothy the precious ministry of the gospel, exhorting him to continue faithfully in his calling and duties, to hold fast to sound doctrine, to preach fervently, to have full confidence in God's word, to stay away from false teaching, and to accept persecution as part of being a soldier in Christ's army. It seems as if Paul is concerned that Timothy was growing weak in the faith. Battle-fatigue is not uncommon for those on the front line facing constant fiery darts. These commands are not to be relegated to those considered "full-time Christian workers." These admonitions are for all who march under the banner of Christ, the Captain of our faith.

As humans, we love creature comforts. We strive to avoid hardship, hard things, any unpleasantnesses, pain and inconvenience. But a true soldier takes for granted that all these things will be a part of his service. He is prepared for imminent combat. He thinks ahead. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil." [Prov. 22:3] Our warfare is spiritual. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." [Eph. 6:12]

Notice the strength we are to appropriate. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." [2:1] The indwelling Holy Spirit enables us in this warfare. He gives us the necessary power to be effective. This is a command, not a suggestion. It is given to every soldier in the army of the Lord. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." [Eph. 6:10]

A good soldier propagates, meaning he passes along to his offspring and others what he knows. It has the connotation of affecting a greater number, or a greater area. This is our mandate. He tells Timothy "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." [2:2] This is spiritual reproduction, and it should keep on spreading until the Lord comes for us.

A good soldier perseveres. He endures hardness. On the front line of conflict, even as some are defecting, and others are falling, we are to stand fast. There is no reprieve from this ordinance from our Commander. While the fiery darts and the onslaught of the enemy pummels us, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow soldiers facing the enemy and advancing toward victory. It is always too soon to quit. "Endure hardness," Paul counsels. [2:2] "Timothy, you have a part in all of this, too. No one is exempt."

Our natural inclinations, our personalities are no excuse for not being willing and ready to endure hardness. Timothy had a reticent personality and tended to be intimidated by others. These were no excuses for slacking in the heat of battle. His part was to overcome these natural tendencies through the Spirit and to boldly carry out his calling. We are to do the same.

A good soldier strives to please his commander. Peter Masters in his book *Hallmarks of Christian Character* writes this:

A soldier accepts danger, knowing he could die for the cause at any time, and he accepts that. How much more should Christians accept inconvenience or setbacks. A soldier in the field accepts rations, uniform, and injury, and so does

the Christian worker. His means will often be limited, his work defined for him; insults, hurts and hindrances assail, but all must be sustained with good grace and faithful prayer. Victory is essential to the earthly soldier, not optional.

Isaac Watts put it this way in his hymn:

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follow'r of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flow'ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith's discerning eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine
In robes of vict'ry through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine.

Thank you for standing with us here at the Where God Is Blessing Broadcasting Network for the cause of the gospel. We appreciate your support and covet your prayers.

Your servant,
Chris Lamb

TRUTH FOR LIFE WITH ALISTAIR BEGG

WEEKDAYS AT 6:30 A.M.

Truth For Life with Alistair Begg is the newest broadcast ministry to join the host of Bible-teaching programs on WGIB. The stated goal of the *Truth For Life* ministry is about seeing unbelievers converted, believers established, and local churches strengthened. Pastor Begg is confident that these goals can be accomplished through the expository preaching of God's Word.

Alistair Begg has been in pastoral ministry since 1975. Following graduation from The London School of Theology, he served eight years in Scotland at both Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh and Hamilton Baptist Church. In 1983, he became the senior pastor at Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio. In 1995, *Truth For Life* began airing its 25-minute daily program on seven radio stations. Today, the program can now be heard in every major radio market across the United States and also in select Canadian markets, through nearly 1,800 radio outlets.

The teaching on *Truth For Life* stems from the week-by-week Bible teaching at Parkside Church. Alistair looks to God as he proclaims His truth through the program, and to the Spirit of God to transform the lives of those who listen. In 2009, driven by the desire to share the good news of the gospel without cost being a barrier, the ministry made the entire *Truth For Life* teaching archive free for download. Since then, over 55 million messages have been downloaded. Also, *Truth For Life* has made all of its CDs, DVDs, and books by Alistair Begg and other featured authors available on an "at cost" basis. In addition, people all around the world can now access the teaching of Alistair Begg through two convenient mobile apps, on podcasts, and even through streaming television. *Truth For Life* also connects with listeners at live ministry events and conferences across the United States and Canada in cities where the radio program is heard. Led by Alistair Begg and overseen by an independent, volunteer board of trustees, *Truth For Life* is a Bible-teaching ministry seeking to faithfully proclaim the Word of God and is committed to the highest level of financial stewardship. Since the local church is the primary means through which discipleship occurs in a Christian's life, the *Truth For Life* broadcast and resources are meant to supplement, not substitute, the regular preaching of the Word that exists in the local church.

Alistair's writings include biblical studies, church history, marriage and family, and devotional booklets. Alistair's revision of Charles Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening* devotional book provides strength for today and hope for tomorrow. Alistair Begg is the senior pastor of Parkside Church where he has served for over 35 years along with his wife, Susan. They have three grown and married children, and seven grandchildren.

Beginning Nov 2, *Truth For Life* with Alistair Begg will join the WGIB morning drive-time lineup to help us get our day focused on the relevant truths from God's Word. You'll soon discover that Alistair's expositional Bible instruction provides you and your family with clear and relevant teaching rooted firmly in the Scriptures. Join Alistair each day as he leads us in the study of God's Word, verse by verse. For more information and resources, visit: truthforlife.org.