

The Price on the Field

TOM HANKS TRIVIA QUIZ: "Gentlemen, it's been a privilege (flying with you)!"

- a) Captain John Miller in ***Saving Private Ryan*** ?
- b) Astronaut Jim Lovell in ***Apollo 13*** ?
- c) Joe Banks in ***Joe Vs. The volcano*** ?

Some privileges are worth the price you pay!

2 Timothy 2:1-7 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Vss. 1,2 Strength required for the work of the gospel: strength required because the work is hard!
Vs.3 "***Suffer hardship with me***": The hardship involved is the price we pay for the privilege of being in on this.

Luke 9:23 "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Some privileges are worth the price you pay! AND it IS a great great privilege to be a follower of Christ!

→ **PAY THE PRICE OF THE PRIVILEGE:**

Vss.3,4 Suffer hardship as a **good soldier** of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

1. **THE BATTLEFIELD PRICE: the hardship of serving only one master**

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

James 4:4 ...friendship with the world is hostility towards God. Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

So there was Paul: in prison and waiting to be executed. Lots of time to reflect on where he was and why.

Many pleasures lost/ opportunities abandoned / people displeased with him. Fellow-Pharisees! Family? Friends?

The price we pay, as soldiers of Christ, to be singular in our focus: doing without any compensation other than what our one master pays.

THE BATTLEFIELD PRIVILEGE: pleasing Christ

So there was Paul... and here we are. Are we willing to pay the "battlefield price"? Risking everything, doing without -- just to please the One who enlisted us as a soldier?

Is the approval of Christ enough? Wouldn't we all rather learn to juggle? To strike a compromise? "To live a balanced life"? To please Christ somewhat and to please others / to please ourselves...

Field Marshall Montgomery:

Three things the British soldier must not be made to do without: "Mail from home/daily newspaper/plenty of tea"

1 Timothy 6:6,7 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

vs. 5 Also if anyone competes **as an athlete**, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

2. THE TRACK AND FIELD PRICE: the hardship of playing by the rules

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **Run in such a way** that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **Therefore I run in such a way**, as not without aim; **I box in such a way**, as not beating the air; but **I discipline my body** and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified**.

So there was Paul, refusing to take the easy way out of prison.

In the Roman Empire, all you had to do was worship Caesar: burn a little incense and say "Caesar is Lord" And there was this...

1 Corinthians 8:4-6 ... we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.

But Paul wouldn't think that way!

Philippians 2:9-11 ...God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

So there was Paul... and here we are: Are we willing to pay the Track and Field price? Keeping all the rules? Refusing to cheat? Refusing short cuts? Insisting on honesty? Staying on the track of integrity? No little lies. No little compromises. No double life.

THE TRACK AND FIELD PRIVILEGE: winning the prize (Chapter 4)... pleasing Christ

vs. 6 **The hard-working farmer** ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

3. THE HARVEST FIELD PRICE: the hardship of hard work

Winston Churchill: First Speech as Prime Minister / May 13, 1940 / to House of Commons:

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

"Poor people, poor people. They trust me, and I can give them nothing but disaster for quite a long time."

Farming: cut down the trees, remove the stumps, move the rocks, plough the soil, sow the seed, weed the field, chase the crows ... work work work! And for what?

THE HARVEST FIELD PRIVILEGE: a share of the crops

NOTICE: And the work that a farmer does is all done *in hope* that the work will pay off! For months!

It's all *Work work work* --- for who knows exactly what!

You know what it's like? **It's like an author** hoping to get published.

You know what it's like? **It's like a church**, wanting to make **an impact** on the city in which it lives!

So there was Paul, having worked hard for years, having laboured in hope --- and now feeling very deserted and having little to show for all his clearing and ploughing and sowing and weeding...

So there was Paul... and here are you and I: Are we willing to pay the farmers' price?

Working hard for "the whole season," **making the sacrifices** of pleasing only one Master, **playing by the rules**, **working hard** with perhaps nothing to show for all our work for a long long time.

With **only the hope** that we are not wasting our time and our effort, but in fact are **earning our share of the crops** --- and **pleasing our Master** in the process?

2 Timothy 2:7-8 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel... **COMMUNION**