

## A Grenade Proof Faith

INTRO: BMW has a new offering for those who may believe their security is threatened. This vehicle can stand up to fire from an M16 rifle but that is only one aspect of this amazing car.

1. It can also withstand the explosion of two grenades and having its tires flattened and still travel at 50 mph.

2. You can purchase one for yourself for only a few hundred thousand dollars.

(1. Or perhaps you would prefer a Land Rover for \$263,100 or a Mercedes of comparable security for a couple of hundred thousand more?

3. For most of us that simply isn't an option and we will just have to face life without our armored vehicle.

4. How about your faith? How strong and tough is your faith? If your faith took a hit, would you continue to love and serve your God?

(1. If you had all four of your tires flattened would you keep on going or lay down and give up?

1. The apostle Paul says in, **II Timothy 1:12**, **“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”**

1. Paul has a grenade proof faith. He's not ashamed of his faith. He knows whom he has believed. He is persuaded that His Lord will fulfill His commitments to Him. He has no doubt about it.

2. Paul tells Timothy, **“For this reason I also suffer these things....”** What reasons?

3. First, Paul says in verse 7, **“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”**

4. Second, Paul says in verse 8 that we should, **“not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord”** and that we should **“share” “in the sufferings for the gospel.”**

5. Third, Paul reminds us in verse 9 of **“who has saved us and called us with a holy calling.”**

6. Finally, Paul says in verse 12 that he is **“not ashamed”** of the gospel and that we in verse 8 should **“not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”**

II. I've known several people over the years who were at one time faithful servants of God but something happened and they stopped serving God. In fact they became bitter and angry people.

1. What happened? In one person's life it was a combination of things ending with the loss of a business.

2. In another person's life it was when a Christian he looked up to failed. In another's it was when a loved one died.

(1. In another it was the devastating illness of a loved one.

3. Those events in the lives of some Christians appear to be even more catastrophic than the explosion of a grenade under their feet.

4. One person's decision to turn away from God does not just affect that one person.

(1. It affects their family, it affects their friends, acquaintances, and it will affect their children and their descendants.

5. The Kurdish Yezidi people group of about 100,000 people is a vivid example of the truth of this. That your decision to turn away from God doesn't just affect you.

6. The Holy Scriptures of Yezidism known as the Mishaf Resor "Black Book" (dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century say that, "Satan is our god, and Beelzebub is our king."

7. While the majority of the 30 million Kurds world wide follow Sunni Islam a small percentage did not convert to Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, instead following the tenets of Yezidism.

8. Yezidis principally worship Lucifer. He goes by the name of Malak Tawus and is known as the "peacock angel" or the "proud angel."

9. Yezidis believe Christ came to earth only as an angel in human form. A Yezidi who is now a Christian pastor "Milo" explains, "The Yezidi people say God created many nations, and every nation God gave to angels. They believe He gave our nation to Satan. Our people believe if you don't worship Satan, God will be angry with you. They say this is the will of God."

(1. Milo goes on to say, "Every family must build one place for worshipping Satan, and ever day they must pray to Satan."

10. The religion, which also uses the sun and serpents as symbols, has a strong cultural hold on Yezidi Kurds.

(1. Villagers regularly pay a tax to the sheik for him to perform various rituals such as weddings and funerals.

11. The most important historical figure in Yezidism is Sheik Adi, who dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century, whom they believe to be the reincarnation of Satan.

12. Carvings on the monument in Shamiram depict the Iraqi city of Lalish where Sheik Adi is buried and to which Yezidis journey to worship.

13. Inevitably these false religions from Islam to Mormonism to Yezidism come back to one person.

(1. Sheik Adi by turning to the devil because of his hatred of God damned the destiny of his descendants and people for century after century.

14. The only good news about these people is that God is now making inroads and through visions and miracles some are turning to the Lord.

III. How about your faith? How strong and tough is your faith? If your faith took a hit, would you continue to love and serve your God?

1. What if the war in Iraq goes badly? Will you continue to believe and serve God?

2. What if there is another terrorist attack on the United States and this time it affects you or your family? Will you continue to believe and serve God?

3. What would happen if you suffered a debilitating disease and you asked God several times to heal you and He said "No?"

(1. In addition you were thrown into prison a few times, beaten with rods three separate times,

1. whipped five different times, you were stoned, shipwrecked, went hungry, didn't have enough clothes to keep you warm and were bitten by a poisonous snake?

4. If that happened to you would you do as Job's wife suggested and just, "**Curse God and die (Job 2:9b)!**"

5. Those things didn't happen to Job but they did happen to the apostle Paul who just kept on serving and loving God more and more and more (II **Corinthians 11:22-28**; II **Corinthians 12:7-9**; **Acts 28:1-6**).

IV. Sadly what is most likely to happen after we take some hit in our life is not that we turn completely away from God.

1. What is most likely to happen is something far worse and many of us here today manifest some degree of that in our Christian walk.

2. What am I talking about? When some bad thing happens to us whether it is an illness, financial blow, or a death in our family What is our tendency?

3. For most of us if we are serving God in any way we tend to slow down in that service. Which is understandable in the short term.

(1. But many never rise back to their previous level of service.

4. And so what occurs in the lives of far too many people is a downward spiral of effectiveness.

5. We have a serious illness and we recover. After recovery we are not as effective.

(1. Someone does something that hurts us in some way. Our effectiveness is further diminished.

(2. A loved one becomes ill or even dies and we become even less effective.

(3. We have an unexpected expense or a loss of income and we become that much less effective.

6. I think you can see where this is going. Eventually you can have many people in every church whose effectiveness in service to their Lord has been nullified. They have been neutralized.

7. They may still sing the hymns, they may still come to church, they may still pray but there is not any life in their singing, or joy much joy in being with other believers, and little if any fervency in prayer.

(1. You may even reach the point in prayer like one man I read about whose prayer life consisted of looking up at the Lord's prayer on his wall at night said, "God those are my sentiments" and went to sleep.

8. There are many of us who have gone to sleep as far as any service to our Lord.

9. Would we continue on if there were to come some persecution to this country? Would we continue on if there were an attack on this country?

10. It is almost a joke because so many would have to start before they could continue on.

11. So many Christians have shifted into neutral and they've been coasting for years and years and years and it comes to a point where the momentum stops and they still think they are coasting

(1. But like Samson there's nothing that happens when they rise up. They might as well be like the Yezidis worshipping the devil because they surely are no longer serving God!

(2. In fact through their example of non service, of non prayer, of non joy, of non everything concerning the One true God

1. They become a stumbling block to those who are trying to serve God.

2. They have become a whitewashed wall much like the Pharisees were accused up by the apostles.

3. A wall blocking those who would do something in service to their God.

V. Are you that man? Are you that woman? As Nathan pointed to David and said "Thou are the man!" Does what I have been describing hit home? Does it describe you?

1. Well, if you say in your heart that it does. If you can admit it to yourself there is hope that you can change.

2. That's the number one thing that King David had going for him - when he heard God speaking about the things he had done wrong, he tried to change.

3. If you have a desire to change, to rise up, to become again an effective servant of the Lord your God. Then it is not too late.

4. It is not too late for you to leave a legacy of faith for your family and friends.

(1. I like the article in the Baptist Messenger by Tom Eliff. He asks the question "Have you shared your testimony with your family?" (EXP)

5. Wouldn't it be great if all of us in this church could rise up? Rise up to a new level of service, go beyond where we have ever gone before.

(1. Instead of becoming less and less effective that we could become more and more effective in service to our Lord?

6. I urge you today to rise up! I think that is what the apostle Paul was telling Timothy. "You've been beaten down Timothy. Get up. Rise up. Start moving. Do something!"

7. “God’s given you everything that you need Timothy. You can do it because God’s provided for it and you can have a grenade proof faith”

VI. How is it that Timothy can have a such a strong and vibrant faith?

1. Paul instructs Timothy and I believe us to about how to have that kind of faith, a grenade proof faith.

2. Paul tells Timothy in **II Timothy 2:1** to **“be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”**

3. He’s saying, “Timothy you know, don’t you remember what a wondrous thing you have been given? You through the unmerited mercy of God have been given forgiveness for your sins.”

(1. “You have been freely given eternal life. Be strong Timothy in this wondrous grace. Don’t forget how blessed you are.”

4. and Paul says **“hold fast to the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 1:13).”**

5. “Don’t you remember Timothy the very words of God that you have been instructed with from me. Where’s the faith and the love that came forth in your life as a result of the hearing the Word of God?”

6. “Don’t forget Timothy about the Word of God and the faith and love of Jesus. Hold fast Timothy! Hold fast Timothy!”

7. Paul continues to instruct Timothy and tells him, **“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**



8. “Timothy your not just a timid little boy any longer. NO! NO! Your much more than that you are a soldier! You are a soldier in the Lord’s army engaged in the Lord’s work”

(1. “No matter what bad or unpleasant thing that may happen remember that you are now a soldier and you have a mission with eternal purpose.”

9. And Paul says, **“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier (II Timothy 2:3).”**

10. “Timothy, Timothy, you’re going to have to let go of some things if you’re going to win the battle and see souls saved. This world you live in is no longer the most important thing in life. Your commander has issued his commands. That must be the focus the all consuming purpose of your life.”

11. And Timothy you can, **“endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (II Timothy 2:10).”**

12. Paul warns Timothy and others to, **“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”**

13. “Don’t be a baby Timothy run from those things that have consumed your life in the past. Run from them and instead put everything you have into being righteous, having faith, being filled with love and peace and helping others to do the same.”

14. And Timothy, **“avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.”**

15. “You know Timothy some things are just not worth fighting about and we ought to just avoid those things and people that are going to cause trouble. There’s more important things.

16. If you're going to be a servant of the Lord you **“must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...(II Timothy 2:22-25a).”**

17. Paul reminds Timothy in 3:16 and 17 that, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

18. In other words - God's provided everything you need. You just need to step up Timothy and be a workman not ashamed.

VII. Conclusion - The apostle Paul sums it all up (II Timothy 4:17-18) by saying, **“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”**

1. God will do the same for you and me if we will follow the instructions and example, which has been so faithfully given to us.
2. Will we lay down those things that have pushed us down? Will we let go of the hurts?
3. Instead of a stumbling block to the faith of others will we instead of spiraling further down begin to spiral up in our effectiveness, in our service to our Lord?
4. Will you rise up! Or, will you lay down? It's your choice, just as it was Timothy's choice.
5. You can sulk, and moan, and complain, and be a stumbling block or you can have a heart like Timothy's and change.