

## “READY”

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*“So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.” Romans 1:15*

Among many of the childhood memories I have, the ones that stand out the most were the races that I had with the other kids in my neighborhood where I grew up. “Ready, set, go!” was the phrase that propelled us from a standstill position to bodies in motion. First, we prepared ourselves by establishing a strong foothold. Then we crouched down, putting all our weight on our toes eagerly waiting for the command to go. When we heard it, we sprang forward in a sudden burst of energy toward an established finish line some distance away. It was always great to be in the race; better still to win. Getting to the goal was the reward for starting and finishing well as well as maintaining an eye on the goal all along the way. I knew even then in my earliest years the importance of being ready if I was going to do well. Being ready was a key priority. That same process—of being ready and then quickly responding to the Lord’s command is also a key priority in the Christian life. Regardless if we are called to serve the Lord in regions beyond or in our local assembly, the need to be ready and to respond to His direction wherever and whatever it might be is paramount if we are to make any progress in the race that “is set before us”, Heb. 12:1.

If ever there was a brilliant example of someone who was ready, it was the apostle Paul. To the believers at Rome He was ready to preach the glad tidings of the good news of Christ to anyone at any time under any circumstances despite the personal hardship and dangers it posed to him. It was his heart’s desire and prayer to God that his own people Israel would be saved (Rom. 10:1) despite the verbal and physical abuse he suffered at their hands, 2 Cor. 11:23-33. He also had a ministry among the Gentiles having received a personal commission from the Lord (Gal. 2:11). He truly was “all things to all men” that he might by all means “save some”, 1 Cor. 9:22. He was ready to sound forth the Gospel. Are we ready to do the same?

Paul was also ready to suffer for the Lord’s sake. When Agabus warned him of impending danger that awaited him in Jerusalem, Paul retorted, “I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”, Acts 21:13. On many occasions, Paul suffered from imprisonment, privation, scourgings and even betrayal from his own associates in ministry—all for his faithful testimony for Christ. He did not count his life dear unto himself; it was part of the process of knowing Him as he enter into the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death, Phil. 3:10. It was the principle in his life of the seed falling into the ground and dying that it might bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Paul was ready to suffer for the Lord. Are we?

Paul was also ready to serve. He told the Corinthians that he was “ready to come to them” (2 Cor. 12:14). Despite having his motives impugned and his character criticized, he knew the value of steadfastness in the work of the Lord; the blessing that it brings to the Body of Christ and the manner by which it declares in a very practical way personal love for Christ. And above it all, he was ready to be offered, knowing his departure was at hand as he awaited with anticipation the crown promised to all that love His appearing, 2 Tim. 4:6-8. Ready to save, to suffer, to serve and to see the Savior—all part of running the race that is set before us and key components of our faith in Christ, whether we serve Him here or overseas. Are we ready?

*Who will follow Jesus, Standing for the right, Holding up His banner, In the thickest fight?  
List’ning for His orders, Ready to obey, Who will follow Jesus, Serving Him today? -- Hewitt*

