**“GET READY, Get Set…GO!”**

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

**THESIS:** To encourage Christians to be ready for whatever God wants them to do.

**INTRO.:** A. The response of Jesus’ disciples to His call has always amazed me. Here are men with jobs, families, & responsibilities, and Jesus shows up, apparently

out of the blue, & tells them to follow Him – and a they do! Now! They were obviously READY!

***Mt.4:18-20***

***And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.***

***Mt.9:9***

***And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.***

***Lk.5:10-11***

***And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon***. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

 B. The old cliché that ***“the greatest ability, is availability”*** should be an axiom of every believer’s life. It was surely “words to live by” for the Apostle Paul. Again & again Paul made the statement: ***“I am ready…”*** It is that statement or rather that philosophy of the Christian life I want to expound today…

**I. BE READY TO SERVE: (text)**

1. Preachers – Missionaries – Teachers:

1. Those who are called to full-time service, need to be ready to go & do where

 ever & whatever the Lord directs!

**ILLUS.:** I have only declined one offer to preach in my 40+ years of ministry. Last

year a preacher asked me to preach a 10 or 15 minute message in a tent meeting & I said “My introductions are longer than that. No thanks.” When God called me to preach I told Him that I would go wherever & do whatever – no limitations (though I did ask Him to consider sending me as a missionary to Hawaii!).

Missionaries greatest frustration right now is not being where God called them to be & not knowing what He expects of them in this interim; to plant a church, go to another field or -?

1. Deacons – Sun. Schl. Teachers – Bus Workers, etc.
2. Every year men are nominated here to serve as Deacons & decline; they be sorry when they are face-to-face w/Jesus!
3. Opportunities abound to serve here: Children’s Church, C-Club, Bus Min., Deaf Min., etc. – yet many just sit & soak instead of surrender & serve.
4. You need to say with Paul ***“I am ready…”***  to serve!
5. Singers – Players – Pray-ers
6. There are folks here who can sing better than our special music people or better than our choir members, but when asked, always offer excuses, or never even tell anyone.
7. Some can play musical instruments – the ONLY reason that’s so is so you can glorify God w/your talent!
8. There are folks who can’t do much publicly, but who could be a blessing in private w/a personal prayer ministry.

**ILLUS.:** We used to have an older lady who just sent tracts to everyone in the phone directory! In my former church we had an older lady who just spent hours each day praying for missionaries & me! What a blessing! Paul said ***“I am ready…” – to***

***serve.*** What about you?

**II. BE READY TO SUFFER:**

***Acts 21:13***

***13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.***

1. No Pain – No Gain!

***Phil.1:29***

***For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;***

***Rom.8:17-18 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

***2 Tim.2:12***

***If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: (suffering w/eternal dividends)***

***1 Pet.2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.***

***1 Pet.4:16-19***

***Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.***

***2 Tim.3:12***

***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (persecution is the norm for the believer)***

**ILLUS.:** In our lukewarm, Laodicean churches, believers are neither hot nor cold & they make the Savior sick! Our lack of boldness & coldness nauseates Him. It is because we are cowardly, we suffer little. We fear what others will think of us if we openly witness of Him or stand for Him & His Word. But our focus needs to be on the future – when we stand before Him. Remember: No pain – no gain!

**III. BE READY TO BLESS:**

***2 Cor.12:14,15a Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend & be spent for you…***

1. Others:

**ILLUS.:** I have invested many years of my life in this church & its people. I was only 38 when I came here as pastor. I have tried to invest myself in the lives the members& have tried to help you raise your kids, teach character, develop spiritual fruit, train you to serve & stay after souls. I am looking for His “well done” of course, but I have tried to be a servant, to help & to be a blessing. To the extent I have not done so, I am a failure. To the extent I have done so, I am blessed.

 There was no Bus ministry when I came, no deaf ministry, no handicapped ministry, no soul-winning program, no Christian school, few standards, fewer opportunities to serve, no C-Club for the children, no nursing home ministry, no rescue mission ministry. I have not kept a record of those called-to-preach, became missionaries, have gone to Christian colleges, etc. over the years. None of this was done for me, but for others & for the Lord. As Paul said: ***“…that I may boast myself a little”***

**POEM:**  “A Pastor’s Heart” by Jack Hyles – See my website: **pastorpaulfedena.weebly.com**

1. The point of all this is that you should lose yourself in service for others.
2. Serving others will minimize your own problems!

**IV. BE READY TO DIE:**

2 Tim.4:6

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

1. Die To Self:

***Gal.2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.***

1. Don’t get offended.

***Ps.119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.***

1. Don’t get upset.
2. Don’t get angry.
3. “Prepare To Meet Thy God”
4. This passage was not written to unbelievers but to backslidden Israel.
5. The admonition is that God’s people be ready to meet God here as well as hereafter, i.e., to have a close walk w/Him.

**ILLUS.:** My wife received e-mail from a church member this week about “backriding” (instead of backsliding). It said: “Thank you so much for your prayers…Thank you and your husband. I wish you would still continue to pray for me…I still need prayer for my spiritual condition. I have been **back riding** for a while now & am having a hard time coming back to the Lord. Yes, I used **‘back-riding’** instead of **back-sliding**, because I believe when a person sets their foot outside the Lord’s will you slip, but when you are continuous in sliding, it’s no more a circumstance that has come our way to cause us to slide, but instead, when we continue to do our own thing it becomes a ride, and a hard one to get off of. …I know it is still **back-sliding**, just a different way to explain it…”

**CONCL.: *ARE YOU READY?!* …TO SERVE, TO SUFFER, TO BLESS & TO DIE?!** Which area are you weak in? What has God spoken to your about? Are you selfish? Are you fearful? Are you a blessing? Are you ready to face God here & hereafter?

**“GET READY…GO!**