**READY OR NOT?**

**TEXT:** ***2 Tim. 4:6,7 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith…***

**THESIS:** To challenge both the saved and the lost to prepare for the inevitable – DEATH.

**INTRO.:**

 **A.** Our time in this life on earth is predetermined. We are not informed ahead of time, but our death is inevitable. The issue at hand is, are you prepared for that inevitability? Like Paul in our text can you make the statement “I am ready!” Now of course we know Paul was ready since his Damascus Road experience when the Lord saved him. Obviously, we will not experience a voice from Heaven or 3 days of blindness to get saved as Paul did, but the issue is, have you prepared for the inevitable…death or meeting the Lord face to face? Is the “time of your departure…at hand?”

**ILLUS.:** I was flying out of the Phila. airport and due to traffic on I95, I was running late. I had to literally run to the gate and when I arrived, they had shut the boarding door. I was just too late! I thought I was ready to fly, but it didn’t happen as planned. I had purchased the ticket, but I wouldn’t get on that flight. (Wouldn’t it be sad if you arrived at the boarding gate to eternity and you found the gate closed for the flight to Heaven?! The only other flight that was left open to you is the gate to Hell!)

**I. THE TIME OF YOUR DEPARTURE IS PREDETERMINED:**

 **A.** There is Nothing You Can Do to Avoid That Time:

*Heb. 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die…but after this the judgment…*

 **1.** The last tick of the clock of our life is predetermined.

  **2.** We can do all we can to prolong our life, but it will be to no avail.

 **3.** We will hear that call to leave earth at the appointed time & will be unable to stop it.

**NOTE:** I did everything in my power to postpone my wife’s departure, but to no avail. (She just celebrated her 87th birthday in Heaven on Oct. 24th, 2023. Of course, they don’t celebrate earth birthdays in Heaven.)

 **B.** The Only Question to Answer is “Am I ready?”

 **1.** Paul said in our text that he was ready…are YOU?

 **a**. Unsaved, God says in order to be ready you must get saved.

 **b**. Believer, are you ready? Paul said “I am now ready…I have finished my course…I have kept the faith.”

 **c**. Every unsaved person needs to get ready, and you WILL finish your course!

 **d**. Every saved person needs to prepare to meet the Lord and fight a good fight, i.e. to live for Christ from the moment he/she gets saved till departure.

 **e**. Paul even wished to go to Heaven soon, he said “I have a desire to depart.”

 **1)** If you are not saved, you had better NOT have a desire to die!

 **2)** If you are saved, your desire is contingent on your faithfulness, but ready or not, you will go! “It is appointed unto man once to die.!

**II. THE RESULTS OF YOUR DEPARTURE ARE UP TO YOU:**

 **A.** Biblically the Results Are Predetermined Based on Your Decision Here on Earth:

 **1.** The graphic illustration in the Bible is found in Luke 16:

*Luke 16:23,24 And in hell he (the rich man) lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame*.

 **2.** What a startling contrast in this scenario! Heaven or Hell! (Are YOU a poor SAVED Lazarus or a LOST rich man?

 **3.** Death itself may be easy or hard depending on circumstances, but the ultimate consequences after you leave this life must be settled now!

 **4.** There are only two options: heaven or hell; eternal rest or eternal torment!

 **5.** Very few look forward to going through the “valley of the shadow of death”.

 a. For everyone death is a valley experience.

 b. For everyone death is a dark shadow.

**ILLUS.** The difference is determined by whether you know the Shepherd Who can escort you through that valley experience or not. There is comfort for the believer in knowing that the Shepherd will protect him and even prepare a sumptuous table for him or her. There is no fear in that valley for the sheep!

**III. YOUR DEPARTURE IS INEVITABLE; YOUR ETERNITY IS BASED ON YOUR CHOICE IN THIS LIFE:**

 **A.** Religious Experience Has Nothing to Do with Your Eternal Destiny:

 **1.** Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Jew, Gentile, Shintoist, Baptist, or ??? is immaterial.

 **2.** Nicodemus was a devout Jewish follower of the Law of Moses, etc.

 **a.** In spite of his religious credentials, Jesus told him “Except a man be born again, he cannot see (or enter) into the Kingdom of God.”

 **b.** You may be a member of this church and still go to hell when you die.

 **c.** You may do many good works and be kind, sweet, helpful and even sacrifice your time, talents, and even money and still end up in hell.

 **d.** You may have been baptized, catechized, and even “sanforized” and still end up in hell after death – “ye must be born again”!

*John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name…*

 **B.** The Scene on Mt. Calvary Reveals the Difference:

 **1.** One thief crucified there said prove to me you are the Savior you claim to be: he said “Show me!”

  **2.** The other thief on Jesus side simply said “Save me!”

 **a.** The first man ended up in hell that day.

 **b.** Jesus promised the other man “Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise!”

 **3.** The difference in their eternal destinies was simple belief and trust in the blood on that central cross.

**CONCL.:** 🔥So the most important question for each of us regarding our eternal destiny is are we READY OR NOT? Paul said: For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Christian, you are headed for death and eternity and the Judgment Seat of Christ, and eternity in Heaven. READY OR NOT?

 🔥Unsaved friend, you are headed for death and eternity and the Great White Throne Judgment and the Lake of Fire or Hell. You decision NOW is critical. READY OR NOT?