

**HOW READY ARE YOU?
2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8**

Introduction

Paul says here that the time of his *departure* was at hand. He uses a word that takes its meaning from the idea of **a ship in the harbor where the time has come to cast off the lines and set sail from the port.**

He uses the same word in *Philippians 1:23*. There he said:
Philippians 1:23-24—“23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to **depart**, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”

Paul says that death for the Believer (*and we could include leaving this world by way of the Rapture as well*) is like a *departure*. **We are cutting loose from this life and setting sail for the next. I have a desire for that! And I hope that you do as well!**

Paul then says, “*I have fought a good fight.*” The language that Paul uses means “*to contend for a prize or to struggle.*” Paul is saying that life has been a real struggle at times.

And I think that each of us understands that to be true! But Paul reminds us that **although life can be a real struggle at times, it is worth the struggle!**

Paul gives us some powerful reasons why he was able to face his *departure* from this life with such confidence—**HE WAS READY!**
THE QUESTION IS, ARE YOU READY—For Death Or The Rapture?

I. PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE KNEW WHERE HE WAS HEADED!

Paul’s departure from earth meant his arrival in heaven! Paul knew without a shadow of a doubt where he was headed in eternity!

Look at what Paul said in *2 Corinthians 5:6-8*.

So the Bible tells us that **for the Believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.** As with most things in life, we really can’t have it both ways!

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To be *present with the Lord* necessitates the giving up of this life!

I’m glad that we can know where we are headed! The Bible says that we can know for sure where we are headed in eternity!

1 John 5:13—“*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*”

Death does not have to be a leap into darkness or into the great unknown. The Bible tells us that by placing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we can be saved and know where we are headed!

So if we have placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, when the time comes for our *departure*, we can face it with confidence knowing that we have been assured of a place in heaven.

George Sweeting wrote an article in the *Jan/Feb 2003* issue of *Moody Magazine* entitled “*Can I Die Well.*” In it he described death for him as being:

1. *Like a prisoner awaiting his release,*
2. *Like a schoolboy when the end of term is near,*
3. *Like a patient in the hospital anxiously awaiting a discharge.*

He said, “I long to be gone – extricating myself from the flesh I have too long inhabited, seeing the great doors of eternity swing open ...”
- such is the prospect of death from one who has believed on Christ!

PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE HE KNEW WHERE HE WAS HEADED...

II. PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE HAD LIVED A MEANINGFUL LIFE. (Vs 6)

As Paul looked at the nearness and certainty of his death, he realized that his death would not be in vain, but would serve a better purpose.

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He saw his death as an offering that would be poured out to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ!

Too many people reach the end of their life and they have nothing of eternal value to show for their time on this earth!

They have served no one but themselves!

They have taken time for self, but not for God and others!

They have earthly treasure that they will leave behind, but because of a life mostly lived for self, they have little to no heavenly treasure awaiting!

A person can only die a meaningful death when they have lived a meaningful life!

Living a meaningful life means that a person has lived with God at the very center of their life!

Paul was ready to die because he knew his **death had meaning for him!** That's because from the time he met the Lord on the Damascus road, **the Lord Jesus Christ was the Center of his life!**

PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE KNEW WHERE HE WAS HEADED...BECAUSE HE HAD LIVED A MEANINGFUL LIFE.

III. **PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE KNEW HE HAD FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT! (Vs 7; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27)**

What **good fight** is Paul talking about here? The **good fight** of faith!

He is talking about **fighting against the forces of hell for the souls of men.**

After his coming to know the LORD on the Damascus road, Paul had dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and fulfilling the Great Commission!

Paul had fought hard **against** the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel before his conversion! We know that.

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But I believe the Scriptures reveal that he fought even harder **for** the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel after his conversion!

Note: To fight the *good fight*, one has got to be in the fight!

IV. **PAUL WAS READY TO DEPART BECAUSE HE KNEW HE HAD SUCCESSFULLY “FINISHED HIS COURSE.” (Vs. 7)**

The Bible often uses the imagery of a race to describe the Believer's life. But this race is not just a hundred yard dash; it is marathon.

There was a story of a woman who ran the Boston Marathon and had apparently won it. But later it was found out that she had cheated. Instead of running the course, she had gotten on a bus and taken a shortcut. She sneaked off, then made her way back to the course and went across the finish line. When it was found out she was disqualified.

There is no shortcutting allowed if you are going to finish your course.

Most of us are familiar with how the Apostle Paul started his race; (i.e. how he became a Believer.) The story is told in **Acts 9** how Paul (whose name then was Saul) was on his way to Damascus to persecute some Believers when he was struck down by a blinding light and then he heard the voice of Jesus. Paul became a Believer that day!

On **February 17, 1971**, on a Wednesday night, at the age of almost 15 years old, I began my race.

My experience was different than Paul's when I got saved. We don't have to experience a blinding light in order to be saved.

In racing, a good start is essential, if the start is off, then the chances are good that the race will go badly. (*Exp: Olympics; car races*)

But, as important as a good start is; it is even more important to finish well.

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Paul had lived his life, fought his fight and run his race without shirking his duties and responsibilities. He could close his eyes in death with a sense of satisfaction at a job well done.

He had taken no short cuts and he was not stopped by the obstacles he faced. Instead of circumventing mountains, he climbed them. He weathered the storms he faced.

Paul faced his departure from this life with confidence because not only had he started well, but he **continued**...He ran his race and finished his race. We too can be confident at our departure if we **continue!**

So often there are folks who spend their last days saying,
“I wish I had...”

Perhaps they should have **been a better spouse, a better parent, a better neighbor, a better friend, or a better Church member.** Instead of making a better living they should have made a better life.

**What are you doing now to make sure that you finish your course?
What course has God laid out for you to run?**

Are you in the race, or sitting on the sidelines? Are you fighting the good fight of faith? Or are you just a spectator? Are you pressing on or have you given up?

In **vs. 8**, Paul turns from reasons for his confidence in his departure to tell us some things about his arrival!

When we head off on a trip home by plane; we make sure we get on the plane, we endure the flight, and at the end of the flight, there is an arrival.

Often the reason for the excitement associated with the trip is not the trip itself, but because of who or what is waiting for us on our arrival.

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The same thing is true of the Believer.

We face our departure from this life with excitement not because the departure is exciting, but because of what is waiting for us on our arrival!

Traveling itself is not the most enjoyable thing in the world!
(e.g. Talk about traveling by car or by plane)

Traveling is not always pleasant, but we normally don't mind and we endure the hardships of traveling because ultimately, it brings us to a destination that we're looking forward to.

When the time comes for our departure from this life, it may not be a delightful experience. It may include a hospital or a nursing home stay. It might include an illness or incapacitation. But listen, what's waiting on the other side for us will be worth it all.

There is a song that my wife and I sang a few weeks back that I think summarizes what I am trying to say.

It is entitled *“When We See Christ”*. It talks about some of the difficulties that we face in living life in this world, but the chorus of that song says *“It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!”*

Conclusion

So...How ready are you for your departure from this life?

Do you know that you are saved and on your way to heaven?

If you are saved, are you living for Jesus a life that is true?
Striving to please Him in all that you do?

The Judgment seat of Christ is ahead! Are you ready?