Are You Ready To Die?

Introduction: Are you ready to die? Now, I do not mean to be morbid this morning, but we need to always be ready to die, since we do not know the day nor the hour it may happen, we need to always be ready. So, I say again, are you ready to die. The apostle Paul was..."Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." - Acts 21:13.

Every moment we are that much closer to dying. Though life is to be enjoyed and we should actually love life and have good days on earth, still we must not lose sight of the big picture..."this world is not my home, I’m just a passing thru”. Though we may not embrace death, still death is not to be feared (Hebrews 2:9) and “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalm 116:15). But how can we have such confidence? How can we be ready for death whenever?

Text: 2 Tim. 4:6-8

Notice, Paul was accepting of his eminent death ("departure") and KNEW he had a crown of righteousness in heaven...

He also indicates the same can be true for others like him who believe on Jesus Christ.

But, before we get to HOW this is assured, notice what he does not say gives him such confidence.

1. “I have accepted Jesus as my savior.”
2. “I have been baptized.”
3. “I have done a lot of good works.”
True, there is no hope without believing on the Jesus Christ and confessing Him as Lord. Even Jesus said as much. “Except you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins.” and Paul says in Romans 10, “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Elaborate.

True, obeying the gospel by being immersed in water for the purpose of being saved is required. Paul had been baptized. He had baptized others, and he plainly knew Jesus commanded “he who believes AND is baptized shall be saved. But, that alone does not get the job done, neither does it produce true confidence in the day of death.

And also true, God has demanded we maintain good works...in fact, the more the merrier...we are urged to be zealous for good works...but Paul knew not to approach his hour of judgment before Christ at his death and begin listing good things he had done. Jesus once said, After you have done all that is commanded you...say, I am an unworthy servant, it is my duty to do these things.

So, Paul could have said all these, but does not. Now, notice what Paul does say and where he places his assurances...why he says he is ready to die. Read again the text.

I. By FIGHTING the good fight of faith

Read I Tim 6:12.

Contending earnestly for the faith is an overriding concern of Jude’s epistle (v.3) The word means to fight...as in boxing, to be a contender.

Many are the Scriptures that use militaristic terms to describe the Christian life. We must be taking up the armor of God (Eph. 6) and warring a good warfare against the devil if we are to be truly ready to die. Many hymns reflect the same sentiment...Onward Christian Soldiers, Soldiers of Christ, Arise, etc.
How about you? Do you honestly describe your approach to your faith as a **fight**, a battle...a daily warfare? Galatians 5 teaches us that the flesh is warring against the spirit within us and we determine who the victor will be...and it will only be the spirit winning out against the warring efforts of the the flesh, if we fight back.

Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world, and that includes death - I John 5:4

**II. By FINISHING the race**

The Christian life is also likened to a foot race. And just as a runner only receives the prize if he **finishes**, so too with the saint of God. To have run in the past, but have dropped off along the way, will remove our confidence of eternal life. Along the way a Christian may be opportunity to quit, but, we must keep plugging along.

This takes a lot of discipline - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The race is not to be the swiftest, but to finish. And don’t forget that. Do not quit!!

Jesus says, in Revelation 2:10, he that is faithful **until death** will receive the crown of life. Not he that is faithful for a stretch during his life. If we are going to be ready to die, we must be running the race everyday! Running in the race when death comes.

**III. By KEEPING the faith**

Paul says in another letter to Timothy that is very possible to depart the faith (I Timothy 4:1) and if so, destruction follows. But, all you need do is back up a few verse in this same chapter...4:1-4. Read.

Paul knew he was going to heaven for he had **kept** the faith.
The faith he is describing is the body of things believed that come from Jesus Christ. This is not keeping YOUR faith (that would be covered in the earlier points) but keeping true to THE faith of Jesus Christ…the doctrine of Christ….the truth (verse 4).

False doctrines can jeopardize our salvation. Man today downplays the importance of doctrine, teaching, Bible study, preaching, etc. A touchy-feely-emotional-warm and fuzzy religion is what matters to most today.

But, the crown of righteousness awaits those who embrace the pure doctrine until the end of their life. You must search for the truth and when you find it, give all you have to possess it. And then KEEP the faith….practice it faithfully…And you will be ready to die.

IV. Love His Appearing

It is the character of all the saints that they love the appearing of Jesus Christ: they loved his first appearing, when he appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself on the cross and they love to think of it. They likewise love his second appearing at the great day; they love it, and long for it. Our affections must daily be set above where Jesus sits at the right hand of God on the throne and we remain ever vigilant and watchful for His return. In this way I am ready to die.

Conclusion: Did you know we are to be earnestly hastening the coming of the Lord? See II Peter 3:10-13. Are we earnestly hastening…looking forward to, the appearing of Jesus again? Are we ready to die? If we are fighting the the good fight of faith, finishing the Christian race, keeping loyal to the one faith originally delivered by God to the saints, and are expectantly looking for His return appearance…we can be ready.