

**Intro:** Sports Teams; Unemployment Rates; Health Problems; Church Ministries; - All of us have and will experience being “sidelined” for seasons of our lives. Attitude and action during these times are critical to how we run the marathon of life.

It is difficult to stay “ready.”

**1. Stay Ready To Persevere in following God’s Will.**

**Acts 20:22-24 (HCSB)**

<sup>22</sup> “And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, bound in my spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there,

<sup>23</sup> except that in town after town the Holy Spirit testifies to me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me.

<sup>24</sup> But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.

**Acts 16:25-26 (HCSB)**

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

<sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose.

**Acts 21:10-14 (HCSB)** <sup>10</sup> While we were staying there many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

<sup>11</sup> He came to us, took Paul’s belt, tied his own feet and hands, and said, “This is what the Holy Spirit says: ‘In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into Gentile hands.’ ”

<sup>12</sup> When we heard this, both we and the local people begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Then Paul replied, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

<sup>14</sup> Since he would not be persuaded, we stopped talking and simply said, “The Lord’s will be done!”

(Being sidelined can be right in the middle of God’s will)

## **2. Stay Ready To Present Your Personal Testimony.**

### **(Jerusalem) Acts 22:1-10 (HCSB)**

<sup>1</sup> “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.”

<sup>2</sup> When they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even quieter.

<sup>3</sup> He continued, “I am a Jewish man, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and educated according to the strict view of our patriarchal law. Being zealous for God, just as all of you are today,

<sup>4</sup> I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women in jail,

<sup>5</sup> as both the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. Having received letters from them to the brothers, I was traveling to Damascus to bring those who were prisoners there to be punished in Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> “As I was traveling and near Damascus, about noon an intense light from heaven suddenly flashed around me.

<sup>7</sup> I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’

<sup>8</sup> “I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ “He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting!’

<sup>9</sup> Now those who were with me saw the light, but they did not hear the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

<sup>10</sup> “Then I said, ‘What should I do, Lord?’ “And the Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything that is assigned for you to do.’

### **Agrippa - Acts 26:12-19 (HCSB)**

<sup>12</sup> “Under these circumstances I was traveling to Damascus with authority and a commission from the chief priests.

<sup>13</sup> At midday, while on the road, O king, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me.

<sup>14</sup> When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

<sup>15</sup> “But I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ “And the Lord replied: ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

<sup>16</sup> But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of things you have seen,

and of things in which I will appear to you.

<sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

<sup>19</sup> “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

### **Answer Basic Questions:**

-What was your life like before you became a Christian?

-How did you come to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior?

-How is Jesus making a difference in your life?

### **3. Stay Ready To Provide A Warning.**

#### **Acts 24:24-25 (HCSB)**

<sup>24</sup> After some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and listened to him on the subject of faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> Now as he spoke about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became afraid and replied, “Leave for now, but when I find time I’ll call for you.”

#### **John 16:8 (HCSB)**

<sup>8</sup> When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment:

### **4. Stay Ready To Proclaim The Good News About Jesus.**

**Acts 26:16-18 (HCSB)** <sup>16</sup> But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of things you have seen, and of things in which I will appear to you.

<sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

#### **Acts 26:22-29 (HCSB)**

<sup>22</sup> Since I have obtained help that comes from God, to this day I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place—

<sup>23</sup> that the Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

<sup>24</sup> As he was making his defense this way, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You’re out of your mind, Paul! Too much study is driving you mad!”

<sup>25</sup> But Paul replied, “I’m not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. On the contrary, I’m speaking words of truth and good judgment.

<sup>26</sup> For the king knows about these matters. It is to him I am actually speaking boldly. For I’m not convinced that any of these things escapes his notice, since this was not done in a corner!

<sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.”

<sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily?”

<sup>29</sup> “I wish before God,” replied Paul, “that whether easily or with difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am—except for these chains.”

## **5. Stay Ready To Pray, Study, and Write.**

**Philippians 1:3-4 (HCSB)** <sup>3</sup> I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer,

**Colossians 1:3 (HCSB)** <sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

### **2 Timothy 4:13 (HCSB)**

<sup>13</sup> When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas with Carpus, as well as the scrolls, especially the parchments.

(Many of Paul’s 13 new testament books were written from Prison)

**2 Timothy 1:8 (HCSB)** <sup>8</sup> So don’t be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God,

**2 Timothy 2:9 (HCSB)** <sup>9</sup> For this I suffer, to the point of being bound like a criminal; but God’s message is not bound.

(Four of his letters are called the “prison epistles” because they were written during his imprisonment in Rome)

**Ephesians 3:1 (HCSB)** <sup>1</sup> For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

**Ephesians 4:1 (HCSB)** <sup>1</sup> I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received,

**Ephesians 6:20 (HCSB)** <sup>20</sup> For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

**Philippians 1:7 (HCSB)** <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of the gospel.

**Philippians 2:23 (HCSB)** <sup>23</sup> Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

**Colossians 4:3 (HCSB)** <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the Messiah—for which I am in prison—

**Colossians 4:18 (HCSB)** <sup>18</sup> This greeting is in my own hand—Paul. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

**Philemon 1:1 (HCSB)** <sup>1</sup> Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother: To Philemon, our dear friend and co-worker,

**Philemon 1:9 (HCSB)** <sup>9</sup> I appeal, instead, on the basis of love. I, Paul, as an elderly man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus,

**Invitation:** Turning to God or Away from God when you are sidelined. Slouching on the bench, or ready and eager?