Ready for Every Good Work

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:14-17
October 25, 2026 - Week 4 of Sermon Series: ***"A People Made Ready"***
Theme: "I AM READY." - God's Word equips me to serve.
Key Sentence: *God does not prepare us merely to know more; God forms us through the Word so that we are ready to live, love, and serve faithfully.*

Scripture Reading - 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NRSVUE)

*14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*

Introduction

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we come to the fourth and final Sunday of our October sermon series, "A People Made Ready." For four weeks, we have been asking one important question: How is God preparing us for what comes next?

On the first Sunday we said, "I AM ROOTED." Christ is my foundation. Then we said, "I AM LISTENING." Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. Last Sunday we said, "I AM MAKING ROOM." One thing is needed. And today all of those movements lead us to one final declaration: "I AM READY."

Not ready because we know everything. Not ready because we have everything figured out. Not ready because we are perfect. We are ready because God is forming us, teaching us, correcting us, strengthening us, and equipping us.

Paul tells Timothy that Scripture is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness so that the person of God may be "equipped for every good work." That is where our October journey has been leading. God roots us. God speaks to us. God creates room within us. And then God sends us.

It is especially fitting that today both CPC Plainview and CPC Rochester begin our 2027 pledge drive. A pledge drive is more than preparing a budget; it is a spiritual opportunity to ask, “Lord, how will I participate in the good work you are preparing through this congregation next year?” As we say, “I AM READY,” we remember that readiness includes our prayers, our service, our gifts, and our financial stewardship.

Today I would like to reflect on three movements:

First, Continue in What You Have Learned
Second, Let God's Word Form You
Third, Be Ready for Every Good Work

The key sentence for today is this:

> *"God does not prepare us merely to know more; God forms us through the Word so that we are ready to live, love, and serve faithfully."*

First, Continue in What You Have Learned

Paul begins this part of his letter by telling Timothy, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned..." I like that word: continue. Paul does not tell Timothy to search for something completely new. He says: remember what you have received. Remain in it. Keep going. Continue.

Sometimes we think spiritual maturity means always finding something new - a new idea, a new program, a new technique, a new book, or a new experience. New things can certainly help us grow. But sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is simply continue practicing what God has already taught us.

Continue praying. Continue worshiping. Continue reading Scripture. Continue forgiving. Continue giving. Continue serving. Continue loving. Continue trusting. Continue showing up. Christian faith is not built only through dramatic spiritual moments. Much of faith is built through faithful continuation.

Nene Royal - From a Young Thai Guitarist to an AGT Champion

Let me share a recent story that many Thai people have celebrated with great joy. Nene Royal, a 16-year-old singer and guitarist from Phuket, Thailand, became the 2026 winner of America's Got Talent Season 21. Her victory may look like one extraordinary moment on a huge stage, but her journey began years earlier. Nene taught herself to play guitar when she was only seven years old. Long before the championship, there were many ordinary days of learning, practicing, performing, and continuing.

When Nene finally stood on the America's Got Talent stage, people saw the result of that long preparation. Her audition with "Zombie" captured attention. She continued through the competition, performed "Hysteria," received a Golden Buzzer after "Black Hole Sun," and reached the finale with "Seven Nation Army." Then, on September 23, 2026, this young Thai musician was announced as the winner - the first Thai contestant to win the show.

What the world finally saw on that stage was not created in one night. Behind the applause were years of continuing: continuing to learn, continuing to practice, continuing to perform, and continuing when the final result was still unknown. That is a helpful picture of discipleship. Prayers may sometimes feel ordinary. Worship may sometimes feel familiar. Scripture may sometimes sound like something we have heard before. But God is still forming us through faithful continuation. We may not see the result immediately, but faithful practice is preparing us for the moment when God calls us to use what has been formed within us.

"Spiritual maturity is not always about beginning something new; often it is about faithfully continuing what God has already taught us."

So perhaps Paul's first word to us today is simple: do not stop. Keep walking with Christ.

Second, Let God's Word Form You

Paul then says that Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. Notice what Paul does not say. He does not say Scripture is given merely so that we can collect religious information. The Bible does more than inform us. It is meant to form us.

There is a big difference. We can know many Bible verses and still need transformation. We can know Bible stories and still struggle to forgive. We can know theology and still need humility. We can attend Bible studies and still need God to change our attitudes.

The purpose of Scripture is not simply that we know more about God. Through God's Word, we increasingly become the people God calls us to be. Sometimes Scripture comforts us. Sometimes it encourages us. But sometimes Scripture also confronts us. It may show us that we need to forgive, change an attitude, become more generous, stop judging, trust more deeply, make peace, speak truth, or care for someone we have overlooked.

The Mirror Before Church

Imagine getting dressed for church in the morning. You put on your clothes, fix your hair, and think everything looks fine. Then just before leaving the house, you look into a mirror. Suddenly you notice something you could not see without the mirror. Maybe your collar is folded incorrectly. Maybe there is something on your shirt. Maybe your hair is doing something very interesting!

The mirror is not attacking you. The mirror is helping you see what is actually there. And once you see it, you can respond.

Scripture can work like that. We open the Bible expecting to examine the Word of God, and sometimes we discover that the Word of God is examining us. We read Jesus saying, "Love your enemies," and the Word becomes a mirror. We read, "Forgive one another," and the Word becomes a mirror. We hear the call to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly, and again the mirror appears.

God shows us not only what needs to change, but what we can become through grace. The same Word that corrects us also trains us, strengthens us, and leads us forward.

> *"We do not read Scripture only to discover what the Bible says; we read Scripture so God can reshape the people we are becoming."*

This connects beautifully with our October journey. When we are rooted, we remain close to Christ. When we are listening, we become attentive to God. When we are making room, we become available. Then God's Word has space to form us.

Third, Be Ready for Every Good Work

Paul finally tells us the purpose: so that everyone who belongs to God may be "equipped for every good work." That word equipped is important. God forms us for a purpose. God does not prepare us only so that we feel spiritual. God does not prepare us only so that we know more Bible. God prepares us so that we can participate in God's work.

There is a connection here with our September series. Remember how September ended? We said, "I AM PARTICIPATING. God has given me something to do." October now adds another truth: God is preparing me to do it.

Perhaps you say, "I am not ready. I do not know enough. I am too young. I am too old. I am not gifted like someone else. I am only an ordinary person." But the church has always been built through ordinary people made available to an extraordinary God.

You do not need to be able to do everything. Nobody can. You only need to ask: What good work has God placed in front of me? Perhaps it is encouraging someone, visiting someone who is lonely, teaching a child, serving a meal, giving generously, praying faithfully, welcoming a newcomer, calling someone who has been absent, listening to someone who is hurting, offering forgiveness, or helping a neighbor.

The Toolbox Before the Repair

Imagine a carpenter arriving at a house where something has broken. The carpenter opens a toolbox. Inside are different tools: a hammer, a screwdriver, a wrench, a measuring tape, and a level. Each tool has a different purpose.

Imagine if the hammer said, "I wish I were a screwdriver." Or the measuring tape said, "I am not as impressive as the power drill." That would make no sense. The carpenter does not need every tool to be the same. The carpenter needs each tool to be ready for its purpose.

The Body of Christ is like that. You do not need my gifts, and I do not need your gifts. We do not all need to preach. We do not all need to sing. We do not all need to teach. We do not all need to lead the same ministry. But each of us can be ready for the work God has placed before us.

> *"Readiness does not mean being able to do everything; readiness means being available for what God asks of us."*

Maybe one of the most powerful prayers we can pray is, "Lord, I am available. Use what you have given me."

Ready to Give, Ready to Serve

Today our pledge drive gives us one concrete way to practice that availability. A pledge is not a payment for belonging to the church, and it is not a way to earn God's favor. It is a prayerful response to grace: "Lord, you have entrusted something to me; how can I offer a portion of it for your work?" Our pledges help make worship, Christian formation, pastoral care, mission, outreach, and the everyday ministries of these congregations possible. Paul tells us elsewhere that "God loves a cheerful giver." So as you consider your 2027 pledge, do not compare yourself with anyone else. Pray, listen, and ask what faithful generosity looks like for you. For some, this may mean making a first pledge; for others, continuing or increasing a commitment. The amount may differ, but the invitation is the same: "Lord, I am available. Use what you have entrusted to me."

Our October Journey

Church, look at what God has been teaching us this month. These are not four separate sermons. They belong together.

> *"I AM ROOTED." - Christ is my foundation.*
> *"I AM LISTENING." - Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.*
> *"I AM MAKING ROOM." - One thing is needed.*
> *"I AM READY." - God's Word equips me to serve.*

Rooted people can listen. Listening people learn to make room. People who make room become available. And available people become ready for God's work.

A Practice for This Week

For three weeks we have practiced a simple prayer. Week One: "Jesus, root my life more deeply in you." Week Two: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Week Three: "Jesus, show me what is crowding you out." This week I invite you to pray:

> *"Lord, show me one good work you have prepared for me."*

Then pay attention. Perhaps someone will cross your path. Perhaps you will notice a need. Perhaps somebody will need encouragement. Perhaps God will remind you of a person you should call. Perhaps an opportunity to serve will appear.

Do not ask, "Can I change the whole world?" Ask, "What good work is in front of me today?" Then do that faithfully.

And as part of that prayer this week, take time with your 2027 pledge materials and ask, "Lord, how can my giving help equip this church for every good work in the year ahead?"

Preparing for Advent

Soon we will move toward Thanksgiving and then Advent. During Advent we will hear again, "Prepare the way of the Lord." But perhaps God has already begun preparing the way inside us.

God has been preparing our hearts: rooting us, teaching us to listen, helping us make room, and now equipping us. So when Advent comes, perhaps we will not enter it only as people preparing decorations. We can enter it as A People Made Ready - ready to hope, worship, welcome, give, serve, and receive Christ anew.

Conclusion

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, remember our three pictures today. The musician who kept practicing teaches us: Continue. The mirror teaches us: Let God's Word form you. And the toolbox teaches us: Be ready for the work God has prepared. *Continue. Be formed. Be equipped.*

And when God calls, be available.

Church, let us carry the entire October journey together:

"I AM ROOTED." - Christ is my foundation., "I AM LISTENING." - Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening., "I AM MAKING ROOM." - One thing is needed., and "I AM READY." - God's Word equips me to serve.

And today, as our 2027 pledge drive begins, one way we embody “I AM READY” is by placing even our financial resources before God and saying, “Lord, use this gift to strengthen your church and bless your world.”

Not ready because we are perfect. Ready because God is faithful. Not ready because we know everything. Ready because God continues teaching us. Not ready because everything depends upon us. Ready because the God who calls us also equips us.

And so perhaps our final prayer for this October series can simply be:

"Lord, root us. Lord, speak to us. Lord, make room within us. Lord, equip us. And Lord, use us."

Make us truly A People Made Ready.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reference Notes

1. The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

2. Philip H. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus, New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, commentary on 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

3. William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, Word Biblical Commentary 46. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000, commentary on 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

4. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Common Worship. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018, on the ministry of the Word and the church's response in faithful service.

5. Thailand Government Public Relations Department, “History Made! Thai Teen Nene Royal Crowned America’s Got Talent 2026 Winner,” September 24, 2026; on Nene Royal’s age, Phuket background, early guitar learning, major AGT performances, and Season 21 victory.

6. The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2 Corinthians 9:7, on cheerful and willing generosity.