"Ready for anything"

This is J. B. Phillips translation of Phil. 4:13. Paul said he was, ***"Ready for anything through the strength of the One who lives within me"***. He was ready for any venture, for any risk, for any sacrifice. He was ready at any moment. At Paul's commissioning Jesus had spoken to him, ***"I will send you <u>far away</u> to the Gentiles"*** Acts 22:21. He became restless about staying in one place too long and was eager to press on to other places. ***"Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city……."***

"Far away" The whole world was on his heart. Nowhere was too distant or too remote, nowhere too inaccessible or too unfriendly for this intrepid man. ***"I must see Rome" – "I go to Jerusalem" – "When I have accomplished this, I go to Spain"***.

David Livingston said, "**Anywhere for Jesus Christ, so long as it be forward**".

Temple Gairdner of Cairo wrote, "**Do we believe in God, that He is concerned with our life and has a purpose for each one of us? Then if we do, let us pull up our anchors and let the winds of God carry us wither they will.**"

Paul's thinking knew no limits in this world. God had spoken to him and he was ***"ready for anything"***.

"Far away" How far this bigoted little Jew had travelled to become a citizen of the world, at home anywhere among its people, even in prison! How amazingly he had abandoned his own culture and adapted himself for the sake of the Gospel – all things to all men that he might win them! How wonderfully he had learned to be content whatever his circumstances! He preached to Jews, philosophers, women; to Greeks, barbarians and Romans. He preached in small towns and in one of the major capitals of the world – Rome. He preached at centres of government, of commerce and of culture and religion. He testified before kings and governors. He spoke to officials and to slaves; to traders, soldiers, sailors, artisans and farmers – all things to all men. ***"This I do for the sake of the Gospel."***

"Far away" Those things that had been gain to him – ancestry, upbringing, culture, scholarship, prestige, power – he counted loss for Jesus for whom he gladly suffered the loss of all things.

"Far away" It must be so for all workers among 'neighbours'. Sometimes there will be a separation from loved ones and home and country – all that has meant security.

"Far away" into the pain of a devotion that puts Jesus before all earthly ties – not in sentiment, but in a costly reality. This is the discipleship that puts Jesus before all other claims.

"Far away" He must go into the language of the people he is sent to; into their thought life, their culture, their background. He must understand and adapt to the home life and customs of those he would win for Jesus. He must sit where they sit. He must be ready to adapt and, if necessary, discard. He must always work to simplify and make relevant in order to be one with those among whom he is to share the unsearchable riches of Jesus.

"Far away" Spiritually he accepted a surrender that goes further and further into the will of God. Paul went ever deeper into the fellowship and sufferings of Christ and into an obedience that knew no limits in life. It was a self-giving that was even willing to become cursed for the sake of others. Paul became a living sacrifice without any secret reservation or shameful evasion. He became 'a whole burnt offering', laid out piece by piece on the altar and out of the ashes of an abandoned self, he was ready for anything for Jesus.

He was ready for any loss, any suffering, any sacrifice at any cost. For him to live was Christ and to die was a glorious gain.

"Ready for anything" Are we ready? Paul was … and so, alas, to our shame are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Someone has said, **"The calculating love of Christians is the shame of the church and the astonishment of angels"**. Uncalculating obedience – ***"ready for anything"*** – must be our watchword and the watchword of all who would wholly follow Jesus. We must so mould our mental attitudes and unconscious reactions that we are always available. We must so master our wills and marshal our energies that we are instantly obedient to whatever our Lord and King has chosen for us – ***"Ready for anything through the strength of the One lives within me."***