

## Ambassador of His Glory

**Thesis:** We are a people who have the honor, joy, and privilege to represent our glorious King as his ambassadors in this world.

**Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:20

*2 Corinthians 5:14–20 (NIV84) 14 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

Let’s walk through the context for this high calling that we have as ambassadors of his glory (2 Corinthians 5:14–20 (NIV84)).

**Verse 14a: For Christ’s love compels us...**

1. Our motivation is the love Jesus has for us, and the love God has shed abroad in our heart for Jesus.
2. This love compels or propels us; we can’t stay immobile.

**Verse 14b: because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.**

1. All humanity was condemned to death because of sin.
  - a. We all choose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil so that we define good and bad on our own terms.
  - b. We all choose to say “no” to partnering with God in building his kingdom and we say “yes” to building our own kingdom.
2. Christ identified with all sinful humanity and died for us, in our stead.
3. Therefore, all died.
4. The conclusion “Christ died, therefore all died” only makes sense if Christ died as the substitute for all humanity. But humans did not select Christ to die for us; God did. Christ’s submission to God’s will was a supreme act of self-giving love. (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. Vol. 29. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.)

**Verse 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.**

1. Our motivation changes because Jesus died for us and was raised again.
2. **Our new motivation: we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.**
3. Those who belong to Christ do not live for themselves. In societies given to self-promotion, self-fulfillment, and self-indulgence, Christians will stand out as distinctively different. They live only for Christ and give up their own rights for the good of others and do not insist on having their own way. (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. Vol. 29. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.)

**Verse 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.**

1. **A worldly point of view is living for ourselves** or making decisions based on our human understanding and wisdom. (See 2 Corinthians 5:15.)
2. *Though we once regarded Christ this way:* To judge others according to worldly standards, or from a sinful point of view, only furthers division and discord rather than fostering reconciliation.
3. At one time, Paul thought Jesus was a blasphemer, a threat to God's law and ways, a deceiver, and a rebel. Those beliefs about Jesus were from a worldly point of view.

**Verse 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

1. *If anyone is in Christ:*
  - a. This is the condition for the blessings and new reality.
  - b. We belong to Christ, to live according to Christ's power, and to be united with Christ.
2. *New creation:*
  - a. Christians see the world in a new way and become new when they are joined to Christ.
  - b. The new heaven and new earth are invading this world, and we get to have a foretaste and experience of that which is to come.
3. *The old has gone:*
  - a. Our whole being, value system, understanding of how the world works, and behavior are changed and are being changed in Christ.
4. *The new has come:*
  - a. Our God has come to make all things new.
  - b. The "new thing" that Isaiah foretold that God would do has come to pass in Christ.

**Verse 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:**

1. All this is from God. **Everything begins with God's initiative:** "All this from God."
  - a. Paul then amplifies what he means:
    - i. 5:18 God reconciled us to himself through Christ gave us a ministry of reconciliation
    - ii. 5:19 reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.
    - iii. 5:19b And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
  - b. He concludes by listing the results of God's initiative:
    - i. 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf:
    - ii. Be reconciled to God.
    - iii. 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Verse 19a: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.**

**Verse 19b: And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**

1. Verses 18 – 19 contains three key assertions.
  - a. (1) God is the driving force behind the redemption of humankind. Reconciliation comes solely at God's initiative.
  - b. (2) God acted through Christ's death, and Christ alone is the means of reconciliation.
  - c. (3) God continues to act through those who have been reconciled. We have the privilege and responsibility to share in this great divine enterprise and are to call others to be reconciled to God.
2. Christ's death requires our response as we accept reconciliation with God and work to reconcile ourselves with our fellow humans.
3. *The ministry of reconciliation* therefore involves more than simply explaining to others what God has done in Christ.
  - a. It requires that you and I become an active reconciler.
  - b. Like Christ, a minister of reconciliation plunges into the midst of human tumult to bring harmony out of chaos, reconciliation out of estrangement, and love in the place of hate.
  - c. We do the work of peacemaking; not peacekeeping or trouble making. (*Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*)

**Verse 20a We are therefore Christ's ambassadors.**

1. We are Christ's spokesman, his envoy, his representative.
2. We do not act on our own authority but under the commission of a greater power and authority who sent us.

**Verse 20b: as though God were making his appeal through us.**

1. Paul understands himself to be divinely authorized to announce to the world God's terms for peace and right relationship with God and others.
2. What an honor and privilege. We get to share with others that God wants a relationship with them. And, we share with others how God's transforming love and power creates a way for them to have a right relationship with God and others.

**Verse 20c: We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.**

1. This is a passionate call for a response: "Make a choice now or at some point."
2. Reconciliation is not just for people who don't know God; it is also for Christians who are alienated from God or from each other. In 2 Corinthians, there are members of the church there who are alienated from each other, from leadership, and/or from God by their actions, affections, and attitudes.
3. Those who are reconciled to God, in right relationship with God and others, are a company of people who are helping others be reconciled to God and each other.

**Reality check:**

We need to be clear on the difference between how we see being an ambassador today and the way that Paul lived as an ambassador of Christ. Paul didn't demand that the government he represented pay for his way as an ambassador. Today, an ambassador can't be imprisoned or suffer. That's not true for the ambassadors of the kingdom of God. (Illustration: consider Paul and Jesus.)

**Takeaways:**

**What a privilege, joy, and honor we have as an ambassador of his glory.**

1. **It is our honor to represent the King and the kingdom of God because the Lord has sent us.**
2. **It is a privilege to partner with Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence together with others.**
  - a. Jesus is already at work.

- b. Our job is to join him on his mission and not ask him to bless and do what we want him to do.
3. **It is a joy to go with Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit to be stretched, challenged, and changed.**
  - a. As we go, we pray for boldness and that God would extend his hand to do signs, wonders, and miracles to the glory of Jesus.
  - b. *Acts 4:29–30 (NIV84) 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*
4. **It is our commissioning to represent Jesus in love, forgiveness, and grace;** not with threats, vengeance, anger, manipulation, or self-interest.
5. **It is our blessing to go, representing a community of kingdom minded people** (church) who are praying with us and for us, and who confirm that God is sending us and commissioning us (Acts 13:1-3).
6. **It is amazing that God sends us** in his goodness, grace, and glory as sons and daughters of the Most High to help people experience the life, love, and mercy of our God.
7. **It is our honor to level the playing field through worship, welcome, and warfare** (The Lord's Prayer).
8. **It is an honor to serve the Lord, to give witness to Jesus, and to be sent to others, giving people a chance to turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and become a part of the family of God.**
  - a. *Acts 26:14–18 (NIV84) 14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' " 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

**Watch out for the wrong mindset as we go:**

1. Wrong mindset: We're going to be honored, understood, protected, and received with fanfare.

- a. Sometimes, God gives us such grace. At other times, there is opposition, warfare, and other challenges.
2. Wrong mindset: We are going to promote our own self-interests, preferences, and perspectives.
3. Wrong mindset: We go in our own strength, of our own accord, and without connection to mutually accountable and supportive relationships with God's community.

**Here is the reality for the ambassador of Christ:**

1. We must be willing to pay our own way, cover our own costs, and cover our own expenses, or to work with the Lord in raising our means through partnership with others.
2. Sometimes we will be misunderstood and opposed.
3. Sometimes we will suffer and sacrifice convenience, comfort, and personal preferences.
4. We go and have the right to go because we're sent by God.
5. We go in the authority and power of the King and the kingdom of God to represent the king.
6. We go in the protection, grace, and favor of the Lord. Even if we run into persecution, lack, and attack, we are willing and able by the goodness of God to suffer, lay down our lives, and risk even our lives like Jesus did for us.
7. We go proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel of the kingdom of God.
  - a. *Mark 1:14–15 (NIV84) 14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*
  - b. *Matthew 9:35–38 (NIV84) 35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

**Summary: What a privilege, joy, and honor we have as an ambassador of his glory.**