

## Ambassadors for Christ; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

- I. Ambassador
  - a. A diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign<sup>1</sup>
  - b. For the USA, the president's representative to a foreign country
  - c. The ambassador only says and does what the president wants him to in relation to the foreign government
  - d. This is why they are appointed by the president – and when the president changes, so do the ambassadors
- II. Flesh or Spirit
  - a. 2 Corinthians 5:16–17 (ESV); <sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
  - b. According to the flesh
    - i. Making evaluations, decisions, by human standards, social standing, or possessions
    - ii. “We regard no one...” “no longer”
    - iii. But we often still do make evaluations according to human or worldly standards
      1. We tend to evaluate sin in a worldly manner – “my sin is not as bad as your sin”
      2. God regards all sin the same
      3. Romans 1:26-32
      4. We allow, or even encourage, behavior based on personality – I understand we are all not robots and have different personalities
      5. We are all sinners in need of the saving blood of Jesus
    - iv. And Jesus' blood does not allow for 'regarding' people using human standards
  - c. We are a new creation
    - i. A lot of things stay the same after our conversion – so I understand the difficulty of this statement
    - ii. While the outward person may stay the same, the inward person changes (or should change) dramatically
    - iii. God hates sin, so we must hate sin
    - iv. God loves his creation (us), so we must love his creation as well
    - v. It is not 'good enough' for us to love those who belong to God, but we must love even our enemies
    - vi. Matthew 5:43–48 (ESV); <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies

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<sup>1</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary](#). (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- d. We must remember that our enemy is not God's creation (humanity), but evil and unrighteousness
- e. Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV); <sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- f. A very true and wise saying, "hate the sin, not the sinner" – just not practiced nearly enough

### III. Our Ministry

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:18–19 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- b. Our ministry is a ministry of reconciliation (a reestablishment of an interrupted or broken relationship)
- c. Meaning we facilitate the repair of the sinner's relationship with God – and we can't do that if we hate the person, if we accuse them of sinful behavior and consign them to spiritual death, eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord
- d. The power of reconciliation is in the Gospel
  - i. We show sinners the love that God has for his creation (humanity) and His desire for us to spend eternity with Him
  - ii. We love them while showing them the Gospel and how God wants to turn their (our) broken lives over to Him
  - iii. We show them how turning over our broken lives and living for God brings purpose and fulfillment for us
  - iv. We show them that they no longer have to be a slave to sin, but have been set free in Christ
- e. God gives this ministry to us, the reconciled

### IV. Reconciled

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV); Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- b. God uses us to appeal to the lost and broken of this world to be saved – we are His ambassadors
  - i. We can only say what He wants us to say
  - ii. We can only do what He wants us to do
  - iii. Which is to love Him and love humanity

- iv. We celebrate the Gospel and its power to reconcile, repair, mend broken hearts
    - v. Galatians 2:20 (ESV); I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
  - c. Implore – to beg, plead
    - i. Life is tough, it is messy – we tend to make mistakes, then make more mistakes trying to fix the first one.
    - ii. I often ask myself how people can get through these hard, tough, messy times without God – He is the only way I make it through
    - iii. There is an urgency that is expressed here – “implore”
    - iv. We are so excited and happy with our reconciliation that we should want that for others as well
- V. Ambassadors
  - a. We look at spiritual life
  - b. We help repair broken relationships with God
  - c. We live (love) the Gospel!
  - d. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV); For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.