

“We Are: Ambassadors for Christ”

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Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:14-20

“**For the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

16**Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh**; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.

17**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

18Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **He has committed to us the word of reconciliation**.

20Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

2 Corinthians -> Paul's defense of his ministry

The Role of an Ambassador → U.S. Embassy Protocol

- **Speaking with one voice to others on U.S. policy**—and ensuring mission staff do likewise—while providing to the President and Secretary of State expert guidance and frank counsel
- **Directing and coordinating all executive branch offices and personnel** (except for those under the command of a U.S. area military commander, under another chief of mission, or on the staff of an international organization)
- **Cooperating with the U.S. legislative and judicial branches so that U.S. foreign policy goals are advanced**; security is maintained; and executive, legislative, and judicial responsibilities are carried out;
- Reviewing communications to or from mission elements
- **Taking direct responsibility for the security of the mission** — including security from terrorism — and **protecting all U.S. Government personnel on official duty** (other than those personnel under the command of a U.S. area military commander) and their dependents
- **Carefully using mission resources through regular reviews of programs, personnel, and funding levels**
- Reshaping the mission to serve American interests and values and to ensure that all executive branch agencies attached to the mission do likewise; and
- **Serving Americans with professional excellence, the highest standards of ethical conduct, and diplomatic discretion**

Ambassadors then:

U.S. Government Ambassadors

Speak U.S. Policy
Direct and Coordinate Personnel
Cooperate with U.S. Goals
Security of Embassy Employees
Responsible for Funding
Excellent Professionalism

Christ's Ambassadors

Speak the Truth Clearly
Organize Ministry Support within the Church
Align on Ministry Goals
Protect the Sheep
Have Integrity in our Finances
Live Ethically

Background of 2 Corinthians

- 4 Letters to the Corinthians (we have 2 in the Bible)
- The "Severe Letter" has been lost
- The Corinthians were less than thankful for Paul and his service

Those attacking Paul's character said he was odd:

- He wasn't like other speakers who had come to Corinth
- He didn't ask for money
- He didn't want high praise
- He was just **devoted to communicating the truth**

2 Corinthians 5:11-13

"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. **We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. **For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.**"**

Paul was passionate about teaching the truth and desperate to ensure that the Corinthians were getting the truth.

He was an original Jesus freak!

"If people think we're crazy because we're passionate about Jesus, they should see our commitment to God"

"If you see us as reasonable and in the right mind, it is because God has shaped your understanding to believe"

Our Motive

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that **one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, **but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.**"**

The love of Christ was shown on the cross

Controls (or Constraineth in the KJV) -> *sunecho* -> means to press and hold firmly together

This love of Christ controlled Paul actions -> he could never forget Christ's sacrifice for him.

Jesus's sacrifice motivated Paul to join the His mission

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

John 8:31-32 (Jesus said)

"If you **continue in My word**, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

We are to live for Christ now and to live by the faith -> the Word of God -> Trusting in Him for everything

Remaining under the direction of His Word because of our love and remembrance of Him

Our Motive should be to return His love and to Serve Him daily with our lives

Our Focus (People Focus)

2 Corinthians 5:16

"**Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh**; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer."

"We know no man after the flesh" -> KJV

Even Jesus, Paul wrote: **We no longer look at Him with human perspectives** -> we see Him spiritually.

Do this mean we shouldn't visually recognize anyone?

Know or Recognize means "to perceive"

The question is: **How should we see people if we're in Christ?**

We are human and we like to size people up: When you first meet someone, what do you first look at?

How do we evaluate the people we meet?

"Oh, Jim is tall...and Geoffrey could afford to lose a few pounds..."

"Aleta has an interesting accent...and Cheryl speaks softly..."

Paul says we should only evaluate people based on who they are in Christ

Are they in the kingdom or out of the kingdom?

Do they have a personal relationship with Jesus or not?

I remember meeting some **highfalutin** people in my day.

How many of you think "Highfalutin" is a real word?

I would run into them on airplanes or at conferences: Professional athletes, coaches, authors, actors, politicians, models, famous Bible preachers, etc.

I'm not necessarily "awestruck" when I meet famous people. I may have been in the past, but now:

What do I really want to know if I meet someone?

"Do you know Jesus? Where are you in Christ?"

Our People Focus should be on their relationship with Jesus, not their physical characteristics or achievements

Our Status (Spiritual Status)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

"In Christ"

There's a lot of meaning in those two words:

You are "In Christ" if you believe that **He is God come in the flesh** to redeem you

You are "In Christ" if you have accepted His sacrifice and Him **as your Savior**

You are "In Christ" if you have committed your life to Him **as your Lord**

You are "In Christ" if you **trust Him to come and deliver you into Heaven** after your last breath.

How many of you are "In Christ" ...?

If you are "in Christ", you are **a new creature or a new creation.**

You have been recreated in Christ.

You say, well, I look the same...and I might say worse!

The word new here is *kainos*, **a qualitatively new production** -> more like an innovation

You are a new kind of human -> a human with a divine presence inside you in the Holy Spirit.

"Old things have passed away" -> old desires, old value systems, old beliefs, old plans, old thoughts, old languages, etc.

Behold "New things have come"

Behold is a "WOW!" comment

When the Holy Spirit shows up in your life, regeneration happens.

Renovation happens -> I love to use those renovation examples...

Galatians 5:16-24

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: **immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these**, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

The old you without the Spirit’s renovation work could have several of these characteristics.

The new you with the Spirit inside you, hopefully, is showing changes to the old life and you are filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Combining this with the last sentence, instead of viewing people for their name or likeness, we should view them for the Spirit’s influence. **Are they living in the old way...or in the new way?**

That means we don’t look at people’s past failures, either. We see them as the new in Christ

Our Ministry

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them”**

“Now all these things are from God” -> God is the one behind ALL transformation. It is God’s gift, your faith.

“He reconciled us to Himself through Christ” -> God brought us to Christ. God drew us to Jesus. Those who are the Chosen, followed along with God’s choice.

“reconciled” -> *katalasso* means “down to an exact point” -> from disparate views to a single one. It was used as how someone would exchange coins to be able to use **a common currency**.

In this case, we were changed **from enemies into friends**.

Colossians 1:21-23

“And although you were **formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now **reconciled you** in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless** and beyond reproach-- **if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away** from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven”**

You know that you have been reconciled if you firmly stay in the faith...

Romans 5:8-11

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom **we have now received the reconciliation.**”**

2 Corinthians 5:19

“**He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**”

“He has **committed to us** the word of reconciliation” -> What is our job? The Ministry of Reconciliation!

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

This is not me getting between Jerry and Jim when they're having a heated discussion.

This is me getting between John and God.

Our Ministry is bringing people to Jesus, discipling them as the Lord called us to do in **Matthew 28:18-20**

Our Role

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though **God were making an appeal through us**; **we beg you** on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

“Ambassadors” -> an emissary or a diplomat

An ambassador is “a trusted, respected believer **who is authorized to speak as God's emissary**”

“making an appeal through us” -> parakaleo -> calling out

Isaiah 55:1-3

“Ho! **Every one who thirsts, come to the waters**; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. “**Why do you spend money for what is not bread**, and your wages for what does not satisfy? **Listen carefully to Me**, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. “Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.”

“we beg you” -> “a deep, emotional pleading or request”

What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?

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Have Integrity in our Finances
Live Ethically

1. **Be Moved** by the loving sacrifice of Christ into action
2. **Adopt a Peacemaker mentality**
3. **Evaluate people** only by their relationship to Jesus
4. Lovingly **Speak the Truth** of God's Word

Prayer

Benediction