

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 “You Are Christ’s Ambassadors!” June 26-28,2021
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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, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 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 people’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. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)

Introduction

(Picture) This is a picture of Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. (Picture) This is Richard Grenell, the U.S. ambassador to Germany. These and many others from our nation have been appointed to represent us in other countries. (Picture) These folks, some whom you might recognize, are ambassadors of our Chamber of Commerce. They welcome new businesses and promote our community. Ambassadors are people who have been appointed to represent a country, community, or an organization. ... You are all ambassadors. **YOU ARE CHRIST’S AMBASSADORS...**

Paul & His Fellow Missionaries

So was the Apostle Paul and his missionary companions who wrote to the Corinthians. Paul had founded a Christian congregation in Corinth on his second missionary journey. He visited there again on his third missionary journey. After that, while he was in Ephesus in Asia Minor, he heard of problems in the Corinthian congregation. So he wrote a rather direct letter dealing with these problems. Then news came to Paul that things were turning around in Corinth. So he wrote this second letter to the Corinthians to give comfort and encouragement.

In this section of this letter that we are considering, Paul has two concerns. One is that he wants the Corinthians to be clear that his ministry is not about him but rather, about God and especially Christ. The other is that since everyone will one day have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, he wants people to be ready and to be welcomed into eternal glory.

Therefore, Paul is writing as an official ambassador of Christ. In the opening to this letter Paul calls himself **“an apostle of Christ called by God.”** In this section he wrote of Christ, **“And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”**

What motivated Paul in this ambassadorship? He answers, **“¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us.”** – Christ’s undeserved amazing love that moved him to save Paul and us. So Paul was an official ambassador of Christ.

When you think of Nike, what message comes to mind? ...“Just do it!” How about Wheaties? “Breakfast of Champions.” M&M’s? ...“Melts in your mouth and not in your hands.” When it came to Paul and the message of reconciliation, it was about Christ, forgiveness, peace, and righteousness.

Think about these statements of what loved moved God the Father and God the Son to do:

- V. 14 – **“...we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”** No one needs to die and go to hell to pay for their sins because Christ did it for them.
- V. 18&19 – **“... God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ...”** We came into this world spiritually dead and enemies of God because of sin. But Christ satisfied God with his holy life and paid for our sins with his death on the cross. In doing so he brought us peace with God – he reconciled us to God.

- V. 21 - ²¹ **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us** Christ had no sin of his own but took our sinfulness and sins upon himself and paid for them in full so that we won't have to.

Paul also talks about the results of God showing such love and taking such action.

- V. 15 - ¹⁵ **And he died for all, that those who live (live by faith) should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.** Christ gives us Christians, purpose – to live for him.
- V. 16 - 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.** We don't look at people based on education, appearance, wealth, success, etc., as the world does – but we see people as precious souls who have been reconciled by Christ to God and we want them to have and enjoy the message of peace with God through Christ.
- V. 17 - ¹⁷ **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!** Once a person becomes a Christian there is a change in the control room of their soul. The sinful nature is kicked out and a new person steps in who knows the love of Christ, in love wants to live for Christ, and strives to glorify Christ.
- V. 19 – **“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.”** Even though the ledger of life should be volumes when it comes to our sins, because of Christ, in God's Book of Life there is not one sin logged by our name. There are only Christ's acts of love done in our behalf and our imperfect godly acts of love perfected in Christ.
- V. 21 – **“...That in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** Christ took our sins and paid for them. He gave us his righteousness that is ours through faith in him.

So as Christ's ambassador Paul has laid out the saving work of Christ and the intended results. Now he comes to the closer, 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.** Doesn't this sound strange? After all, Paul made the point that Christ already reconciled us to God. What is Paul saying? He's saying what he said to a jailor in Philippi who asked what he must do to be saved. Paul answered, **“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16).”**

Us

“Be reconciled to God.” This is one of the most important directives to consider. It's cause to pause and examine ourselves. This deals with an eternal destiny of heaven or hell. Do I really believe that Christ died for me ... that God does not count my sins against me ... that I am a new person in Christ ... that I am righteous before God? You may have a disease for which there is a cure. You may know about the cure, but unless you take it in it won't help you. God through Paul is saying to you in love, “This message of reconciliation, the message of peace with God through faith in Christ, take it in!”

It is said that the best ambassadors or representatives of a product, a service, or whatever, are those who have benefitted greatly from them. You have benefitted greatly from God's love in Christ. You have peace with God. God does not count your sins against you. You are a new creation in Christ. You are righteous in Christ. You are greatly blessed!

Now you are Christ's ambassadors! As Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2, **“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”**

Our motive is like that of the Apostle Paul, **“Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”** Our motive starts with Christ's undeserved love for us. Then it goes to our response of love to him for his love to us. But his love for us and our love for him, moves us to Christ-like love for others and concern as to whether they are reconciled to God.

Our methods in serving as Christ's ambassadors are in how we live and what we say to others. First, the greatest message you can preach is not from a pulpit, but with your life. Your life preaches sermons every day to those

who meet you – beauty salon, the barber shop, B&L Bar, Rodney’s, or the Kegel Club, Cashwise or Hyvee. As you exhibit the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – people notice. It makes them wonder, “What makes him or her that way?” Eventually, there may come the question, “How can you be so” The door is opened then to represent Christ as his ambassador with that message of reconciliation – peace with God through Christ.

This is a message that so many people need. There are people who believe that when they die, they will go to hell because they need to pay for their sins. You can tell them, “Christ died for you, and you died with him. He paid for your sins.” There are people who picture God as only angry at them because of sin. You can tell them that Christ reconciled them to God taking their place and dying for their sins. There are people who picture a mountain for sins for which they will have to give an account on the last day of their life or the last day in time. You can tell them, “Because of Christ, God does not count your sins against you.” There are people who feel they have not purpose in life. You can tell them, “Christ died and rose again for you that you live for him to bring him glory.” There are people who feel that they are hopeless in overcoming weakness and sin in their lives. You can tell, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come.” Some things involve intense struggle, but with Christ’s love in our hearts and the Holy Spirit dwelling in our soul, we can overcome.

Conclusion

(Picture) What ambassadors like Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. ambassador to the United Nation and (Picture) Richard Grenell, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, do is important. But what you do as Christ’s ambassador is even more so – it has eternal consequences for those with whom you come in contact. Be the ambassador God made you to be.