

Ambassadors for Christ

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[0:00] 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17! 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 In Christ he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did proceed you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

ambassadors for Christ. Verse 20 tells us of ambassadors. Now we know in the worldly sense of an ambassador, it's a very important high office.

[1:40] It's really a very significant high-ranking position to be an ambassador. When you think of it, the Australian ambassador, say, for the Australian ambassador in Iraq, is there in that country, to represent and to speak, on behalf of the government of Australia.

And when he or she speaks, they speak not for themselves, but for the nation. Imagine that, if you were such a person, to be in such a role, an ambassador.

It's pretty heavy duty. And an ambassador, when they select an ambassador, they look for someone who's got tact and diplomacy and has dignity and courtesy and the ability to communicate.

It's a very significant position. And that embassy on that foreign soil is a bit of Australia on that foreign soil. The embassy, the place where the ambassador is located.

And the whole honour of Australia is in his hands, the ambassador. And we as Australians are judged by the ambassador that represents us over in that country, whether it be Iraq, Nigeria, you name it.

[2:58] An ambassador. It's a very important role. We see an ambassador spoken of likewise in Proverbs. I'll just turn to that. Proverbs 13, and verse 17.

It says, a wicked messenger falleth into mischief, but a faithful ambassador is health.

I'll say that again. Proverbs 13, verse 17. A wicked messenger falleth into mischief, but a faithful ambassador is health.

A faithful ambassador is health. In other words, brings healing. There's wholeness there. There's reconciliation.

A faithful ambassador, a good and faithful ambassador is one who brings health and refreshment, wholeness and comfort as a blessing when the ambassador is faithful.

[3:57] Now think of it for yourself. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. That's saying for every believer, you that believe, you that are, here's each one of you, each one of us, here's an ambassador.

We can think of numbers of things that means, for example, three, a representative, an agent and a spokesman.

Look at what an ambassador is. It's a high rig. How much higher can it be to be a child of the Most High God?

You can't get higher than that. I'm in honoured company here this evening. Amongst the royal family, the king's sons and daughters, you are children of the Most High God.

I'm honoured to be in your presence tonight. There's that sense, isn't there? We don't understand how high ranking we are in the kingdom of God. An ambassador is empowered.

[5:08] Think of that ambassador in that land. They have a very high empowerment, an authorisation behind them. So look at these three things for a start. An ambassador is a representative.

So when an ambassador is in this other land, they are Australia to that land. They represent the country they are sent from.

They represent us, Australians. They represent our country, Australia, hopefully faithfully in that foreign land. A representative.

What about you and me? We are ambassadors for Christ. We stand in the place of our king. That's awesome, isn't it? That everything that we do reflects on the one who has sent us.

So that ought to make us consider our conduct, what we say, what we do, how we live. Because the kingdom of God, our king, is measured in a way by how we conduct ourselves.

[6:14] We are a representative. That's important. Think that the honour and reputation of your country is in your hands.

Just as for an ambassador in another country, the honour and reputation of Australia is in his or her hands. The ambassador, you are a representative tonight.

Secondly, you're an agent as an ambassador. There's an agency. You are acting on behalf of another. There's a sense where you are God's agent.

The agent of Christ. In other words, as an ambassador in the secular sense, can act with the full authority of the government on certain matters.

They are delegated such that they can speak and act for the nation that sends them. It's a very serious privilege, isn't it?

[7:19] And we read in our text as we started there in 2 Corinthians, well we didn't read that one, but 2 Corinthians 5 verse 11, in this context of being an ambassador for Christ, it says this in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 11, and it's just after talking about the judgment seat of Christ.

It says, verse 11, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also made manifest in your consciences.

As ambassadors, we know the terror of the Lord. We know the judgment is to come, and we, it says, we persuade men. We don't pressure men, we persuade them.

We lovingly and gently would point people to the Saviour, to know Him, to know the truth of the gospel. There's a call for us to do that, for every believer to be such that we are agents of the kingdom of God, agents of the kingdom of the King.

So we are representatives, we are agents, and thirdly, we're spokesmen. We're spokesmen, we speak on behalf of our God.

[8:35] That's an incredible high honour, isn't it? For every believer, not for any, just a preacher, but for anyone, every Christian, every believer, every one of you are spokesmen and women.

We have something to stand for, to proclaim, to advocate, as an ambassador does for the nation's viewpoint. Every one of us can be a messenger, and an ambassador is not in that country to represent their own views, or themselves, but they are there to please the King, or the government that has sent them.

And it's the same with you and me. We are to speak for the kingdom of God. We're not on this earth to please ourselves, but to please the one who has sent us.

everyone that believes is likewise an ambassador for Christ. So think of this truth that you're an ambassador, and what that means for you.

As a Christian, you're called to be an ambassador for Christ. And when an ambassador is in another land, they are always on call.

[9:51] They could get a call any day of the week, any time of the day or night, they are always on call. It's the same with us, really.

You're a full-time Christian. You know, I know as a younger Christian at one time, I was a bit of a chameleon, in that I kind of put on a church face, and then I didn't put on a church face, if you know what I mean.

I was kind of, changing to suit where I was. But really, as a Christian, that's wrong, isn't it? And I came to see that.

That as a Christian, you're a full-time Christian. You don't put on your Christianity and then put it off. You're a full-time ambassador. You're always on call. You're always representing your king, no matter where you are or who you win.

You represent your Lord, your king, in your daily life. You represent him wherever you are, before others, whoever they are. So speak for him. Speak for him in your conversation.

[11:02] Represent Christ, your saviour, completely, properly. As an ambassador for Christ, it's a lifestyle. You can imagine what it would be like to actually be an ambassador for a country.

Say you were the Australian ambassador in Mozambique or wherever it be. You can think of whatever country it might be. That you are. They're always looking at you.

That you represent Australia. When you're going about your everyday life, when you're down the shop, when you're off-jeezy. You're not really off-jeezy because you represent Australia.

You're judged as an Australian. And likewise for you as a Christian, isn't it? As an ambassador you're for Christ, you are for him. You represent him in your lifestyle.

You're a representative of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. It's a special commission that we have to represent our Lord. And as a representative of the King of Kings, we belong to heaven.

[12:05] That's our loyalty. We are strangers here. This is tempering. You know, as I could reflect personally as someone born in another country, I'm kind of, I'm just a stranger here still.

I like to think of myself as an Aussie, but I suppose if you scratch me deep enough, the pommie comes out. And, you know, that's the same, in a way I can kind of capture that and identify with that. That as a Christian, actually, Australia is not my identity. I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian first and an Australian. And we're strangers here. That's the point of it.

And it's a priority for us to be an ambassador of our Lord. And you think of an ambassador in another country, that we have an ambassador in another country in that secular setting.

They've got all the nation's wealth behind them for an assignment. If Australia said we want to invest, then we'd be the channel for that investment, for that assignment, whatever it be.

[13:10] That all the wealth of Australia can come behind us. And likewise, if some war breaks out, we've got the protection of our nation behind us as we are in that foreign land. And it's the same for us as an ambassador for Christ.

We've got the protection of our king all the time. And we are on his assignment. We are representing the interests of our nation here. And our loyalty is for him.

Our primary allegiance is to our Lord, not to any earthly power. God, it helps make life make sense in a way, doesn't it?

But we're called to be ambassadors here in this materialistic world. We're here representing another country, a better one, as the Bible says, of heaven.

It's a better country. We are representing another state, another king. And it says of us, as it says in the context here, that the love of Christ constrains us.

[14:07] Because we love our Lord, we're led by him, we're controlled by him. There's a compulsion. Because we are his ambassadors. So think of this fact that you are an ambassador today.

It means you're a foreigner. We don't belong to Australia. We are foreigners here. We're temporary residents. You might get a PR, a permanent residency, on your passport, but honestly it's not true. You are not a permanent resident of Australia. You are a temporary resident. This is temporary. Our home is eternal, isn't it? Amen? Our home is in heaven.

And as a temporary resident, we've got no real investments where we live, in a sense, in the real sense of it, our investment is in heaven. We are sent by the King of heaven as citizens of that country.

country. And we are strangers here. It tells us in Philippians 3, verse 20, you could put it that we're citizens of heaven. There's a sense where our citizenship is in heaven.

[15:20] And we represent our home country, which is heaven, in our host country, which is Australia. Our home country is heaven. Our host country is Australia, is earth.

So we're foreigners in the world. You know, to capture that, it helps you to realise the context of life here, doesn't it? That we dress differently, we talk differently to the world in the sense that we don't adopt the crass customs and the crude language of the world.

We have a King to serve, to love, to honour, to bless, to represent. And we're called to be strangers, not to blend in. Now that doesn't mean we walk around like we're weird or anything, but there's a sense that we are foreigners.

And it's a sense in a way too, when you actually come to think of it, that this is a hostile country.

Now the world, in the sense of the world at large, the world is an enemy of God.

The Bible talks about how this world is in rebellion against God. And we are representing the one who wants to redeem this world. So as ambassadors, we also have an embassy.

[16:35] Now, you could reckon in a way that your church is the embassy of heaven. But even more so, you could think your home is the embassy of heaven too.

Because as an ambassador, you live in the embassy, the embassy is your home. So actually the four walls of your home, your family, your household, it should be something of an embassy of the heaven, of heaven on planet earth.

That we should be such a people that our home ought to be reflected that we are part of God's kingdom.

So that it's a place where our Lord is on it, even in your home. And when you think of an embassy, even if you think of not so much the building that is the church, but the gathering of the people that is the church, the assembly, the congregation of your brothers and sisters, as we get together as fellow ambassadors, if you like, we've got a bit of our homeland on foreign soil.

It's a home away from home, in a sense. As we sing, we're kind of practicing for the heavenly choir that will join one day, maybe. There was some lovely singing, by the way, before, wasn't there?

[17:46] There are different parts, and I heard the little dog join in that is out in there. So, you know, it's a wonderful harmony there, the canines and the different parts of the choir, but you can imagine this is a home away from home.

Soon we'll be in a heavenly home, and for the meantime, our embassy is here. And so we can visit with our fellow countrymen, who are visiting this foreign land, and we can encourage one another as we're saints this side of glory.

And in an embassy, it's where we can send and receive messages to the king. regarding our needs and health. And in an embassy, it's where we relate with others from our homeland, and we gain encouragement from co-workers.

As it's been said, when you visit an Australian embassy, for example, in an Australian embassy in Paris, you are stepping onto Australian soils when you walk in. You step onto Australian soil.

It's a sense where, in a way, when we get together as God's people, we're stepping onto heaven's soil. In that kind of sense, that we're together, we've got the same mind, the same heart, the same love for our great Lord.

[18:58] We're ambassadors for Christ. And an ambassador has some written instructions. When you think about it, this is the ambassador's guide, isn't it?

It's the ambassador's directions. It is our standing orders. It's our policy. It's our guide for living as ambassadors. And so it's good to get a handle on the word that, or to guide how the ambassador should live.

What does an ambassador do? An ambassador helps people to emigrate to his country. We want more people to be in the kingdom of heaven, don't we?

And really, that's one of the critical responsibilities. It's a calling that God gives to us. As we read here, we are ambassadors for Christ.

As though God just beseech you, sorry, getting my tongue tight here, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

[20:07] So as an ambassador, just as a secular ambassador, we're we show the candidate what the requirements are and how to apply. We have a message to reach others to emigrate to this country.

And what a joy it is to see others come to know the Saviour. It's a big responsibility when you think about it, because as an ambassador, we stand on a diplomatic mission.

We have a mission to accomplish, which brings us to an uproar point. Our message, our message as ambassadors. It says, now then, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us.

We pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. As ambassadors, we have a message. The message is, he has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He has made him to be our sin, to bear our sin, to pay for our sin, that we in Christ should be made the righteousness of God. Our message is messengers of God that we carry as as though Christ pleads through us.

[21:24] It's saying there, we pray you in Christ's stead. In other words, we pray you on his behalf. We urge you, we beseech you on behalf of him. We plead with you.

We plead as though Christ is pleading through us. An ambassador needs to communicate the message of the king, of the government, of the kingdom of God, in our case.

And as messengers, we ought to be communicators and communicate graciously too. We ought to communicate with grace. I've seen some folk well-meaning as they be, very harsh.

A message that didn't seem to be the message of the gospel to me, but was more a browbeating and a hammering and a condemning.

Friends, there's a conviction, but there's an uplifting. There's a saving. There's a gracious saviour. We represent him.

[22:28] We're spokesmen with a message that is vital, that is life-saving, a vital, urgent message. And we're spokesmen for his kingdom, so we ought to communicate with grace and truth.

The world needs to hear the message of our king loudly and clearly. And how is it going to happen? He's not going to send angels. Well, maybe he does on occasion send angels.

I'm not precluding that. Could happen. But to communicate the gospel, he doesn't send angels, does he? He sends human beings, just like you and me.

And with all our thoughts, he sends ambassadors. And this king that we serve wants his message communicated.

And it's the message of every believer. He's committed, it says, this message of reconciliation. Verse 19, he's committed unto us.

[23:31] The word of reconciliation. He's given it to you, to me, to be ambassadors. Every believer has committed this message of reconciliation, of peace with God.

Think of that. And Paul says, I beseech you, I urge you. There's an urgency here. There's no time to waste.

There's a time constraint. We are to communicate the message. We are peacemakers. This message is an urgent one.

It's important. It's as Christ is urging through us. He's appealing through us. That's a heavy responsibility too, isn't it? Is it not? That through you, through me, through human vessels, God is making his appeal through you, through us.

And what is that message? Be reconciled to God. That's the essential message. Be reconciled to God. We're conveying a message of our sovereign.

[24:38] We're conveying a message of our government, the kingdom of God. We're representing him, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, at his commission, under his assignment.

We represent him in our words and our actions. We demonstrate his character and accomplish his purposes if we're a faithful ambassador.

And to communicate that message, be reconciled, to God. In other words, be brought back into fellowship with God. Reconciliation means to bring into agreement, to bring together.

You might have a time where you reconcile your accounts. You reconcile, I don't think anyone's got checkbooks anymore, but you get that point where you reconcile what's been dishd out and what the bank statement is and you bring them into an agreement.

Reconciliation means bring into agreement. We've got an accountant here. He can help you. There's a reconciliation. They've run into agreement. The checkbook balance with the bank statement balance.

[25:51] And there's a reconciliation here. It's between two parties who are at odds with each other to bring them together as friends, that we can be made friends with God.

It's amending of broken relationships. Before Christ's atoning death, it says God and man were separated by sin. But in Christ's death, man and God are brought back together. There's a reconciling. There's a relationship made. As we read in Romans 5, verse 10, it says, For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Reconciliation is a beautiful word, isn't it? There was a story told, a bit alike to one I told this morning, that the father had had a disagreement with his son and this conflict became so bad between the father and son that they wouldn't talk to each other anymore and finally the son left home.

One day the son received a telegram that his mother lay dying and if he wanted to see her alive again, he needed to return home right away. So the son came to the bedside of his dying mother and on the other side of the bed stood his father.

[27:00] And still neither of them would speak to one another. The wife pleaded with them, that it would make things right. And though she begged them with tears, both of them stood beside the bed and said nothing.

Finally, with her dying breath, she took the hand of her husband on one side and the hand of her son on the other and brought them both to her bosom and died. And the two stood there a moment with their hands clutched over the body of their dead mother and they burst into tears and got right with each other.

What a picture of reconciliation. That's what Jesus does by virtue of the cross, by virtue of the death of the cross, that the father and the sinner can be brought together.

That the father and the sinner can be saved and made a son. And we can be brought together and it happens because of the death of the cross. Friends, our task is as ambassadors to tell the world how to be reconciled with God.

It's a vital message. It's essential. And we've been given the authority to speak on his behalf. You are ambassadors for Christ. You that are saved tonight, you are ambassadors for Christ.

[28:15] And it says we appeal to men, we beseech them, be reconciled to God. We looked at that verse that I started with there of now then are we ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us.

We pray you in Christ's stead on his behalf, be reconciled to God. And then we saw how a faithful ambassador is helped. I urge you tonight to reflect on these truths that you are called to be an ambassador for Christ and he wants you to be a faithful ambassador.

Are we a faithful ambassador? Friends, when war breaks out an ambassador is recalled. When hostilities break out, when hostilities are imminent, the nation calls the ambassador back home. And you could reflect on how one day hostility is going to break out. One day there will be tribulation. There will be great tribulation. Friends, the ambassadors are going to be called out. I believe they will be called out before it hops up to that point of judgment, of wrath. Friends, the ambassador will be called out.

[29:37] In other words, there is only a certain time for the message of reconciliation to be delivered. While we are this side of his coming, friends, are we going to be faithful representatives?

Are we going to be a worthy agent? A bold messenger? Sometimes it can be hard. I know for myself, I found it that way too. As you know, as a Christian in a workplace, there's tact, there's diplomacy, there's wisdom, there's finding the opportunity and the right moment and the right method, the right words, gracious words.

So witness to your colleagues, your friends, your neighbours. One day the ambassadors are going to be recalled home or go to heaven when hostilities are imminent.

When the recall of all believers happens at the rapture, this will announce the beginning of the end for Satan. Friends, there's a time limit to get reconciled to God. Now that's not to say there may be opportunity to get saved in the tribulation, God forbid you leave it that long to get right with God,

honestly.

And the point I'm making here tonight is are you living up to your name as an ambassador for Christ? It's a challenge, isn't it? That you would even be chosen to be an ambassador, that you would have that privilege and it's a full-time responsibility.

[31:01] Don't have the attitude that you clock on and clock off as a Christian. You're a full-time ambassador. Amen? So do not dishonour your saviour by your conduct.

Be gracious as you communicate the message. Be a messenger that is a faithful one, a faithful ambassador. As again, I reflect on certain ones that kind of try to communicate a gospel message, but it's all about fire falling from heaven and you're too sinful, blah, blah, blah, and you're damned and condemned without offering actually there's a saviour who's done everything that he needed to do to save you.

And no matter how far, far, far away from God, no matter how sinful and desperate and as much as you feel like you're in the gutter, that you're too sinful, that God can't reach you.

It says that his arm is not shortened, that it cannot save. Friends, there's graciousness with our saviour and he's given us a gracious message and you represent him. What would he say?

Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden. His words would be gracious, they'd be words of invitation, they'd be words of love, of care. You are chosen, authorised and sent as an ambassador.

[32:23] You're an agent, you're a messenger, you're a spokesman. Are you serving for the embassy of heaven? Think of that wherever you go.

Are you following the ambassador's guide and policy? It's here. This is how we are to live, what we are to do. Are you helping people emigrate to our homeland, that others will be there as he has shared the gospel to them, that others will know him?

there's no greater joy to faithfully relay the message of heaven. Be ye reconciled to God. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you reconcile sinful man, and it's because in that perfect one, in your body, on the tree, you took our sin, that you were made sin for us and you know sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in you, that you transfer our sin with your righteousness.

Lord, we thank you for that, that we can trust you, and for each one that they can know what it is, to know that heart peace with God, not by any working or effort of self, but in receiving that gift.

[33:43] And Lord, when we receive that gift, it changes us from the inside out. We want to tell others. We want to be faithful, ambassadors. We want to be your hand extended.

Lord, we want our words to be gracious, our lives to be a testimony. Lord, we want to be an ambassador that will live wisely and fully discharge what you've called us to be, to do.

We pray that our homes would be an embassy of the kingdom of heaven. Lord, we pray that this church body, this gathering, this and other churches alike to us, that they would be such that they're embassies of the kingdom of heaven.

And Lord, such that we'll be able to be called by you faithful ambassadors. Lord, we thank you for that. We pray for each one, each home here tonight, that each one might know the grace of God.

And we thank you for it. In Jesus' name. Amen.