

Evangelize Them...As Christ's Ambassadors
2 Cor 5:11-21

"A man must do one or two things with his religion. He must either give it up or he must give it away."

Robert E Speer.

For many weeks now we have received exhortation after exhortation to go and give away ourselves and the gospel. Let's actually do it. As you go out, evangelize them as Christ's Ambassadors!

Our text this morning is 2 Cor 5:11-21

Framing the Message—3 Foundational Truths

1. To be entrusted with the gospel is to be enlisted as an ambassador.

An ambassador is:

- One Summoned by a Sovereign
- One Supplied by the Sovereign
- One sent to represent the Sovereign

2. To be enlisted as an ambassador is to be sent on a mission

The mission is:

primarily proclamation (word)
also substantiation (deed)

3. The evangelist's mission at its heart is a ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation:

- Is exclusively a Pauline word in the NT (13 x)
- Means - a change or exchange. Whether used of God and man, or man-to-man, it carries the idea of changing state or status—from separated to mended, broken to fixed, hostile to peaceful, enemy to friend.
- Is key to this portion of scripture (5x in 3 verses).

The Foundation of All Ministry is the Foundation of Our Ministry as Christ's Ambassadors (11-13)

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that

you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

Foundational - ambassadors are to be governed by a strong consciousness of divine accountability.

Paul is governed by a keen awareness that he will stand before Christ at the judgment seat to give an account for his life and ministry.

Therefore – goes back to v. 9-10 –

“...we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

The judgment seat of Christ puts a fear in him that makes him bring his “A-game” to the ministry.

This judgment is not a judgment of **condemnation**.

There is no for those in Christ Jesus (Rm 8:1; 1 Jn 2:1)

This is a judgment for **commendation**.

(1 Cor 3:12)

¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Knowing the fear of the Lord “we persuade men.”

Paul believes in persuading (Acts 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23)

Paul persuades without gimmicks and tricks.

Paul seeks to overcome their oppositions, their disbelief, their disdain, and their doubts, through “the plain, but passionate, statement of the truth.

(2 Cor 4:2)

Foundation - ambassadors do ministry with human sensitivity.

But what we are known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

Paul is accountable to God, but he also since he needs of those he ministers to. Paul wants to provide them something tangible to take to people who put stock in the tangible. (Charts, sales, degrees, resumes, etc.)

Foundation - Ambassador are concerned with overall ministerial integrity.

Christ and His cross is the model and motivation for our ministry as Christ's ambassadors (14-17).

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Jesus' loving substitutionary sacrifice on the cross provides for us our ministry model and ministry paradigm (vv. 14-15)

The love of Christ controls us...

- Constrains and compels.
- It keeps us from selfishness
- It compels us to service

This is the love that Jesus displayed in giving his life for underserving, sinners has become Paul model and motivation.

ILLUST. When love and service is your strong suit, people will either hate you, or follow you. If a whole bunch of guys are in a room with their wives, the guy who really seems to excel at displaying loving service usually leaves everyone with no choice but to follow that example.

Paul says, "the love of Jesus" compels us, constrains us, leaves us no choice but to follow him as the ultimate model of ministry. We serve not our selves, but others. This is the conclusion based on thinking about it.

“We have concluded” - (aorist participle κρίναντας) (v.14)

And we’ve thought about and concluded—

“one died and therefore all died, and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Jesus’ loving substitutionary sacrifice on the cross provides for us a transformed biblical perspective. (vv. 16-17)

Through gospel-lenses...

We no longer see Christ through the world’s perspective.

We no longer see others through the world’s perspective.

ILLUST. The 3-d glasses.

Having been recipients of reconciliation, ambassadors become participants in the ministry of reconciliation. (18-21)

¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ambassadors are recipients of reconciliation—reconciliation is all of God. (vv. 18-19)

- Reconciliation is authored by God – “*All this is from God*”
- Reconciliation is initiated by God – “*who reconciled us to himself*”
- Reconciliation is accomplished by God through Christ – “*that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.*”
- Reconciliation is achieved by God through the gracious act of forgiveness – “*not counting their trespasses against them*”
- Reconciliation is offered courtesy of God through Christ’s ambassadors – “*and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*”

Ambassadors are participants in reconciliation ministry—reconciliation ministry is all of grace (20-21)

Ambassadors evangelize with passionate appeals on behalf of Christ (20)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

—Be Passionate!

—Implore!

Spurgeon in *The Soul Winner*

BE EARNEST! ((TURN UP!))

What earnestness our theme deserves! We have to tell of an earnest savior, an earnest heaven, and an earnest hell. How earnest we ought to be when we remember that in our work we have to deal with souls that are immortal, would send that is eternal in its effects, With partying that is infinite, and with terrors and joys that are to last forever and ever

Ambassadors evangelize by unpacking the gospel (21).

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

—In evangelism be gospel-centered!

—In evangelism tell of what God has done!

God took sinless Christ and put our sin on him
Dealt with Him as though he had sinned...poured the wrath out
So that his righteousness could be our righteousness.