Week Three **- You are God’s Ambassador**

God, because He decided to use us to accomplish His mission in this world, calls us His **“ambassadors.”** We are called to be God’s voice to reconcile people to Himself. This includes the willingness to speak up and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Will we join Him in this?

**Prayer** - “God, we pray that you would help us understand what it means to be an ambassador for reconciliation between you and your people. Teach us to mirror our life and speech with that of Christ to effectively invite people in communion with You for the first time and others back into communion with You.”

**Scripture we will be using this morning** –

2 Corinthians 5:18-21,

Matthew 5:23,

John 4,

 Matthew 7:28-29,

1 Corinthians 3:6

### Introduction

We have been in this series called “Don’t be like the Chameleon, instead, stand out as opposed to fitting in” where we have spent some time looking into scripture and learning what it looks like to stand out on behalf of Christ. Last week we said God decided to choose us, call us out of the darkness around us and bring us into His glorious light. We also discussed the concept that we are God’s own possession. Not so that we could simply stay there and bask in the radiant light of Christ all by ourselves, but rather to reach those who are still stuck in the darkness.

He has saved us, not just for our own benefit but also for the benefit of others. That we might be **“ambassadors**” of the most High and bring glory to His name.

One website submits this as the job description of an ambassador:

“Ambassadors represent the policies and interests of their home countries around the world. This is the highest-ranking diplomatic position, requiring the ambassador to attend and host events with foreign leaders and representatives while promoting their home nation’s policies abroad. An ambassador typically lives in a foreign country for an extended period of time and has varied day-to-day duties.

Today, we want to show more specifically who and what He has called us to be on this earth AND what to say when we have opportunities to call people out of their darkness and into His light.

Flock, if you do not receive anything else today, know this: **that He has called us to be** **AMBASSADORS for Christ**! We are called to the highest position, to represent the interests of our Lord, to all the nations of the world. Starting right here!

What an amazing assignment and calling...and of course the next most important question is, “How do I do that?”

 “What exactly does that look like in my life?”

 “What does this all mean!?!”

I want to invite you to turn with me to our main passage of scripture that we will be spending time in today, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 which says:

***“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 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. 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. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”***

**I don’t use this term enough, but after reading these few verses,,,PRAISE GOD!**

This is Paul writing after he just finished telling his readers that anyone who belongs to Christ is a “new creation” in verse 17. He continues on, starting in verse 18 by saying, **“*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...*”**

**God gave us this ministry! This is our marching orders! This isn’t an option. This is an order for all of us, both individually and collectively, not something to be left to others!**

We are not to accept the free gift of God of personal reconciliation without also accepting the mission of reconciliation towards others! To do so would make us out to be hypocrites!

**Reconciliation Brings Revival**

**Please pay attention here. It is very important that all of us understand this statement!**

 I want us to understand one thing in particular from what Paul is saying*. People will experience revival through our ability to reconcile with each other*. Here is what I mean: it is going to be very difficult to bring those around us into a relationship with Christ if they only see broken relationships in our lives.

 If all a broken world sees is more brokenness, anger, and division then what incentive is there to consider a change? (repeat)

This should motivate any and all to seek out those that we may have an issue with and work to resolve it. It’s that important!

Jesus himself even talks about the importance of reconciliation in the Sermon on the Mount.

 **Matthew 5:23**

In Matthew 5:23 He says**, “*If you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*”**

You see, God has provided Jesus as a model for what reconciliation looks like. Not only between people and God, but also people-to-people. Jesus came to break cultural boundaries that did not allow people of different cultures to truly be in relationship with one another.

You may know the story of Jesus’ encounter (found in John 4) with the woman at the well in Samaria that we discussed in week 1. As a Jew, Jesus should not have been speaking with her or even be seen with her at all. However, He was much more focused on getting her heart in the right place, than following cultural norms of the time.

To put it another way, ***He was willing to stand out rather than fit in for the sake of someone’s soul****.*

I wonder how many people in your life are looking at you and all they see are broken relationships with those around you. They hear you talking about this Jesus guy that you love, and that you follow closely, but they don’t see much love coming out of your life toward other people. You see, one way or another, I believe that our lives will paint an image in the heads of those who do not believe as to what our God looks like, acts like, speaks like, and loves like.

And in order for God to use us to reconcile lost people to Himself, I believe there has to be work put in by us to seek reconciliation with those around us, as a testimony to what God’s love looks like in **action.**

I know of some that are estranged from each other over personal matters that have not sought to reconciliate and it’s because of their pride. I strongly suggest that those who find themselves in this position read over and over two of the verses that we have just alluded to. (2 Cor. 5:18-21 & Matt. 5:23) and then pray for each other. You will find it amazing what God’s words and your prayers can do.

This is one of many parts of a walk with Christ that we believe is meant to look like the cross. Here is what we mean: if you look at a cross, you will obviously see that it has both a horizontal fixture as well as a vertical one. The life that we live is meant to have a balance between our vertical relationship (us and God), and our horizontal relationships (us and others). God has reconciled the vertical relationship through Christ, and we are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation in the horizontal relationships we have with others.

***And as we work for reconciliation with others, we will see revival in our church***.

 **2 Corinthians 5:19-20 Again**

**(19)“ 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. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”**

As we keep reading in our passage, Paul goes on to tell us, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come to God or come back to God!” Right here, Paul gives a title to the role God has chosen to call us to fill: **ambassadors.**

Some of you will remember what the word *ambassador* means based upon the definition I gave at the beginning of this sermon. But I want us to hear the word as it was used in Greek, which was the original language that the New Testament was written in. Here, the word is *presbeuo.*

Essentially, this word means to act as God’s representative for His Kingdom. I think we can agree that there seems to be a good bit of weight which comes with that. You see, the *what* we represent will often reflect the *way* we act and speak. If we represent the world, we will find ourselves fitting into its mold and representing it’s policies and characteristics. However, if we represent Christ and God’s eternal Kingdom, we will naturally stand out because the policies and characteristics of God’s Kingdom are opposed to that of the world.

*And if you’re already standing out, you might as well speak out too.*

**Be Willing to Speak Out, to Speak Up.**

**Here is the key: if we have decided in our minds to be all right with standing out, the next step for us is to speak out, to speak up.**

**Matthew 7:28-29**

If there is one thing we see consistently throughout the life of Jesus, it is that when He spoke, people listened. The Bible actually tells us why people were so eager to hear what He had to say. Matthew 7:28-29 tells us that**,**

**“*when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, for He taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.*”** Jesus knew that His message was the truth. He was so convinced of this that He was willing to speak up and at times, speak against the culture around Him.

The culture around us tries to convince us of what’s called “relative truth,” which means there is no absolute truth, and therefore truth can change with most any passing whim. We see that as it takes place in our society today. How many things that were taboo not long ago is now fully accepted and embraced today?

However, if you follow Christ, you know that God’s truth is THE truth for our hurting and broken world. Just look around and you will see that as the world relies more on relative truth, the more hurt and brokenness there is!

The only time we will have the willingness to speak up and share the truth of scripture with others is when we are SO CONVINCED that it is the truth, that nothing will get in our way.

However, the reality is, many of us have stumbling blocks in our way known as disagreement or rejection.

**(Story)** I can remember times when all I did was mention Christ and it was like I just told them that I have the plague. They immediately shut me out and said, “Don’t talk to me about your religion, I don’t want to hear it. A few that while standing with others also rejected what I spoke up about when alone would come to me with personal problems and issues and ask what I thought or what I would do. They didn’t want the others to know that they respected me for my beliefs.

Whether we like it or not, this kind of thing will happen to us all the time if we choose to speak up and talk about the hope we have. Even throughout Jesus’ ministry, and the ministry of the apostles after Christ left, there were many times that they called out to people, saying similar things as Paul says in our passage, “Come back to God!” However, they turned away instead.

Rejection of the faith should not be seen as an exception, but rather should be rightly understood as many people’s normal response to the things of God’s kingdom.

Many are called, but few are chosen!

***We Must Learn to Deal With Rejection.***

If you are going to stand out and speak out, you have to learn to deal with rejection. Too many people allow rejection to redirect them back to worldly living. Back to being a chameleon and just fitting in. Not wanting to make waves.

 However, the key is to understand that if we are truly ambassadors for Christ, the rejection is not directed at us. Rather, the rejection is toward God.

Even more importantly than that, as ambassadors we are in the business of simply planting seeds.

Some of the soil we plant in will be perfect for the seed to grow immediately. Other soil will not quite be ready to experience growth. Nonetheless, in all cases, if we are willing to speak up, the seed of the Gospel message will be planted.

**1 Corinthians 3:6**

The Bible even records Paul talking about this in 1 Corinthians 3:6, when he says**, “*I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.*” Let these verses serve as a reminder to us: God is the one that grows the seed once we plant it.**

**Will we seek to be God’s ambassador and plant seeds by speaking up for Christ?**

### Conclusion

God never said any of this would be easy. In fact, Jesus specifically said in John 16:33, **“In this world** **you will have trouble**…” And in other places in the gospels Jesus warns us to**, “Count the cost.”**

However, if we are listening to and reading all of the words of Jesus correctly, We should be convinced it will all be worth it in the end. Speaking up for what you believe in is often rebuked and rejected in our culture. However, nothing will get in our way of being an ambassador for Christ if we are convinced of the truth behind His message.

Remember who we represent.

Remember the power of the Kingdom behind us.

Remember, just like an earthly ambassador, our appointment to this foreign land (the world), is a temporary one. Our citizenship is a heavenly one. Our home is not here.

This week, may God to ignite a new passion inside of our hearts to stand out, to speak up, and to share His love and Gospel message with those around us in our daily life.

Spend some time reading and re-reading 1 Corinthians 5:17-21. Familiarize yourself with the position of an ambassador. Think about how you can embody this position and mindset in your day to day living.

I would suggest that if there is someone that you are estranged from due to differences that you seek that person out and be reconciled before you try and take up the call to be an ambassador of Christ and attempt to reconcile the world around you! Until you do, you will find difficult to have the mindset needed as an ambassador of Christ.

Who can you share the gospel with this week?

Who can you be reconciled with personally this week?

Let’s pray together.

Our God and Father, we pray thanking You that through Jesus we stand before You as Your children. We thank You for Your word that not only saves us but gives us direction in our lives. May we accept Your word as absolute truth. May we have the mindset to be Your ambassadors. We pray that we make every effort to be reconciled with all so that we may work to plant seeds of Your Kingdom. That we may have the strength and courage to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to a world in need.

Amen.

If you’re here or watching on line wont you make every effort to come to the Lord with a humble heart. Asking for forgiveness and being baptized into Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. Christ freely went to the cross for you. He loves you and wants the best for you. He offers you a new life, a forgiven life, a life of direction and truth. Alife of care and concern. And most importantly, a life eternal!