

Miscellaneous

Four Things Ambassadors Need

July 10th, 2011

Text - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Scripture Reading - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Why not Isaiah?

The text on which our church is built

Enemies to Ambassadors

Who we were - Enemies of God

- **2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (ESV)**

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ *reconciled us to himself* and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was *reconciling the world to himself*, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, *be reconciled to God*.

What God did - Made peace with God possible through Christ

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Who we are in Christ - Not only new creations but ambassadors

- **2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (ESV)**

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old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 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.

The affect this truth had on Paul

- **2 Corinthians 5:14-16 (ESV) - Completely changed his life because of the Gospel**

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.

- **Romans 12:1 (NIV) - Offered himself up because of the Gospel**

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

- **Philippians 2:17-18 (ESV) - Offered himself gladly because of the Gospel**

¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

- **Ephesians 3:7-8 (ESV) - Was amazed that God has made him His ambassador**

⁷ Of this gospel *I was made a minister* according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

⁸ *To me*, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Four things we need to be effective ambassadors for Christ

God

To be an effective ambassador for Christ we need to be completely in love with and completely dependent upon God.

- Dive in and make a difference!
- **God Pursuing** – Difference making starts with our relationship with God. In order for us to make a difference in the lives of others, we must first allow God to make a difference in our lives. Therefore, we will be a church that makes the pursuit of God, and an ever-deepening relationship with Him, our highest priority. (Jn 17:3, Mt 22:37-38, Rom 12:1-2, Jer 29:11-13, Eph 2:8-10)
- **Prayerful** – Jesus said that without Him we can do nothing. Therefore, in order to make a difference, we must be humbly and constantly asking for and depending on Jesus' strength, wisdom, and guidance in everything we do. We must become a house of prayer where praying is not merely one of the many things we do but the foundation and power source of everything we do. (John 15:5, Col 1:29, Jam 1:5, Mt 21:13)

Focus

To be an effective ambassador for Christ we must be completely focused on what He has sent us to do.

- **Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)**
¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**
⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- **2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (ESV)**
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.

Paul was completely focused.

- **2 Corinthians 5:14-16 (ESV) - Completely changed his life because of the Gospel**

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.

We need to be too.

- **Ministry Minded** – If we want to make a difference we must embrace the fact that we have been placed on this earth to serve, not to be served, and we must truly believe that it is indeed better to give than to receive. We must develop a ministry mindset in which we see life as ministry, ministry as life, and every opportunity as a ministry opportunity. (Mark 10:43-45, Acts 20:35, 2 Cor 5:17-21)

It is SO EASY to be distracted.

- *An important question to be able to answer as a church is, "How does someone move from unbeliever to mature Christian at your church?" Some churches would answer, "Through the variety of opportunities, classes, and programs we offer." Others would have a very set curriculum that a person would walk through, i.e. Christianity 101, 201, 301, leadership training, etc. At TWE I would answer this way, "By getting to know our people and their needs and providing for them where they are at." We need to get to know each individual, find out where they are at spiritually, and meet them there. There is no sense offering this or that class or Bible study unless we know people are interested in coming to it. This is why MGs and CGs are so critical. We need to get to know our people and engage them on a spiritual level in order to spur them on, show them the way, and meet their needs. We need to understand where our folks are at and*

help them to move forward from that place. We need to know their questions, their fears, their struggles, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Whether they be a seeker, a new believer, or mature saints in Christ we need to know where they are scratching, where should they be scratching if they aren't, and how can we help them to itch?

- One brother's response

Rest

Being an effective ambassador for Christ will *wear you out!*

- Have you ever come to the end of long day of ministry (or even a short day of ministry) and just felt beat?
- It happens to me all the time!

I think one of the main reasons for this is we're in a spiritual battle.

- **Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)**

¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- The disappointments
- Your own flesh
 - **Matthew 26:41 (ESV)**
⁴¹Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Each Other

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

Two are better than one

- Exponential growth of leading one person to Jesus a year and teaching them to do the same
- We want ALL our people to be: Relational, Gospel Sharing, Reproducing

If one falls down, his friend can help him up

- Support, encouragement, accountability

Relationships don't happen automatically

- Mission Trip
- My greatest regret

We have to learn to INCLUDE

- Challenge to connect and disconnected alike
 - o Above both's desire to free up time
 - o New Life young couple's response to disconnection