

Ambassadors for God

2Cor 5:17-21

Introduction:

1. Not only is each Christian called to be a missionary, but each Christian is also called to be an ambassador
2. In Bible days an ambassador had little to do with politics, but he was a personal messenger for his ruler
3. The ambassador was under the authority of a ruler or a govt
4. In Paul's day, the Romans had 2 kinds of provinces
 - a. Senatorial provinces were made up of people who had submitted to Rome and were peacefully obeying the law
 - b. Imperial provinces were still rebellious and would create problems for Rome if they could. Rome sent ambassadors to the imperial provinces but not to the senatorial provinces
5. Christians are God's ambassadors to this world because the world is at war with God
 - a. This world is an imperial province in God's eyes
 - b. We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ and if the world rejects us then they are also rejecting Christ
6. One of the reasons that believers are left on this earth is for the ministry of reconciliation.
 - a. This is one of the things that we will not be doing in heaven
 - b. There will be no lost sinners in heaven and no ministry of reconciliation there
 - c. We are left here as ambassadors, with a ministry of reconciliation to declare the message of how sinners can be reconciled to God.
7. Let's examine the characteristics of ambassadors and learn how these relate to believers today

I. Ambassadors Must Be Citizens – Col 1:13

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. The president appoints ambassadors to various countries with which we have diplomatic dealings
2. The president would not appoint a citizen of Canada to be an ambassador of America in some foreign country
3. Being a Canadian, he might not act in the best interest of America, there might be a conflict of interest
4. Earthly ambassadors are strangers in the land to which they are sent

B. Heavenly Ambassadors

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

1. All Gods' ambassadors were once citizens of Satan's kingdom – outside the kingdom of God
 - a) *We could not leave Satan's realm under our own power and we could not make ourselves citizens of God's kingdom*
 - b) *Only Jesus can set us free and give us a new citizenship*
2. We've been translated from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom – Col 1:13
 - a) *"Translated" – can refer to moving defeated people from one land to another such as the deportation of prisoners of war*
 - b) *When we trusted Christ as Savior, we were moved out of Satan's defeated kingdom into the victorious kingdom of the Lord*
3. Our citizenship is in heaven – Phil 3:20
20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
4. Our heavenly citizenship qualifies us to become ambassadors of God the Father on earth
5. We are strangers and pilgrims here since heaven is our real home

II. Ambassadors Must Be Commissioned

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. Private individuals may be influential in dealing with foreign powers, but only the ambassador has authority to act
2. He has been commissioned by his govt and his credentials have been approved and accepted
3. Free-lance ambassadors usually produce good publicity, but poor diplomacy

B. Heavenly Ambassadors – 2Cor 5:18-19

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

1. Every Christian is ambassador for God whether he knows it or not, or agrees with it or not
2. **Joh 15:16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
3. Our chief job in this world is to share the gospel

III. Ambassadors Represent Their Ruler

A. Earthly Ambassadors – 1 Cor 15:3-4

1. The ambassador has no right to manufacture his own message.
2. His message is given to him by his ruler
3. The ambassador does not promote himself or allow his own personal interests to get in the way of his official work
4. Being a US ambassador is not just a 9-5 job, one is an ambassador around the clock
5. The ambassador possesses all the authority and power of the one who sent him

B. Heavenly Ambassadors - 1 Cor 15:3-4

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; **4** And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

1. Not every believer is called to full-time Christian service but every believer is called to full-time Christian living
2. No matter where we are we represent the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church
3. People form their opinions of God and the gospel based on what they hear and see in us
4. Our message is the gospel of Jesus Christ
5. We do not have liberty to change the message

Ga 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

IV. Ambassadors Have Their Needs Met

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. We send an ambassador to a foreign country but we make sure that his needs are met
2. The ambassador does not have to get a job in the foreign country in order to support himself
3. His office and residence are provided
4. The look of the embassy reflects on the power and glory of the country that commissioned the ambassador

B. Heavenly Ambassadors – Phil 4:19

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1. As long as we are on the King's business we will have what we need
2. All the resources of heaven are at our disposal
3. The Master is with us wherever we go

Matt 28:20band, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

V. Ambassadors Keep In Touch with Headquarters

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. There must be constant contact between the ambassador and the ruler who sent him
2. How else can the ambassador know how his ruler is thinking and how he should act in important matters
3. An ambassador who is not in contact with his govt is in danger of jeopardizing his nation's foreign policy

B. Heavenly Ambassadors – Eph 6:18

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

1. We need to constantly communicate with our heavenly headquarters
2. Stay in God's Word to discover God's will and God's strategy for his people
3. Keep praying to stay in contact with the Master

VI. Ambassadors Must Give an Account

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. An ambassador may be called home to account for the job he is doing
2. Has he obeyed orders and represented his nation well?
3. There is no question of citizenship, it is a matter of faithfulness and obedience

B. Heavenly Ambassadors – 2Cor 5:10

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

1. We must someday appear before the judgment seat of Christ to account for our faithfulness
2. Our salvation [heavenly citizenship] will not be in question, but our faithfulness and obedience
3. We have the opportunity to receive crowns based on our works – like medals
4. Don't confuse the judgment seat of Christ with the GWT judgment in Revelation

VII. Ambassadors Are Called Home Before War – 1Thess 4:13-18

A. Earthly Ambassadors

1. We would certainly call an ambassador home before we attacked a country
2. We don't want to harm our own ambassador

B. Heavenly Ambassadors

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. **15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. **16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

1. Before Jesus returns to judge this earth, His ambassadors will be removed from this earth
 2. It has always been God's policy to remove his ambassadors before judgment falls
 - a) *Noah and his family were kept safe during the flood*
 - b) *Lot was pulled out of Sodom before judgment*
 - c) *God has not appointed us to wrath*
- 1Th 5:9** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
3. As long as God's ambassadors are in this world calling sinners to repent – we are giving a message of peace
 4. Someday God will call His ambassadors home to heaven and then God will declare war
 5. The world has persecuted God's ambassadors not realizing that our very presence in the world is their opportunity for salvation and hope

Conclusion:

1. If you have never trusted Jesus as Savior, trust Him now
2. Believer – you are an ambassador. What kind of ambassador are you?
3. But one night I [John MacArthur] was flying to El Paso, Texas, I was going down there to do a men's conference at the civic center in El Paso. I was next to an Arabic man. And as we got up into the air a little bit, I took out my Bible and my notes and just started writing some things I wanted to say when I got there. Ten-fifteen minutes into the flight, he looks over, I can see he's glancing and glancing, and glancing, and finally he says, "Excuse me, sir, is that a Bible?"

I said, "It is a Bible."

He said, "Oh," he said, "then maybe you could answer a religious question."

I said, "Yes, I think I could answer a religious question." I said, "What's your question?"

He said, "Well, I'm new in America and in my country everybody is a Muslim, it's against the law not to be a Muslim. Religion is very simple, everybody's the same. In America," he said, "it's very confusing...very confusing."

And he said, "My question is, what is the difference between a Catholic, a Protestant and a Baptist?"

And I said, "Well, I'll be glad to answer that and I answered his question."

And I said, "Since you asked me a question, could I ask you a question?"

And he said, "Of course, of course."

And I said...and I knew the answers, but I wanted to engage him in the conversation. So I said, "Do Muslims have sins?"

He said, "We have so many sins, I don't even know all the sins."

I said, "May I ask you another question?"

He said, "Of course."

I said, "Do you do them?"

"I do them all the time...all the time. In fact," he said, "I'm going to El Paso to do some sins." That's a pretty honest guy.

I said, "Really. Well just what kind of sins are you going to El Paso to do?"

He said, "When I was immigrating I met this girl at the immigration point and we will meet and do some sins."

And I said, "How does Allah feel about this?"

"It's very bad. I could go to hell. There's a hell in Islam."

I said, "You could go to hell. Why don't you stop doing them?"

"I can't."

I said, "Do you have any hope that you might escape hell?"

And I'll never forget this line, he said, "I hope that Allah will forgive me."

I said, "On the basis of what?"

"I don't know, I just hope He will forgive me."

And then I said something just came out of my mouth, I said, "Well I know the true God personally and He won't." I didn't really think when I said it how it would affect him, but it had a dramatic effect on him because in Islam God is totally transcendent, nobody knows Him. You can't know Him, He's not knowable. He's not even involved except in judgment.

My friend was trying to process "You know..." and he said to me, "You know THE God personally?"

But I said, "the true God, He is too holy to overlook your sin and you will pay for it forever in hell. And he was very quiet. And I said, "However, God has designed a plan for you to be reconciled to Him and go to heaven."

He said, "What is it?"

And so I unfolded the gospel completely to him. First time in his life he had ever heard it. He said to me, "Now, I understand how Jesus fits in.."

He made no particular commitment then. I got his address, sent him a lot of material. Never heard back. Even directed him to a church in the area where he lived. I don't know what long-term affect I had on him, but I think I fouled up his weekend a little bit. That's a guess, but it's a fairly good one. This is the ministry of reconciliation.