

Our Role as Ambassadors
Series: E-100 – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21
April 9, 2017 Pastor Bill Bump

In 2 Corinthians, Paul introduces several metaphors to help us understand how we are to live:

Paul says we are to be like a fragrance.

Paul says we are to be like an earthen vessel containing a great treasure.

In our passage today, Paul says we are to be like an ambassador.

2 Corinthians 5:19b-20 ¹⁹ And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

Let's begin with the first half of our essential passage, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

2 Corinthians 5:11-15 ¹¹ Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. ¹² Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. ¹³ If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. ¹⁴ Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵ He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

As ambassadors, we are to try to persuade others.

According to verses 11 and 14, the two great motivations for ambassadors for Jesus are fear and love.

Fear does not refer to terror but to respect, awe, and reverence.

Paul says that Jesus' love compels us to proclaim that He died for us.

There is no greater honor than being a representative of Jesus the King.

In the second half of our essential passage, Paul exhorts each one of us to be reconciled to God and to become ambassadors.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 ¹⁶ So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For 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. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

The heart and center of this section is the cross of Jesus.

In Jesus, God offered Himself to humanity, and Jesus took upon Himself the death we deserved. So, in Him, we have newness of life, according to verse 17.

In verse 19, Paul declares that God does not hold our sins against us anymore.

In verse 20, Paul points out that our message requires a voluntary acceptance.

We don't command others to be saved. We don't condemn them. We plead with people to respond to a God of love.

In verse 21, Paul explains, in a profound way, what he means when he says Jesus died for us all.

The result of Jesus becoming sin for us is that we become right with God through Him.

God has settled the problem of all of our sins by placing them upon Jesus so His justice has been satisfied.

Conclusion

How should we now live? We should no longer live for ourselves; rather, we should live as ambassadors for Jesus.

How to be reconciled with God:

1. Repent of your sins.
2. Acknowledge your need of a Savior.
3. Ask Jesus to come into your life to save you and give you new life that is right with God.
4. Thank Jesus for coming into your life and giving you the gift of the Holy Spirit.

