

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." II Corinthians 5:20.

An ambassador is a spokesman or a representative of one with authority to speak to another. We think of an ambassador as one who goes to a foreign country to represent his own nation. He has his citizenship in a country other than the one in which he resides. He is a citizen of the country that he represents and the one to which he expects to return. He does not express his own ideas, but simply makes known the will of his country.

An ambassador has an important and exacting task. He must be able to convey the views of his country to other nations, to represent what is best in his own nation, to smooth out misunderstandings, to promote peace and friendship.

Every Christian is God's authorized ambassador, clothed with divine authority and power to speak His reconciling message in Christ to the unsaved everywhere. We are envoys of God, voicing and embodying Christ's reconciling appeal to a lost world.

Men need to be reconciled to God. To bring about this reconciliation was the task to which Paul had given his life. He knew that he had been called to this glorious task by Christ when he met Him on the road to Damascus. Henceforth, he was Christ's representative. He was His envoy to those who were strangers to God through fear, ignorance or sin. He was Christ's transmitter. His one object, as A. B. Bruce, the New Testament scholar, said of himself, was "to see Jesus Christ and to show Him to others." He was an ambassador for Christ. That is what every Christian ought to be.

Christians become ambassadors for Christ at the moment of their regeneration. This call to win people to Christ comes to us in the same bundle with our salvation. Then, the multitudinous needs of a lost world call us to this ambassadorship. Every opportunity for Christian service and need for such service is God's call to each of us to be His spiritual ambassadors. Our Lord calls us to preach, to teach, to sing, to administer, to suffer and to witness in special ways for Christ.

I. Their Office.

1. It is one of distinguished honor.
They represent the One Who sends them. They may or they may not be talented people. They are not to be respected for their talents, but for their office. Their office is the ground of their honor.
2. It is one of important trust.
They are not sent to make laws, but simply to convey a message. Paul said that he was "put in trust with the gospel," and God "requires in stewards that a man be found faithful." They are simply to deliver to the people that which they have received from the Lord Jesus.
3. It is one which requires tact, diligence, and labour.

II. Their Character.

To be effective and successful ambassadors they must be: ---

1. Intelligent.
No wise prince would employ as his representative at a foreign court a man destitute of good sense and acquired knowledge. Surely, then, the care of souls demands that our minds be roused by cultivation and our conduct give evidence that we have been taught by the Lord.

2. Attached to Christ.
Love to Christ and for His cause, arising from the heart-felt power of His religion, and from the workings of a devoted gratitude, is certainly an important qualification for an ambassador of Christ.
3. Zealous for Christ.
4. Faithful to Christ.
"Thus saith the Lord" should be distinctly attached to all our announcements.

III. Their Duties.

1. Negative.
 - (1) Not to originate their message.
 - (2) Not to speak their own words.
 - (3) Not to think lightly of their mission.
 - (4) Not to seek their own glory.
 - (5) Not to seek pleasure.
 - (6) Not to aim at their own comfort.
 - (7) Not to depart from their instructions.
Neither to add to them nor take away from them.
2. Positive.
 - (1) To go where they are sent.
 - (2) To have a message to deliver.
 - (3) To communicate the mind of the Lord.
 - (4) To defend His honor.
 - (5) To put their Master's business first.
 - (6) To better prepare themselves for their work.
 - (7) To strive to do their work in the best possible way.

IV. Their Delivery of The Message.

1. With courtesy.
2. With intense earnestness.
It is momentous. Great issues depend upon its acceptance or rejection.
3. With zealous pleading.

V. Their Message.

1. That God loves men.
2. That God has given Christ for men.
3. That Christ willingly gave Himself for men.
4. That by the death of Christ means for the reconciliation of the world to God has been provided.
5. That God earnestly invites men to be reconciled to Him.

This message is full and final.

VI. Their Motives.

1. Desire to be obedient to Christ.
2. Love for the lost.
3. Love for the church.
4. Love for Christ.

VII. Their Encouragement.

As ambassadors of Christ, we are to go in person and to employ the most earnest and loving entreaties possible. In this great work we are encouraged by certain facts.

1. The presence of Christ comforts us.
"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." What a comfort to know that Christ will go with us.
2. The purpose of Christ constrains us.
His purpose is to save and utilize the entire man--mind, soul and body. If we love Christ, we will long to see men saved, too.
3. The program of Christ challenges us.
His program extends to all men everywhere.
4. The person of Christ compels us.
So dynamic was His personality that He could draw one to Him by a look. He stands by our side. He looks on as we strive to do His will. He inspires us to do our best. We feel constrained to do our best for Him.
5. The power of Christ completes us.
Without Christ we cannot do anything. In His strength we can do all things which He requires and expects of us. We can be complete in Him. His power is available to us; therefore, let us use it.