

Titles of Christians (5)
Ambassadors for Christ
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Last time we studied the title of Christians, “Witnesses of Jesus Christ”; today we are going to study a very interesting title:

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2Cor 5:20 ESV)

Here it says that Christians are ambassadors for Christ.

The meaning and task of “ambassadors for Christ”

What does it mean to be “ambassadors for Christ”? According to English dictionaries, an ambassador is the highest-ranking person who represents his or her own government while living in another country.

Certainly ambassadors for Christ are different from the international diplomatic ambassadors, for we are not dealing with diplomats in foreign countries, but dealing with the people in the world, so we implore them to reconcile with God.

When an ambassador is sent to a foreign country, he represents his own country. Christians are the people of the kingdom of God; Yahweh God sent us into the world to represent the kingdom of God. What is our task? What are we supposed to do in this world?

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:18 – 20** 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. (2Cor 5:18-20 ESV)

Here it says that Yahweh God wants to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ, not counting their sins against them. There are two steps: first He reconciles us to Himself; after that, He entrusts the message of reconciliation to us and sends us into the world to be ambassadors for Christ. Our job is to tell the world that God doesn’t count their sins against them; and we are to implore the people of the world to be reconciled to Yahweh God.

The message of reconciliation

The terms “reconcile” and “reconciliation” appear several times in this short passage. Let’s think about it. It is only when two parties are at war with one another that they need to reconcile; if the two parties are on good terms, they don’t need to reconcile. So does it mean that the world is at war with Yahweh God? Yes, the Bible says that when we commit sin, not only do we cause harm to other people and to ourselves, but ultimately sin is rebellion against God. When we sin, we rebel against God, and become enemies of God! Now let’s look at two passages in the Bible, one in the Old Testament, one in the New Testament:

^{ESV} **Genesis 39:7 – 9** And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.”⁸ But he refused and said to his master’s wife, “Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge.⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen 39:7-9 ESV)

This is the story of a young man Joseph being tempted. Joseph was a slave of a high-rank Egyptian official named Potiphar. He liked Joseph so much that he put everything in Joseph’s charge. But this official’s wife wanted to entice Joseph, and she said to him, “Lie with me.” He refused and said, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Here Joseph says that adultery is a great wickedness; it is not just a sin against his human master, but ultimately a sin against God!

^{ESV} **Colossians 1:21** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, (Col 1:21 ESV)

This passage says that you were hostile in your minds, doing evil deeds; that means that when you do evil deeds, you are hostile to God in your mind.

These two passages, Genesis 39:7–9 and Colossians 1:21, show that when we commit sin, not only do we sin against other people, but ultimately we sin against God and become enemies of God. And the enemies of God will be destroyed in the fire on Judgment Day; but Yahweh God in His loving kindness has provided a way out for us to reconcile with Him.

We have been reconciled to God through the body of Christ by his death

^{ESV} **Colossians 1:22 – 23** he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Col 1:22-23 ESV)

It says here, “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death ...” Yahweh God doesn’t have a body of flesh, and He doesn’t die, therefore the word “he” doesn’t refer to Yahweh God, but to Jesus Christ.

This passage says that when you believe in Jesus Christ, you are reconciled to God by the death of Christ through his body, and you become holy and blameless! But verse 23 says you have to continue in your faith, you have to continue to believe in Jesus Christ. Don’t think that after you are reconciled to God, you don’t need Jesus anymore! Faith in the Bible includes obedience, it is not just intellectual faith. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have to obey him; if you don’t obey him, you don’t really believe in him in the biblical sense. Colossians 1:22 says reconciliation is by the death of Christ through his body. If you don’t believe in Jesus Christ, you won’t have reconciliation with God either. If you don’t have reconciliation with God, you are enemies of God, and you will be destroyed in the fire on the Judgment Day!

But how do we spread the message of reconciliation? What kind of life quality do we need to have in order to fulfill this task?

We speak the message of reconciliation by the power of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit

Since all human beings have sinned, the whole world is against God. We Christians who live in the world are just like ambassadors sent to an enemy country, and our task is to convince these enemies to reconcile with Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The message of reconciliation is actually the gospel of salvation; convincing people to reconcile with Yahweh God and Jesus Christ is actually preaching the gospel of salvation.

Some people think that only those who are eloquent can preach the gospel, and that the preacher of the gospel has to stand at the pulpit to talk! It is simply not true! I have been preaching the gospel for more than thirty years ever since serving God full time. I have preached at the pulpit, I have preached in some small Christian gatherings, I have preached on a radio station, right now I am preaching on Zoom and YouTube.

Some people would say, “I am not eloquent, how can I tell people to reconcile with Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ?” I am not eloquent at all, I am the least eloquent person, but whenever I preach I always put in all my best to speak forth the message that God gives me. When Yahweh God entrusts a task to you, He will also grant you the wisdom to fulfill the task, and will help you along the way as you diligently carry out His will.

Indeed the Bible says that eloquence in speech is not important, that we shouldn't use eloquence to convince people to believe in Jesus Christ! Does this surprise you?

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 2:1 – 5** And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1Cor 2:1-5 ESV)

Apostle Paul had preached the gospel in many places in Asia as well as in Europe. He had established churches and had trained up many disciples, yet he said he did not use lofty speech or wisdom. He said he knew nothing except Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. His message was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power so that the faith of the hearers would not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

When we preach the gospel, we focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified on the cross. We only preach about the teaching in the Bible, we never boast about ourselves; at the end it is the Holy Spirit of God who will lead us in what to say.

So the first quality of the ambassador for Christ is that we only depend on the power of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, we only talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified on the cross, but we should never depend on human eloquence and the wisdom of men.

We speak with a meek attitude

As ambassadors for Christ the second quality we need to have is a meek attitude. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 Apostle Paul says,

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Let's look at the word "implore" here; the original Greek word for "implore" is *δέομαι* (*deomai*). This word appears a total of 22 times in New Testament. Within these 22 times:

- 10 times are about praying to Yahweh God,
- 5 times are about pleading to the Lord Jesus,
- 4 times are about low status people pleading to higher status people,
- 2 times are about apostle Paul pleading with the church brethren to live according to the teaching of Yahweh God,
- 1 time in this passage, 2 Corinthians 5:20, is about ambassadors for Christ pleading with people to reconcile with God.

As ambassadors for Christ we implore people in the world to reconcile with Yahweh God. We have to humble ourselves with a meek attitude like a low status person talking to someone of high status. We shouldn't think that we are like high ranking diplomats, and that sinners are the outcasts of the kingdom of God, so we can exercise our authority over them and they have to come to listen to us. We have to remember that the people in the world are hostile to Yahweh God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore they will also be hostile to us. When we tell them to repent of their sins and submit to Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus, they will hate us. And since they have killed the Lord Jesus, they may even want to harm us. Therefore we have to be meek and humble. It doesn't mean that we water down the word of God to please them, but we need to have wisdom in how we conduct ourselves in the world and how we convey our message to people. If we are not careful, not only will we put ourselves in possible danger, but even the work of saving people could be jeopardized.

The second quality of an ambassador for Christ is meekness.

We love all the Christian brothers and sisters from our hearts

The third quality of an ambassador for Christ is that we truly love all the Christian brothers and sisters from our hearts. You may wonder why?

^{ESV} **1 John 4:20 – 21** If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1John 4:20-21 ESV)

Here Apostle John says if we truly love God, we would love our brothers and sisters. If we don't love the brethren whom we can see, then our behavior shows that we actually don't love God whom we cannot see even though we say we love Him. And if we ourselves don't love Yahweh God, how can we persuade people to repent and return to Yahweh God?

^{ESV} **1 John 3:14 – 15** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (1John 3:14 ESV)

This passage says that when we love the brethren, that is the proof that we have passed out of death and entered into life. If we don't love the brethren, we are still abiding in death; and hating our brethren is equivalent to murder. Definitely those who are still in death and are murderers cannot be ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

The third quality of an ambassador for Christ is loving all the Christian brothers and sisters.

We are ready to be persecuted

^{ESV} **Ephesians 6:19 – 20** and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph 6:19-20 ESV)

Here Apostle Paul says he is an ambassador in chains, which means he was put in prison. For what reason? Verse 19 says he was put in prison for proclaiming the mystery of the gospel.

During the two thousand years' history of the church, many many Christians have been persecuted and killed for the sake of the gospel. But the more Christians got killed, the more people came to believe in Jesus Christ, and the more churches were established, just as Tertullian, one of the Early Church Fathers of the second century, said "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Even today, in many places in the world, Christians are still being persecuted. If you want to be an ambassador for Christ, you have to be ready for the persecution. That is the fourth quality of the ambassadors for Christ.

We no longer live for ourselves, but for the Lord Jesus Christ

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:15 – 20** 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. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The 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. (2Cor 5:15-20 ESV)

Here Apostle Paul says the Lord Jesus Christ has died for all people and was raised again. The death of Jesus Christ will create a new kind of people who don't live for themselves any more but for the Lord Jesus. It is to this kind of new people that Yahweh God has entrusted the message of reconciliation, and He sent them into the world to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ and to implore people to reconcile with God.

An ambassador for Christ doesn't live for himself, but lives for Jesus Christ. This is the fifth quality of the ambassadors for Christ.

Conclusion

Let's now sum up everything we have just studied. Christians are ambassadors for Christ, we are sent into the world to implore people to reconcile with Yahweh God. In order to be ambassadors for Christ, we need to have these 5 qualities:

- We speak the message of reconciliation by the power of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit; we never depend on human eloquence and the wisdom of men.
- We speak with a meek attitude.
- We love all the Christian brothers and sisters from our hearts.
- We are ready to take persecution.
- We no longer live for ourselves, but for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you want to be an ambassador for Christ?