

AN AMBASSADOR'S HEART

2 Corinthians 5:11 - 21

An ambassador to a foreign country must know what his country believes if he is to represent that country faithfully. The Christian is an ambassador of the highest court in the land, the Kingdom of Heaven. His privilege is to communicate to a lost world the foreign policy of God, consisting of mercy and reconciliation in Christ.

I. The right motivation 5:11-14

II. The right message 5:15-21

WHAT DOES IT SAY?



ince, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What is the "fear of the Lord" that Paul is talking about? (Look up this phrase in a concordance. See Exodus 20:20.)

Compare I Cor. 4:1-5. What is Paul's attitude concerning judging himself and being judged by others?

Read through verses 11-14 again and jot down all the things that motivated Paul for ministry.

List some reasons why you think people serve Christ.

What does it mean that Christ "died for all" (verse 15)? (see Rom. 5:6-8; I Thess. 5:10; Hebrews 2:9)?

Since we've "died", what does Paul say (verse 15) should be our lifestyle?

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

“Ambassadors engaged in human affairs are chosen especially for their tact, their dignity and their courtesy, and because they are gifted with persuasive powers. The ambassadors for Christ should show the same characteristics. They must never try to bludgeon men and women into the kingdom of God, but must speak the truth in love, because it is a gospel of divine love that they are commissioned to proclaim.”

R.V.G. Tasker

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What are the characteristics of being a new creation (vs. 17)?

Look up the word "*reconcile*" in a Bible dictionary. What does the word indicate?

What does it mean to be reconciled to God?

Look up the word "*ambassador*" in a dictionary. What are the responsibilities of an ambassador?

Verse 21. Who is "him"?

“By imputing (charging to one’s account) sin to Christ, God could avoid imputing it to sinners. This cleared the way for God to impute His righteousness to us, a righteousness that is perfect and insures our approval with God.”

Homer A. Kent, Jr.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage.



What aspect of the New Covenant lifestyle is described in this passage?

LIFE RESPONSE

How is God asking you to put this into action in your life this week?



What really motivates you to serve other people?

Describe the relationship in which you have felt you were most effective as an ambassador of Christ.