

Weekly Reflection – Ambassadors for Christ

The mission – “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

- ***“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20 ESV***

The motive – “Love God and love others BECAUSE God loves us.”

- ***“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40 ESV***
- ***“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 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.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV***

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

New Creation

- ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV***
- Not an improved creation or a cleaned-up creation but a new creation. The old is dead and the new has come.
- The Word of God is saying that when someone becomes a Christian their entire life, their entire purpose, their entire way of viewing the value of their life is completely changed.

Reconciliation

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 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.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 ESV

- Reconcile - to bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible or consistent.

Reconciliation is that aspect of the gospel where the separation and enmity between God and humanity caused by sin are ended, and peace and renewed relationship are forever established, through the person and work of Jesus Christ. ***“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” Colossians 1:19-20ESV*** The gospel is the message of reconciliation. God has entrusted to us the ministry and message of reconciliation. In other words, “go and make disciples of all nations”.

God making His appeal through us.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. 2 Corinthians 5:20a ESV

On the surface it could be easy to think this is a really bad idea. If I look in the mirror and see my flesh

this makes no sense. If I view myself and others according to the flesh this appears to be a really bad idea. But verse 16 tells us that now as new creations we are to regard no one (including ourselves) according to the flesh. So, if I look in the mirror of God's word that says I am filled with the Holy Spirit, I am the righteousness of God, Jesus is in me and with me; it is actually brilliant.

Look at verse 21, ***For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*** That's called the great exchange. My sin was placed on Jesus and punished on the cross and I receive the righteousness of God. I give my sin and receive His righteousness. God has entrusted to all who believe the greatest message in all of history. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, be an ambassador of Christ.

Ambassadors for Christ

- Generally speaking, an ambassador is a respected official acting as a representative of a nation. Sent to a foreign land, the ambassador's role is to reflect the official position of the sovereign body that gave him authority.
- Christians are God's ambassadors in that they have been "approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel" (1 Thessalonians 2:4).
- As we go through this world, we represent another Kingdom (John 18:36), and it is our responsibility to reflect the "official position" of heaven. We are in this world, but not of it (John 17:16).
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we must take the message of our King to the "ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), imploring men and women everywhere to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).
- All who believe have been given the ministry and message of reconciliation.
- All Christians are called to be ambassadors for Christ.
- How are you doing with that? How are we doing with that?

Possible obstacles to being an ambassador for Christ.

A blurred view of your citizenship. The call of ambassador suggests something, that you are not home. You don't need an ambassador at home. Only in a foreign land. Some of us aren't living like ambassadors because we don't even know we aren't home. So, we treat this life, this context, this culture as our home. We can easily forget we are not home; we are here representing another place. The scripture calls us sojourners, aliens, and exiles. An ambassador knows they're from somewhere else, they don't forfeit their homeland citizenship. They are in a place to do the business of their homeland, to represent their homeland. They understand the culture without becoming part of the culture.

"That's the pastors or leaderships responsibility." ***"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV*** God does call some to leadership roles in the church. Some. And I believe it is actually relatively few, but **He calls all to ministry**, to be ambassadors for Christ. He has given some people to the church to equip all the saints for ministry. For building up the body of Christ.

A lack of equipping. God has called some to help equip all of the saints for ministry. This is one of the purposes behind what I believe will be an intentional look at disciple making. We want Living Hope to be a local church full of equipped disciples who make disciples who make disciples. I don't know how all of this will flesh out over the next months and years, but we do want to be intentional about equipping all the saints for ministry in very practical ways. How do you live as an ambassador for Christ in your home, in the workplace, in the community and to the nations? We desire to equip all the saints for this ministry.