

THE UNIQUE WORK IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

Message Two

Ambassadors of Christ with the Ministry of Reconciliation and Co-workers of God with an All-fitting Life

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:4, 9, 14-16, 18-20; 6:1; 7:2-3

I. We need to be ambassadors of Christ with the ministry of reconciliation:

- A. The ambassadors of Christ are ones who represent Christ, the highest authority in the universe:
 - 1. God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ—Matt. 28:18.
 - 2. God has appointed Christ to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords—1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14.
- B. The ambassadors of Christ do not live by what they are or by what they can do but by the immortal life, which is Christ Himself within them—2 Cor. 5:4:
 - 1. Whatever we can do, whatever we are, and whatever we have are going to die; this is why we should not have any trust in what we are—1:8-9.
 - 2. We need to realize that Christ as the immortal life is within us; we should trust in this life, live by this life, and work by this life—13:3.
- C. The ambassadors of Christ are determined to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him—5:9:
 - 1. To be determined is to be zealous with a strong aim, striving earnestly to be well pleasing to the Lord—Col. 1:10; Heb. 11:5-6.
 - 2. If we are going to represent Christ to be His ambassadors, we should pray, “Lord, I call the heavens and the earth to witness that my ambition is one—just to please You.”
- D. The ambassadors of Christ are constrained by the love of Christ to live to Him—2 Cor. 5:14-15:
 - 1. To be constrained is similar to being carried away by a tide of water; the love of Christ is as strong as a tide of water that overcomes us and carries us away.
 - 2. The love of Christ constrains us to live to Him and not to ourselves:
 - a. To live to ourselves means that we are under our own control, direction, and governing and that we care for our own aims and goals.
 - b. To live to the Lord is to be absolutely under His control, direction, and governing; it means that everything we do is to fulfill the Lord's purpose and desire.
 - c. To live to the Lord means that we seek to please the Lord in every aspect of our daily life.
 - d. Living for the Lord means that I and the Lord are still two; living to the Lord indicates that I am one with the Lord, as the wife is one with the husband in married life.
- E. The ambassadors of Christ do not know people according to the flesh but according to the spirit—v. 16:
 - 1. We need to recognize things and realize persons not according to the outward appearance in the flesh but according to the measure of Christ in the spirit.
 - 2. People may be known according to their profession, position, talents, and capabilities, but in the church we should know others according to the inner man, according to the spirit.
- F. The ambassadors of Christ carry out the ministry of reconciliation:
 - 1. The ministry of reconciliation is not only to bring sinners back to God but also to bring the believers into God and to make them absolutely one with Him—vv. 18-20.
 - 2. Only when we have been fully reconciled to God are we fully saved—6:1-2; Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25.
 - 3. The extent to which we can bring others to God is always measured by where we are with respect to God; the more we are in Him, the more we can reconcile others into Him—2 Cor. 12:2a; 5:20.

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II. We need to be co-workers of God with an all-fitting life:

- A. We need to work together with God by a life (not by any gift) that is all-sufficient and all-mature, able to fit all situations, able to endure any kind of treatment, to accept any kind of environment, to work under any kind of condition, and to take any kind of opportunity, for the carrying out of our ministry—6:1a.
- B. If we have been fully saved and have an all-fitting life, then any situation or circumstance is right for us to minister life to others—Phil. 1:20; 4:22; 2 Tim. 4:2a; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.
- C. If we would have an all-fitting life, we need an enlarged heart, a heart to embrace all of God's people—2 Cor. 6:11-13; 2 Chron. 1:10; 1 Kings 4:29:
 1. To be enlarged by growing and maturing in life is equivalent to being fully reconciled to God.
 2. With an enlarged heart we are able to embrace all believers regardless of their condition, and with an opened mouth we are free to speak to all believers frankly concerning the real situation into which they have been misled—Matt. 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2.
- D. We need to be enlarged to have the intimate concern of the ministering life—2 Cor. 7:2-3; 1 Thes. 2:8; Phil. 2:19-20:
 1. If we have the ability to carry on a work but lack an intimate concern, our work will be fruitless; our not having the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ is the reason for our barrenness—cf. Luke 15.
 2. Eloquence, gift, and power can never touch people as much as our concern for them—cf. 1 Cor. 12:31b; 2 Tim. 1:7; Philem. 9-12.
 3. How fruitful we are does not depend upon what we are able to do but on whether or not we have an intimate concern—2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 9:22; Matt. 9:12.
 4. A ministering life is a life that warms up others by cherishing them in the humanity of Jesus to nourish them in the divinity of Christ with the riches of Christ—Eph. 5:29; Prov. 25:15.
 5. Paul shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; Acts 20:19-20, 27, 31.
 6. Paul came down to the weak ones' level so that he could gain them—2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20.
 7. As a lover of the church in oneness with the church-loving Christ, Paul was willing to spend what he had, referring to his possessions, and to spend what he was, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints in order to build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 11:28-29.