

INTRODUCTION

The New Testament uses very graphic metaphors (word pictures) to describe the church—the believer’s relationship to God, our relationship with fellow believers, and our responsibility toward the lost. We are:

- The Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22)
- Living Letters (2 Cor. 3: 2, 3)
- The Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33)
- A Spiritual Body (Ephesians & Corinthians)
- A Spiritual Building (Eph. 2:21, 22)
- A Brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17)
- Faithful Fishermen (Matt. 4:19)
- A Holy Temple (Eph. 2:21)
- World Witnesses (Acts 1:8)
- A Spiritual House (1 Pet. 2:5; quite descriptive!)
- A Holy & Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
- A Fragrant Aroma (2 Cor. 2:15, 16)
- A Spiritual Prism reflecting the wisdom, grace, and glory of God (Eph. 3:10)
- Salt in a corrupt world (Matt. 5:13)
- Light in a dark world (Matt. 5:13)
- Active Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20)

In our message, we will focus on the believer as an *Ambassador for Christ*. Let’s first consider the ambassador as:

A MESSENGER

ONE WHO HAS A FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE KING AND HIS AFFAIRS (vv. 15-18)

Note the order: God “has reconciled us,” and in-turn “has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18). As sinners, we needed reconciled to God.

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life. (Rom. 5:10)

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight. (Col. 1:19-22)

Before we came to Christ we were hostile towards God; alienated, separated, a non-participant. We were enemies of God. We were not akin to God. But through faith in Christ and His completed work, we who once were at variance with God have now been brought into a state of agreement with God. We now “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Only Jesus, through His death at Calvary, can bridge the gap between sinful man and holy God. It is man (because of sin) who rebels against God. But it is God who initiated the plan and process of reconciling sinful man back to Himself. It continues to be God Who draws sinners to Himself through the person and work of His Holy Spirit and the ministry of His Word. And only those who have personally trusted Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives stand before God reconciled (v. 18), forgiven (v. 19), and justified (v. 21). We are now a brand new creation in Christ (v. 17). And all of this is of God (v. 18a). Through Christ, we now have full and free access into Heaven’s Oval Office, anytime or anywhere (cf. Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:15, 16).

ONE WHO SPEAKS IN BEHALF OF THE KING (v. 20)

AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTLY APPOINTED BY THE KING (v. 18b)

The One who saves is also the One who sends.

A CITIZEN OF THE COUNTRY HE REPRESENTS

Paul writes:

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. (Eph. 2:19)

For our citizenship is in heaven from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3:20)

The Philippians knew exactly what Paul had in mind here (cf. Acts 16:12). In 42 B.C. Philippi became a Roman colony. Many soldiers of the Roman army had settled there. As a colony, they had the same rights granted to cities in Italy, including the use of Roman law, exemption from taxes, and Roman citizenship. Latin was their official language and they even adopted Roman customs. Paul wrote to the Philippian church:

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. (Phil. 1:27).

Paul reminds us that we are citizens of heaven and our lives should reflect it!

HE IS SENT INTO FOREIGN LANDS

We must remember:

As sojourners, we are not to feel at Home.

As strangers, we are far from Home.

As pilgrims, we are headed for Home.

We must also remember that we live alongside a hostile world. It is a world that is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Christian. We are in enemy territory. Just this past week we were once again reminded of the evil of this world by what took place in Aurora, CO. But since the fall of man, this world has always been filled with hatred, deceit, conspiracy, greed, lust, pride, jealousy, anger, covetousness, idolatry, homosexuality, abortion, child abuse, false religion, false prophets, murder, genocide, war, prejudice, racism, alcohol and drug addiction, pornography, fornication, adultery.... And God has put us right in the middle and in the heat of battle. Yes, we are in the world, but not of the world.

It is in this setting and environment that God has given us the “ministry of reconciliation,” and has committed into our trust the “word of reconciliation.” And because we have been reconciled to God by grace through faith, we must no longer view others with contempt, pride, or a self-righteous spirit; no matter who they are, what they’ve done, or where they live. Where would we have been today if people had looked down their noses at us? Where would we have been today if people had thought we were beyond the reach of God’s grace? We must view all of humanity as those for whom Christ died (2 Cor. 5:16a).

Let us remember who the real enemy is:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)

LOSES SIGHT OF HIS OWN SELFISH INTERESTS AND SEEKS THE BEST INTEREST OF THE KING (v. 15)

- He is on business for the King
- He is in the “King’s stead” (v. 20)
- He is to present the message as the King would present it (2 Cor. 5:20)
- There is much at stake!

War/Peace

Rebellion/Surrender

Eternal Life/Eternal Death

Heaven/Hell

- The matters and message of the King are too important for the ambassador to become entangled with the “affairs of this life” (2 Tim. 2:4). We are representing and speaking in behalf of the King. The Word of reconciliation has been deposited into our trust. We are dealing with eternal souls and their eternal destiny.
- One day “diplomatic relations” will be broken off. But before God brings judgment upon this world, He will bring His church home! But the truth is, the unsaved do not have forever, nor does the church have forever. The time is now.