

INTRODUCTION

Webster's Dictionary defines the word *ambassador* as: "1. The highest-ranking diplomatic representative appointed by one country or government to represent it in another; 3. An official messenger or agent with a special mission." We discover that the word is full of meaning. As believers, being ambassadors for Christ indicates that:

1. We have been directly appointed by Christ.
2. We represent Christ and His Kingdom.
3. It is a position of highest ranking and responsibility.
4. We are official messengers and agents of Christ.
5. The ministry and word of reconciliation have been deposited into our trust.
6. As Christ's messengers and agents, we are sent *to* the POWs of this world; those under Satan's rule and sin's dominion; those in rebellion against God; those presently under God's wrath. And we are sent *with* the good news of reconciliation, forgiveness, and justification.
7. As we present the gospel to the unsaved, we are speaking in behalf of God, "Who is pleading and begging through us," for the unsaved to repent of their sin and by faith trust in Christ and Christ alone as Savior and Lord of their lives.
8. This ambassadorship is of divine appointment and should be carried out responsibly, immediately, humbly, biblically, faithfully, carefully, compassionately, and courageously. After all, we are representing and speaking in behalf of the King; the Word of reconciliation has been deposited into our trust; and we are dealing with eternal souls and their eternal destiny.

So as Christ's ambassadors we have been sent *by* Christ; *to* a lost world; *with* the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection, that is rock-solid and truthful.

Again, please keep in mind, much is at stake. We are dealing with eternal souls with an eternal destiny: souls at war with God who need peace with God; souls in rebellion against God who need to surrender and humble themselves before God; souls under spiritual death who need the life of God; and souls already destined for hell who desperately need to hear and personally know of the grace and love of God.

AS A MESSENGER...

THE AMBASSADOR MUST TAKE THE PROPER APPROACH WHEN DELIVERING THE MESSAGE (v. 16)

Once Paul came to Christ, he viewed *himself* differently (a new creation, reconciled to God). When he came to Christ, he viewed the *Savior* differently (no longer from a worldly point of view, but as the Messiah, Savior and Lord). He viewed others differently: *saints* (a new creation, re-created in the image of God); *sinner*s (ones for whom Christ died regardless of color, country, customs, culture, or class). He knew that all men and women everywhere equally need salvation.

THE AMBASSADOR MUST ALWAYS HAVE A LETTER OR DOCUMENTS OF RECOMMENDATION

When an ambassador is sent by the United States, he or she must have an official letter or document proving their ambassadorship; signed by the president, Secretary of State, or some other high government official.

As ambassadors for Christ:

1. We have been saved (2 Cor. 5:18a)
2. We have been sealed (2 Cor. 1:22). The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. This indicates ownership, security, protection, and authenticity.
3. We have been sent (2 Cor. 5:18b)

THE MESSAGE (vv.19-21)

From beginning to end God was engaged in reconciling the world to Himself in-and-through His Son, Jesus Christ; and He being the only acceptable and perfect sacrifice. And how does God provide such reconciliation, forgiveness, and justification?

For He [God the Father] made Him who knew no sin [God the son] to be sin for us. (v. 21a)

On the cross, Jesus became our sin-bearer; not a sinner; and not sinful. Our sins were “imputed,” or “reckoned” to Christ. We could say they were “placed on His account.” This is called the doctrine of imputation. In reference to Christ, the apostle Peter wrote:

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. (1 Pet. 2:24a)

The prophet Isaiah wrote:

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:6c)

All the wrath and holy fury that God should have poured out on us, was poured out on His Son. He “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24a).

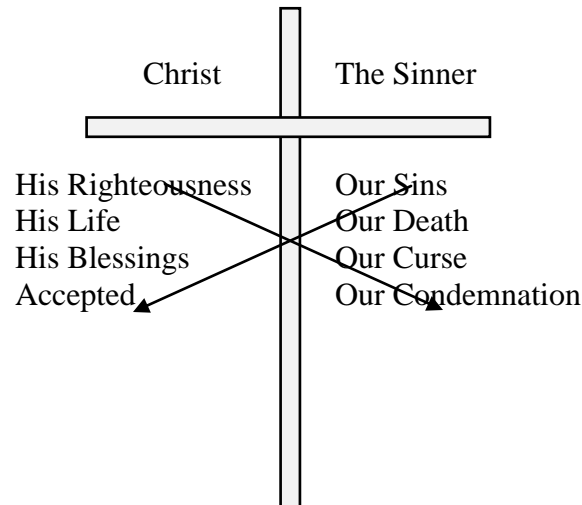
While on the cross, Jesus bore all the sins of all humanity—past, present, and future. Therefore, God treated Him as if He committed all the sins of all humanity—past, present, and future, though He was sinless. All this great multitude of sins and its divine punishment fell upon the Son of God that day. No wonder that during those final three hours God draped the sun and total darkness covered the earth. It’s no wonder Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” God was accomplishing something beyond the physical. It was something the human eye could not see.

There we see the Holy One dying for the unholy;
The sinless One dying for the sinner;
The innocent One dying for the guilty;
The just dying for the unjust.

But there’s more to verse 21!:

That [in order that] we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

It has been said, “A picture’s worth a thousand words.” So let’s take a look at this picture:



Our sins were “imputed,” “credited,” “reckoned,” or “placed on Christ’s account.” But through faith in Christ’s finished work, the righteousness of Christ is “credited” to the account of the believing and repentant sinner. It is only by means of Christ and His death on Calvary that God “might be just [fully satisfy His just and holy demands through the death of His Son] and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). We are “justified freely [without any cost] by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). Paul further writes, “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9). “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness’” (Rom. 4:3).

Justification is “The act of God, whereby He declares the repentant and believing sinner righteous through the full and finished work of Jesus Christ.” Not only does He forgive us, He also clothes us (robes us) in His righteousness. I like how John MacArthur describes it:

“Our iniquitous life was legally charged to Him [Christ] on the cross, as if He had lived it, so that His righteous life could be credited to us, as if we lived it.”

He died our death, so that we might receive His life. He bore our curse, so that we might receive His blessings. He was condemned, so that we might be accepted. He was forsaken, so that we might be forgiven.

*Note 2 Corinthians 5:19b: “Not imputing their trespasses to them.” Our sins were however imputed to someone: Christ (v.21a). But then through faith in Christ, His righteousness is imputed to us (v. 21b).