

BOOK OF 2 CORINTHIANS
AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST—PART 1
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

Introduction

Paul said that we are **ambassadors for Christ**, but what does that mean?

An **ambassador** is simply **an official messenger or representative of one nation or kingdom to some other people with a special errand.**

In fact the definition is very close to the New Testament word for **apostle**. An **apostle** is **one who is sent out bearing the message of another and who acts by His authority.** That's also what a **missionary** is. A **missionary** is **one who has been sent out from one kingdom to reach the people of another with a specific message to deliver or a specific task to perform.**

God has always had His missionaries, and from Genesis 3 we find that He was the first of them as He went walking in the garden to find the two people who had sinned against Him. Since that day God has been sounding out the call of *Luke 19:10*, "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,*" and now He's wanting to do the same thing through each of us that name His name!

However, the majority of those Who name the name of Christ use all kinds of excuses for not sharing their faith. Some people claim...

- They don't have any non-Christian friends
- They say they don't have the gift of evangelism
- They claim they don't have the time
- They're worried about what their friends and family will think
- They don't know how to bring up the topic
- They aren't sure of what to say once the conversation is started
- They say they don't know enough
- They claim their faith is a private matter

What God wants from each believer is for us to accept our calling as an ambassador, a missionary, His representatives in this world and that we quit making excuses and start doing what we've been called to do - tell others about the life-changing person of Jesus Christ!

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I want us to consider four characteristics we must have so we can be the very best ambassador we can be for Christ!

I. WE MUST PERSONALLY KNOW CHRIST!

You can't very well represent a king if you've never met Him!
You can't very well represent a country that you don't belong to!

Your loyalties are going to be all messed up. Imagine me driving out to D.C. to be an ambassador to the U.S. for Enrique Pena Nieto, the president of Mexico. Now I have never been to Mexico! I do know some Mexican's down at La Napolera Mexican Restaurant here in town where I enjoy their food! I can speak a little bit of the language as I took 2 years of Spanish in High School, but quite frankly I remember very little. However I do know a few things about Mexico. But quite frankly I'd make a rather sorry ambassador because I am an American and my loyalties lie in America!

You get the picture? Some people go to Church and they can talk the talk to a certain extent from having been around the Church. They may look like Christians and may even act like Christians to a certain extent because they hang out with Christians! They may even convince a few people that they are Christians, but they'll never make a good representative for Christ because they don't belong to Him! Their kingdom is not the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of this world!

Paul said, "*...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" It's just as plain as that. There are only two choices. You're either in Christ or you're not! You either know Him as your Savior or you don't!

We enter this world without Christ in spiritual darkness belonging to Satan's kingdom—a kingdom of sin and darkness—and blinded to the glorious Gospel of Christ! (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

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We may go to Church and hear the Gospel and have Bibles in our homes and use a form of prayer, but until we are born again we are without God, without Christ, and are foreigners and strangers to God!

A hungry man must take food offered to him and eat to live!
A dying man must receive a sure cure that is offered to him to live!

So also, you can have Jesus Christ preached in your hearing every Sunday and starve spiritually and die and go to hell unless by faith you personally repent and lay hold of the salvation that Christ offers!

You can get by in this world without a lot of things. It is inconvenient to be without money. It is miserable to be without health, it is lonely to be without a friend, it is wretched to be without a reputation, but to be without Christ is the worst lack in all the world! Your only hope is to be in Christ!

Christ is the only person you can be in! You can be married to somebody. You can follow somebody. You can be in the presence of somebody, but Jesus is the only One you can be in!

What does it mean to be in Christ? Its like Noah and his family were in the Ark. The ark was a type of Christ. God had told Noah that He was going to judge the earth. He told Noah that there was safety in the ark. He told Noah that if He wanted to be saved he would have to get in the ark. When that flood came, the only people saved were the ones inside the ark. They were safe in there because God shut the door and no one or no thing was going to open it.

We are in Christ in the same sense. God has promised a day of judgment. He has assured us that the only way to be saved is to be in Christ, but just like it was in the days of Noah, a lot of people scoffed and said it'll never happen, but it did! A lot of folk are saying today that Jesus isn't coming back or that there'll be no day of judgment!

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Some say that God is a God of love and He wouldn't send anybody to hell. That's a fool's talk!

By faith you have to believe that Christ is the only one capable of saving you! And then you must come and trust Him, risk your soul with Him and put your confidence in the only begotten Son of God!

You have to give up on every other hope or shadow of hope you have. Don't put your hope in yourself! Don't go through life hoping that somehow we've got it all wrong here! Don't count on hell not being there! You need to consider Jesus, God's Ark of safety as you watch as the storm clouds of God's wrath that are billowing! You must get in the Ark (Jesus) by putting your trust in Christ!

What happens when you get in Christ through salvation? You become a new creation, a new creature! At that moment, when the Spirit of God takes up residence in you, *"old things are passed away and all things become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."* [i.e. **He did all the necessary work**]."

Now, let's understand something here. When Paul says that old things are passed away, that's an immediate transaction, but what does it mean?

Listen, whatever sin dominated you before salvation, the chances are you still leaned that way after salvation! For example, if you had a taste for beer, whiskey, or liquor before you were saved, chances are there are times you might still have a desire for it!

You may have learned to control it by God's grace, but the desire is still there because we are still in this old sinful flesh! You may have learned to surrender to Christ and allowed Him to give you self-control, but those old sinful desires still war in your body!

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If that weren't the case, then Paul was wasting his time writing the 6th and 7th chapters of Romans. "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" he asked.

So what does he mean when he says here in verse 17 that - "*old things are passed away; behold all things are become new*"?

This is important, because so many people are spending their days in agony, doubting their salvation because some of those old things are still there and they have no assurance of their salvation!

Listen, under sin, without Christ, you had no right to heaven! You were a sinner and you were found guilty and condemned and you were by nature an enemy of God.

But in Christ, in salvation, a legal transaction takes place in the courtroom of heaven. Paul said in Romans 5:1, "*Therefore, **being justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" To be justified by faith means that when you are in Christ by faith (and that is the **ONLY WAY** to be in Christ) you have been *declared free from the penalty of sin* and you're set free from all that goes with it! Jesus said in *John 8:36*, "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*"

That means:

- When we were sentenced to die for our sin, Jesus was our sacrifice! He took our condemnation!
- When we deserved to bear God's wrath for our sin, Jesus was our propitiation! (i.e. He was the One Who satisfied God by paying the penalty of our sin! He was our atonement!
- When we were separated from God by our sin, Jesus was our reconciliation! (*Vs 18*)

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- When we were in bondage to sin, Jesus was our redemption! *Ephesians 1:7* *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

The old things, the condemnation, the wrath of God, the slavemaster in our life called sin have no hold on us anymore!

In Christ all things become new, and all those things are of God:
We have a new home!
We have a new king!
We have a new nature!

God didn't clean up the old sinful nature! He didn't just wipe us off and give us a new start! He gave us a new life (His life) and a new nature (His Divine nature)!

Paul said in *Ephesians 4:24*, "*...that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*" Only God is in the creating business!

People can say all they want to that they can create. Bro. Charles can get out in his shop and build some beautiful writing instruments! It is a work of art, a masterpiece, but he didn't create. All he did was take what God had already given him and reshape it with his tools until it was better.

That's not what God did with us! He created a new man! A man that is created in God's likeness of righteousness and holiness!

Do you know the Son of God? Has God performed this great work in you? Have you been born again? Have you come to Christ in repentance and faith so that God might create in you a new man created in His likeness?

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It may be that you have not been sharing your faith because you've never really known the Son of God. You've just been going through the motions, doing what all good Christians do without really knowing Jesus at all. If you're going to be the ambassador that God wants you to be, you must be born again!

So, if you're not born again, get some help before you leave here tonight! See me or my wife or someone else here and we'll help you with that!

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