

Missional Metaphors Pt. 1, We Are Ambassadors for Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

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“For our sake He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
2 Corinthians 5:21

Intro

What is a “Missional Metaphor?” We are taking a look at three different “metaphors,” that give us an idea of both our identity and the direction that identity takes us. Our identity should never be seen in the fact that we are doing ambassadorial work for the kingdom; we do that work because of the relationship we have with God in Christ Jesus. The “metaphors” just give us a framework, and a trajectory to work towards as we come to realize who we are in Christ, and what God’s mission is in this world.

With that we believe that God is a “Missional” God, meaning that we believe that God is on mission, and that mission is to display His glory in a fallen world that has rejected Him, and created for themselves idols to replace the creator of the universe (See **Jeremiah 2:13; Romans 1:18ff**). It is then our goal as missional ambassadors to determine ways in which His glory can be displayed in understandable, factual and experiential ways. The church is to be the key by which the culture sees “Glimpses” of the glory of God in their midst. We will never do this perfectly, but we, like Abram are called to be a blessing to all nations (**Genesis 13:1-3**), which is clearly communicated to the church too (**Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:9**). I pray that the next three weeks gives a glimpse of who we are, and what we are to do as a result as believers in Christ:

From the Head...

In our passage we are called “*Ambassadors for Christ*.” What a great designation. Imagine being an ambassador for your country? The role of an ambassador is to present your country in a good light in the midst of an often hostile environment. Imagine being God’s ambassador? What would that look like? What does our passage want us to be an ambassador for? The context that this word is used in is in the context of reconciliation. Reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reconciliation involves the liberal use of repentance and forgiveness. The gospel is clear that as Christians, we leave the justice and judgment up to God, as we forgive and love those that hate us. In our passage, we see that the title “Ambassador” is both our identity and a guide to the rhythms we are called to live.

The Motivation for Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:11-15)

Here our identity comes into play. Our motivation comes from both the respect we have for God (‘Fear’ **v. 11**) and the reaction to the love that God has shown us (see **v. 14**; see too **John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:7-12**). This may appear to seem contradictory, but not if we see it in light of our own relationships with our kids/parents. We can totally respect, and even healthily ‘fear’ our parents, yet love them and desire to please them based on the love they have shown us. The overall reason that we respect and love God is because of what Christ has done for us on the cross (see **v. 15**). It is because of Him that we made alive in order to join Him and His work in the world as an ambassador.

The Content of Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-19)

The idea of not regarding one another according to the flesh has to do with the fact that God is making the believer anew in Him. Whatever he/she looks like to us is seen differently by God in Christ. It is God who is manufacturing this salvation, and creating a new person, and that is a process of sanctification that God is making happen (See **Philippians 1:6**). We are not a finished product, but because God is working on us, and because of the love he has lavished upon us, we can be involved in the “Ministry of Reconciliation” here on earth. Since we are being made a new person, we can enter into God’s ministry of reconciliation. We can forgive, because we have been forgiven much.

The Call to Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Thus we are God’s called “Ambassadors,” and we can ‘implore’ people to be reconciled to God through Christ, “*Who was made sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*” How beautiful is that? Here’s the gospel in a nutshell. Our righteousness isn’t enough to get us into a relationship with God and subsequent eternal life with Him,, so God sent His Son to become sin on our behalf, so that we could gain His righteousness. Christ is the perfect display of God’s glory in His work on the cross. It is there that we see God’s perfect Justice and perfect Love demonstrated on the cross of Jesus.

...to the Heart

Reconciliation seems easy at first, but in reality is quite hard. It means that we must put ourselves as second to others, and accept their repentance with no attachments, since this is what Christ did for us in a far greater way. Forgiveness always costs us something, but it is an act of grace that best demonstrates God's perfect grace operating in our lives. It is otherworldly! It makes no sense to a culture bent on revenge and justice and individual rights. It is purely a divine thing to forgive those that have wronged you.

Without understanding God's reconciliation of us to Him, it is impossible to truly love the ministry of reconciliation in our own lives. If we can't see the amazing depth of God's forgiveness toward us, we won't feel the need to forgive others.

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