

The Church – Part 5 – Ambassadors for Christ | 8/17/18

- The Church is called to be ambassadors for Christ.
 - One of the most important functions of the church is to be a witness or an ambassador for Christ.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:20a
 - “Therefore, we are **ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us...**”
 - What does it mean to be an ambassador?
 - In the political world an ambassador is the representative of an entire country.
 - When a politician is chosen and sent to a foreign country that person is the representative of the United States.
 - It is important that the ambassador properly represents the United States and is a voice for all of us in a way that properly reflects who we are as a country.
 - If the voice of the ambassador is good or bad it can directly affect how the world perceives us.
 - We would expect appropriate behavior out of our ambassador both in speech and actions.
 - An ambassador for Christ must represent Him to the world.
 - As Christ and His apostles are no longer physically present, it is now our job to take their place.
 - As the apostles and disciples in the Scriptures lived to share the truth of Christ so must we also do the same. It is our chief purpose.
 - **As His ambassador He expects us to represent Him both in our speech and also our actions.**
 - This is because everything we do as a Christian can have a direct influence on how the world sees Him.
 - When Christians act like the world we are showing the world a false perspective of who Jesus is.
 - God makes His appeal through us
 - **Our most important job as Christians is to be the conduit in which the Gospel message is proclaimed unto the world.**
 - As an ambassador for Christ we are called to proclaim His message which is the Gospel.
 - We are to show the world who Jesus is so that they can hear His message of forgiveness and grace.
 - **This isn't just through our speech of proclaiming the Gospel, but it is also through our actions.**
 - **To witness by our actions is the silent witness.**
 - To witness is also reflected in how we live our lives and our outwardly actions.
 - It is the consistent unintentional witness that we live each and every day.
 - **It's unintentional** because we are not trying to share the Gospel, we are simply trying to live our lives for Christ.
 - How do we **handle ourselves in public? Or at a ball game?** How do we treat others at work or school?
 - **God uses US, the imperfect and flawed Christians to reach a lost world. It is vital that we understand and embrace this vital role that He has given to the church.**
 - **How well do we fulfill our role as being an ambassador for Christ?**

- If you look at your life from an outside view, does it reflect a life that Christ can use to appeal to others?
- Do we tend to neglect or “forget” this importance?
- Ambassadors must proclaim the Gospel
 - **As an ambassador for Christ we MUST proclaim the Gospel through our speech, the Scriptures must be shared with others.**
 - This is a primary way that leads one to Christ and to true faith.
 - We know that we are saved by grace through faith. They must have genuine belief.
 - Ephesians 2:8
 - “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift”
 - **Then how does the lost person obtain this saving faith? By hearing the Gospel**
 - Romans 10:17
 - “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”
 - **If the church chooses to never share the Gospel, if we disobey God and keep this truth to ourselves, then how will the lost have faith to believe?**
 - Romans 10:13-14
 - “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?”
 - **This Scripture reinforces the Great Commission. That it wasn’t just a suggestion, but that Christians plays an important role in spreading the Gospel.**
 - Don’t think that “preacher” means a select few, we all play a part in God’s plan for others to come to know Him.
 - Who is responsible for witnessing?
 - What do you commonly hear as who bears the responsibility to witness?
 - Common Christian views on the responsibility of witnessing
 - It’s the pastors, deacons or teacher’s responsibility.
 - It’s for someone who is really knowledgeable about the Bible and is portrayed as a good Christian.
 - It’s someone else’s job
 - It is our Godly appointed duty to be a witness to others to share the gospel of Christ so that the lost can believe and be saved
 - Matthew 28:19
 - “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - Paul’s calling and purpose is also ours.
 - Acts 26:16b-18
 - “...I have appeared to **you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness** to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the gentiles—to whom **I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive**

forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are **sanctified by faith** in me.”

- How can the whole world be reached if only certain Christians are to be a witness?
- It requires all Christians to spread the Gospel.
- God has chosen to use us to reach others, when we choose not to we are being disobedient.
- **To share the gospel of Christ is to share the cure for the eternal punishment of sin.**
 - If you had the cure for cancer would you share it?
 - Isn't sharing the gospel that brings eternal life greater than the cure for a disease that only affects the body which is temporary?
- **Do you think Christians always make this responsibility a priority in their lives or does it tend to take a backseat?**
- Excuses the church (Christians) use keep themselves from being a witness for Christ.
 - **I don't know enough about the Bible (not qualified).**
 - It's interesting that if you ask most Christians is it difficult or complicated to be saved the response is overwhelmingly no, it is very easy.
 - But when a Christian then is in situation about being a witness they will say that they are not qualified or they do not know enough.
 - **So if you truly believe that Salvation is not difficult then why the excuse?**
 - You don't have to be an expert on the Scripture to be a witness for Christ.
 - As a Christian you already know the most important part of Scripture.
 - Jesus Christ is the Son of God
 - He died on the cross for our sins.
 - He was resurrected and ascended to God in Heaven.
 - If you truly believe in Jesus, then you will be saved.
 - If all you know is that you believed in Jesus Christ and that He saved you,
 - Just tell others what you know and God will do the rest.
 - **Why else is this statement used as a reason to not be a witness?**
 - **I don't know what to say**
 - A frequently used excuse is that we tell ourselves we don't know what to say or even where to begin.
 - **But as Christians no matter what level of spiritual maturity we have something to say.**
 - Christians have something that the world does not, **and that is hope.**
 - **Scripture tells us to be ready and to give a reason for the “hope” that is in us.**
 - 1 Peter 3:15
 - “but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone **who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.**”
 - God wants to have be ready to speak to the hope that we have within us because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.
 - Do we really think that we have NOTHING to say?
 - **This hope is simply to tell someone else what you know to be true as to how Jesus has changed you.**
 - As a Christian you have the Spirit of God living within you, you have experienced a change. That is the hope that we should always be ready to tell someone.
 - **It is also to simply tell someone your story.**
 - Your story about what Jesus has done in your life is your best witness to others.

- Don't think you cannot witness if you do not know what scripture to show, the story that you know is very effective.
- Your story contains:
 - What your life was like before Christ (or before you truly embraced Him)
 - How you became saved and started a personal relationship with Jesus. (How/why did you truly give your life over to God?)
 - How this relationship has changed your life.
 - Paul's testimony gives us an excellent example.
 - Paul's life before Christ
 - Acts 26:4-11
 - Paul met Jesus
 - Acts 26:12-18
 - Paul's life was changed
 - Acts 26:19-23
- We must also understand that if God is using us to witness to someone and we are doing it obediently, that He will give us the words we need to say.
- **What might you tell someone what your "hope that is in you" is?**
- **Why do you think that "your story" is so powerful?**
- I am afraid
 - **What makes you afraid to share the Gospel?**
 - Rejection?
 - Made fun of?
 - Will they be offended?
 - Will they treat me differently or will I lose a friend?
 - If we look at the big picture it can help us overcome our fears.
 - **It is more important to share the Gospel (which affects eternity) than being concerned with temporary social issues.**
 - We are trying to save their lives from the cancer of sin that brings eternal death.
 - God will strengthen us to share his Gospel.
 - Isaiah 41:10
 - "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand."
 - Paul's strength came from God and he was not ashamed.
 - Romans 1:16
 - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek."
 - Fear God not man
 - Acts 4:19-20
 - "But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard,"
 - **What can we do to remove the fear?**
- It's never the right time or place, it isn't "convenient" for me.
 - **It does not have to be in a special place (like church) to share the Gospel.**
 - 2 Timothy 4:2

- **“Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.”**
 - **There will rarely be a right time or place and it will most likely be inconvenient. But we must step out and share our faith and to be a witness where Christ has called us too.**
 - We will use all sorts of excuses, but in the end none of them matter.
 - **It is ALWAYS the right time because you may never get a second chance.**
 - 2 Timothy 2:5
 - **“But as for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill our ministry.”**
 - **Peter and John show us how God will put people in our path that we are to witness to.**
 - Acts 3
 - While there is nothing wrong with have a “scheduled” time or setting that you plan on being a witness of the Gospel, we must also understand that God will likely put someone in our path when we least expect it.
 - **We must never take off our “evangelistic calling” just because we are busy doing what WE want to do.**
 - **Have you ever found yourself in a position like Peter and John, where you were unexpectedly called to share the Gospel with someone?**
- We must not assume that someone is truly saved | Hebrews 12:15a
 - Hebrews 12:15a
 - **“Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God...”**
 - In our Christian walk not only are we to set an example for others so that they may know what it is like to live a life for Christ, we are also supposed to watch out for others.
 - We are called as Christians to find those in the world that are lost and to show them the way to Christ so that they might have an opportunity to believe.
 - We should be genuinely concerned about the lives of others and whether or not they have salvation.
 - **We also need to be sure that we are not limiting or overlooking those that we need to reach.**
 - To come up short is not good enough when it comes to salvation.
 - When we think of falling short of something we think of getting really close to the goal but not quite reaching it.
 - Perhaps in a football game where a team came up just 3 points shy of winning.
 - While they were close it still wasn’t enough to win.
 - To achieve the goal of salvation and eternal life is much the same as you either have it or you don’t’.
 - If you fall short of God’s grace and don’t receive salvation, then you don’t go to Heaven you spend an eternity in Hell.
 - God doesn’t look at someone and say well they almost believed in me, they entertained the idea and were almost convinced so I’m going to write their name the lambs book of live because they were close enough.
 - **No if one falls short the end result is the same as one who was not even close to the goal.**
 - We must make sure that we do not just assume that others are saved.
 - We can get caught up in thought that the only people we need to reach out to are those who we believe have never heard the Gospel before. That only those are the ones that we need to focus on.

- **Those that are “obviously” not Christians.**
- It can be easy to just assume that our loved ones know Christ because maybe they go to church or “seem” to be Christians, but unfortunately those actions alone do not mean that someone is truly saved.
- We need to be concerned for those who may appear to be saved but perhaps are truly not, they may be falling short of God’s grace.
- **There is nothing wrong with getting assurance that those who we think are saved truly are,** because their likely man who go under our radar because we assume.
- Those that fall short might believe they are saved based on false assurances.
 - Jesus made a statement in His great Sermon on the Mount that we would do well to remember.
 - Matthew 7:21-23
 - “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord! Will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in Heaven. On that day any will say to Me’ Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name? Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!’”
 - **Jesus told us that there will be those who have a false assurance of salvation, let us not make assumptions that everyone we know is saved.**
- **Do you think it is hard to talk to someone about Christ whom you assume is a Christian?**