

1. Building Blocks of Christian Life
Evangelism
2 Corinthians 5: 11- 21

2. READ PASSAGE

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be

reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

It could not be more significant than to talk about the role of an ambassador for Christ after the leaks and outbursts and resignation of our ambassador to the USA. You at least may have heard of one!

3. But this passage tells us **we are ambassadors**. So the role of ambassador is very important to us as followers of Jesus Christ. So let's examine what we know of Sir Kim Darroch's position.



First, he lives in Washington. He is our man in Washington.

He has a special status, having been given letters patent by the Queen.

Second he speaks for The United Kingdom. When he speaks to the US government he is speaking for the United Kingdom. He is also spoken to as one who communicates

all messages back to our Foreign Secretary and the government.

He is advising those in Westminster about what is going on in the White House. It is that which has got him in deep water.

Finally he is persecuted for talking to his boss – the Foreign Secretary.

So what is my point?

You live here on earth, in fact, in South Ruislip. This is where you do your ambassador work. In fact Jesus has millions of ambassadors because he wants to engage not just with governments and the high and mighty but with every family, every neighbourhood, every workplace. (and he can afford it!)

You have Special Status. You are a son or daughter of the living God. You are his representative where you are. Called, in Matthew 26:19 to “go and make disciples of all nations” beginning where you are. We spoke of your destiny just two weeks ago. You were created to tell what God has done just where you are, in your home, your workplace, among your neighbours, to your friends and anyone else who will listen. Here you were reconciled to Christ and given the ministry of reconciliation.

You speak as if Jesus is speaking. This is a real challenge to us. When you are known as a follower of Jesus, you speak as one who says what Jesus would say. So it is not surprising people get at us by challenging what we say

against what they think Jesus is saying. It goes further because they expect you to behave as a faithful follower of Jesus.

You talk about what you hear to Jesus. We are called to pray for those we meet. When you have a conversation with someone, do you give feedback to Jesus? Do you tell him what was said and listen to his opinion as what to do next.

Expect persecution. The world does not like you talking to God. They fear what you might be plotting!

But I jumped in at the end of this passage of scripture. So lets go back to the beginning.

4. Motivation I want to pick out 2 expressions to start with. The first is in verse 11:

we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men

the second in verse 14

For Christ's love compels us,

What motivates us to evangelise or to tell the Good News about Jesus is our understanding of God and Jesus. Our understanding of what God is like – ‘the fear of the Lord’ will drive us to screw our courage to the sticking point or just open our lips because we are so full of his grace and love to us. and say something on behalf of Jesus.

But more than that listen to verse 14 again.

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

This verb translated ‘compel’ has a wide variety of meanings. To press together, to be pressed on every side, to be ill like having a virus. We are driven by the knowledge and experience of Christ’s love for us. Its like an all invasive virus making us all hot and bothered and desperate to share the goods news. It’s a very odd metaphor, I know, but makes the point. You don’t tell the Good News our of duty but out of passion. No passion, no talk. Being filled with the Holy Spirit will, inevitably, lead you to spilling the beans that you are a follower of Jesus Christ and why. For example, following communion where we contemplate again the death and resurrection of Jesus we should be so fired up by his love for us that we want to talk about it.

This passage teaches us that our understanding of the good news drives our telling of it.

5. So lets look at what the passage says about our salvation.

Three are two aspects of the good news here. First that of the dead in sin being made alive in Christ – the New

Creation. Secondly that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

5a New Creation

Our understanding of history is that God created the world. How he did that is much disputed. But he did. We know because he says so and he was there! But in the garden of Eden, Eve and then Adam were tempted and sinned and humans were doomed, the human race died spiritually and death became the destiny of all. In addition we were driven from the presence of God.

But God loves us and therefore had a plan for good for the human race. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and rise again, triumphing over death. He offers us eternal life so when we put our faith and trust in him we are re-created. No longer are our spirits doomed but we are promised a place in the presence of God. Eden is restored. So Paul writes:

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

While our physical bodies still have the mark of sin on them and decay and die, our spiritual being is eternal being renewed day by day by the Holy Spirit. One day we will die but death is not an end but a door into heaven. And heaven is glorious because we will live forever in the presence of God. For now we have a taste of heaven because we can live in the presence of God as we talk to

him and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit live out our lives before him.

5b Reconciliation

This concept draws our attention to the fact that God's main concern is about relationship. God created the human race and he loves it. He so much loves it that when we messed up he did not give up on humanity. Throughout the Old Testament we read the history of God seeking a relationship of trust and willing obedience. And through the before Christ history there is a constant message that God will come and meet his people on earth. The Old Testament is very detailed about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. God sought reconciliation with his people but without compromise. He sent Jesus to die in our place for our sins, so that he can restore the relationship he wants with you and me. That is called righteousness.

So Paul summarises this as:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

6. Which brings us to the next step which is **the method**.

At the heart of this is Jesus who is the means of reconciliation. But on ascension day he returned to heaven and at Pentecost he poured out his Spirit on his disciples to tell the Good News. They and we became the messengers of the New Creation, negotiators of the the reconciliation.

We, together, are the body of Christ and we together have this ministry that Christ has the ministry of reconciliation. *And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*
²⁰ *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

7. So the method is for us to tell it!

8. So rather than me talk about that, I want us to have a rehearsal here and now I want you either to tell your own story – give your testimony or In your own words explain the Good News – the gospel. To do that we need to turn to someone sitting near us and pair up. And choose who goes first! And then after polite introductions, either you tell one another your stories of how God has saved you or you explain the Good News to one another. I am going to give 2 minutes to to the introduction, and then 3 minutes for each of you to tell your story. Then when you are just getting into it, I will stop you and we will sing and then you can go for refreshments and over coffee finish off what you wanted to tell one another.

Two minutes to get to know one another.

3 minutes for one to tell their story.

3 minutes for the other to tell their story.

9 Review

Motivation, Meaning method

Song

Prayer