

Message Nine

**Ambassadors of Christ
and the Ministry of Reconciliation**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:16—6:2, 11-13

I. The ministers of the new covenant are ambassadors of Christ—2 Cor. 5:20a; Eph. 6:20:

- A. An ambassador of Christ is one who represents God, the highest authority in the universe:
 - 1. God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ—Matt. 28:18.
 - 2. Jesus is the Christ—the Lord of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords—the highest authority—Acts 2:36; 10:36; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16.
 - 3. The Lord needs some ambassadors on earth who are qualified to represent Him—Matt. 28:19.
 - 4. A new covenant minister is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to represent the highest authority—2 Cor. 3:6; 5:20:
 - a. The apostles were commissioned to represent Christ to accomplish God's purpose—Matt. 10:40; John 13:20; Gal. 4:14b.
 - b. All the members of the Body are representatives of the Head, His ambassadors—Acts 9:6, 10-17; 22:12-16.
- B. As an ambassador of Christ, Paul was “the acting God”—2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12, 15-16; 2:10; 10:1; 11:2:
 - 1. Paul was one with Christ to be the acting God in comforting the believers—1:3-4.
 - 2. Paul conducted himself in the singleness of God, for he was an imitator of the simple God and lived God—v. 12.
 - 3. Paul's coming to the Corinthians was the coming of God as grace—vv. 15-16.
 - 4. Paul forgave a particular matter in the person of Christ—2:10.
 - 5. Paul entreated the believers through the meekness and gentleness of Christ—10:1.
 - 6. Paul was jealous over the saints with the jealousy of God—11:2.

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II. As ambassadors of Christ, the new covenant ministers carry out the ministry of reconciliation—2 Cor. 5:18-20; 6:1:

- A. The apostles were authorized by Christ to represent Him to do the work of reconciliation—5:18, 20.
- B. The ministry of reconciliation is not only to bring sinners back to God but also to bring believers absolutely into God and to make them absolutely one with Him.
- C. Two steps are required for men to be fully reconciled to God:
 - 1. The first step is to reconcile sinners to God from sin—v. 19:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for our sins that we might be forgiven—1 Cor. 15:3.
 - b. Christ bore our sins on the cross that they might be judged by God—1 Pet. 2:24.
 - 2. The second step is to reconcile believers living in the natural life to God from the flesh—2 Cor. 5:20:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for us, the persons, that we might live to Him in the resurrection life—vv. 14-15.
 - b. Christ was made sin on our behalf that sin might be judged and done away with—v. 21; Rom. 8:3.
 - 3. The two steps of reconciliation are portrayed by the two veils of the tabernacle—Exo. 26:37, 31-35; Heb. 9:3; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19.
- D. If we are to carry out the ministry of reconciliation, we need to be identified with the crucified Christ—2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20a; 5:24; 2 Cor. 4:10-12.
- E. The Corinthians still lived in the flesh, that is, in the soul, the outer man, the natural being—1 Cor. 3:1; 2:14:
 - 1. The veil of the flesh, the natural man, separated them from God.
 - 2. Paul was working to cut asunder the separating veil of the flesh so that the believers at Corinth could enter into the Holy of Holies—Heb. 10:19-20.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- F. Only when we have been fully reconciled to God are we fully saved—2 Cor. 6:1-2; Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25.
- G. The extent to which we can bring others to God and into God is always measured by where we are with respect to God; the more we are in Him, the more we can reconcile others into Him—2 Cor. 12:12a; 5:20.

III. The ministry of reconciliation brings us back to God to such an extent that we become the righteousness of God in Christ—v. 21:

- A. Not only are we justified by God (Gal. 2:16)—we actually become the righteousness of God.
- B. When Christ died on the cross as our Substitute, God considered Him not only the sin bearer but sin itself; now in resurrection Christ comes into us as life, and this life lives within us to constitute us into the righteousness of God.
- C. In substitution Christ was made sin for us; now in His constitution we become the righteousness of God in Him—2 Cor. 5:21:
 - 1. The phrase *in Him* means in union with Christ, not only positionally but also organically in resurrection.
 - 2. When Christ died on the cross, God condemned Him in the flesh as sin for us (Rom. 8:3; John 3:14) so that we might be one with Him in His resurrection to be God's righteousness; therefore, in the organic union with Christ we are made the righteousness of God.
- D. To become the righteousness of God in Christ is a matter of being right with God in our being; this is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear—an inner being in the mind and will of God—2 Cor. 5:21.

IV. To be fully reconciled to God will cause us to be enlarged in our hearts; how large our heart is depends on the degree of our reconciliation to God—v. 20; 6:11-13.

2 CORINTHIANS

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- V. Through the ministry of reconciliation, we are incorporated into the processed and consummated Triune God to become, in Christ, an enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation; as a result, we become God's sanctuary, His dwelling place, His Holy of Holies—the New Jerusalem—John 14:20, 23; Rev. 21:2, 10, 16.**