

THE CHURCH IS LEAVING THE BUILDING... SO GOD CAN MAKE HIS APPEAL THROUGH US

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

ATTENTION:

When you know WHO you are, you'll know WHAT to do!

- EXAMPLES:
 - If you are a teacher you teach
 - ...plumber you plumb
 - ...accountant you account
 - ...policeman you police
 - ...sailor you sail
 - ...fisherman you fish
 - ...mother you mother – father you father
 - ...student you study
 - ...politician you _____ (You fill that in I'm not going there)
 - ...a Christian you Christ

ATTUNE:

- The point is, when you know who you are you know what to do.
 - But it doesn't always happen like that!
 - Christians often do not embrace who they are in Christ.

BODY: Today's emphasis is - **We Are Ambassadors For Christ!**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

18 Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: "Be reconciled to God."

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- v. 17 Paul says if anyone is IN CHRIST he is a NEW CREATION.
 - What happened to the old = It's GONE - the NEW has come!

- ∴ how you see yourself must change.
 - The butterfly has emerged from the caterpillar.
 - You have been made new and given a purpose consistent with what you have been made.

- v. 18-19 – In reconciling use - God has given us the *ministry of reconciliation* and the message of *reconciliation*
 - A **ministry** – a responsibility – role to play – etc.
 - A **message** – it is the same message you responded to
- What is a ministry of reconciling/*reconciliation*?
 - It means helping people get right with God.
 - Helping to bring that which is separated back together
 - ...a broken relationship.
 - ...those separated from God because of sin
 - ...back into fellowship with God.
 - Help people who are lost to be saved by helping them come to Christ.
- v. 20 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. As though God were (doing what?) ... making His appeal through us.*
 - Ambassador - Represents God in His absences
 - Makes God's appeal to your colleagues, classmates, family and friends.
 - If a Christian - An ambassador for Christ
 - An ambassador sent by God!
 - **As Christ's ambassador you never represent yourself, you always represent CHRIST.**
- v. 21 *since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: "Be reconciled to God."*
 - God has an appeal to make **to the people in your life**
 - It is a calling to come to Him
 - To be brought back to Him
 - It is a call He has chosen to make through us = *Be reconciled to God*

PROJECT:

Who am I?

- I can barely hang on as a Cristian.

- I know so little.
- I am so afraid.
- I am so _____ .

- Many people hear the call to serve God/others and frankly ignored it!
 - Refused it, walked away from it
 - Living as hangers on only do what their misguided faith tells them they have to do to pay the premiums for their eternal fire insurance
 - To these I want to offer no comfort only a call to repent and become a true follower of Jesus!
 - Many people hear the call to serve God/others and feel they have had nothing to offer.
 - They are discouraged, even fearful because they are hearing our descriptions of faithful service and they feel left out of the discussion.
 - This call to life has been so defined as to exclude them from any possibility of participation.
 - Defining faithful service as something only the quick minded, self-confident extravert could ever perform
 - Downplaying any potential faithfulness in less aggressive offerings of spiritual service.
 - No matter who you are and what your strengths/weaknesses, personality traits, securities/insecurities etc. are, you are an ambassador for Christ every bit as faithful as anyone else.
 - Every Christian can accept the burden of God for the reconciling of those who have walked away from Him.
 - We can feel His sense of loss, His longing to be loved, understood and accepted.
 - Allowing His longing for all of us to be saved to permeate our thoughts, interactions and relationships.
- And do what you have been gifted to do!**

HERE IS A LIFE EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN LEAVE THIS BUILDING AND LIVE – BEGINNING TODAY!

³ For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think

sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. ⁴ *Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function,* ⁵ *in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.* ⁶ *According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith;* ⁷ *if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching;* ⁸ *if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.* ⁹ *Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.* ¹⁰ *Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor.* ¹¹ *Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord.* ¹² *Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.* ¹³ *Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality.* ¹⁴ *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* ¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.* ¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation.* ¹⁷ *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes.* ¹⁸ *If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* ¹⁹ *Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath,*

Vengeance belongs to me;

I will repay,** says the Lord. ²⁰ **But

If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.

²¹ Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Romans 12:3-21

The Church Is Leaving The Building So God Can Make His Appeal Through Each One Of Us!

- As unique as that appeal may be
- As quiet or loud as it may be
- As direct or indirect as it may be
- Whether it is teaching or befriending
- Whether it is telling your story and asking about theirs
- Answering the unanswerable question with love alone.

LET'S FILL OUR LIVES

WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS AND WORDS OF FAITH!