

How to Serve as God's Ambassador: Ministering the Message of Reconciliation

By Bob Young

Introduction

It is likely obvious that the title of this sermon is based on 2 Corinthians 5.

We encounter in this chapter the concept of reconciliation with these points:

- Christians have been made new by reconciliation to God
- Thus, Christians are ministers of reconciliation
- Christians have a ministry of reconciliation
- Christians have received a message of reconciliation
- Thus, Christians are God's models and mentors of reconciliation

Our Identity

We are challenged when we think about our Christian identity. Who are we? This text says we are ambassadors, but that word is filled with meaning beyond its obvious applications in English.

We are presbueo, experienced, senior, we have seniority, not as authority but as responsibility. We are to be the old timers, those who can provide counsel and guidance for the "newbies". There is a description often-used in various occupations: short-timers. Missions short-timers, ministry short-timers, education short-timers....

The opposite would be long-timers. That is what Paul is talking about. As we mature in Christ, we become old-timers and long-timers.

The text suggests that this lesson be developed with a view to Jesus' reconciling work.

Jesus summarized life in two commands: love God, love your neighbor.

We have been strong on #2 without recognizing the importance of #1.

We have thought love is something that happens rather than pursuing love.

We must restore intentional, unconditional agape love.

We will not fully experience and share reconciliation until we are touched by the Master.

Our seniority comes from our past experience. We have experienced the newness; we have been molded by the message so that we can bear witness to the impact of the message in our lives. People can look at us and see the living reality of what life is about—a genuine old timer. (Use illustrations of various 'old timers'.) Are you an "old timer"? Not in years, but in experience, in maturity, in wisdom, in involvement, in passion....

***1 Let the Message master you and make you new—be loved by God, love God**

The message ministers to us before we can minister the message. We become masters because the message masters us.

- Prayer
- Bible study
- Spiritual direction, nurture, application
- Spiritual disciplines

***2 Minister the Message—love others**

Concern for all, but especially the marginalized

- This text addresses what we do as ministers of the message
- What have we done in name for Christ for others?

***3 Model the message**

Evangelism as modeling, we are models of the message

- What is our testimony? Rev. 12:11
- We can be a joyful advocate for the Christ-way
- We can share faith stories of your life and journey
- We can celebrate
- We can live out a faith that is reliable, strong, satisfying in crisis, satisfying in 'daily-ness'

***4 Mentor others according to the message**

We become mentors

How do we build up others so that they are not only brought to Christ but enabled to walk with him and in him?