

The Servant Leader as an Ambassador

By Frank Catanzaro

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Study the comments relating to 2 Corinthians 5:20 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share a clear explanation of the term *ambassador* and its importance to this lesson.

Assignment Two

Study the comments relating to 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to lead a discussion revealing what God is specifically asking us to do.

Assignment Three

Study the comments relating to 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to give the group a better understanding of the depth and breadth of the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf.

Scripture to Memorize

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will have a clear understanding of Christ's sacrifice and our calling to be ambassadors for Christ in the world.

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He and his wife, Teresa, have been married for over 34 years and have one son, Jonathan (a pastor in Georgia), who is married to Elissa. They have three children. Frank and his wife live in Fort Worth.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Suppose you have a friend named Jeff who loves the Lord and desires to walk with Him faithfully. However, Jeff believes it is wrong for us to be evangelists. His argument is that an individual's faith is personal and we should not be aggressive in sharing our own faith. What do you think about Jeff's argument? Do you think his attitude is consistent with being a faithful ambassador?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 20. Therefore. The Greek word translated as *therefore* has a definition that could be paraphrased with "now that I have said what I just said, you need to pay particular attention to what I am about to say since what I just said gives context to what I am about to say." This first word of verse 20 demonstrates the importance of what precedes it in understanding what is about to follow.

Paul wrote to us the words the Holy Spirit gave him. Here is a paraphrase of what he said: Because you have been given a new identity (v.17), and because God did it all (v.18), and because you have been called to a ministry of reconciliation (v.18), and because your sins are forgiven by the power of Christ (v.19), you have been called to be an ambassador (v.20). There it is. The calling to be an ambassador flows from all that precedes this statement.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now give the group a clear explanation of the term *ambassador* and the implications of it relative to this lesson.

Studying the Passage

Verse 20. we are ambassadors for Christ. This verse declares that we *are* ambassadors for Christ. This is not something to prayerfully consider. He has already determined that this role is part of our identity as His children.

You probably are familiar with ambassadors for our country. They live in other countries around the world and they represent the United States. For the most part, everything they say and do is assigned to them by others in authority.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now present the specific assignment God has given His ambassadors.

Studying the Passage

For believers, this world is not our home. We have a home in heaven and we are representatives or ambassadors of the One who is preparing that home for us. We are to do His will in this world and seek to glorify Him in all that we do.

Verse 20. God making His appeal through us. God is making an appeal through us, as ambassadors, to the world. That appeal is **be reconciled to God**.

So what is job one for the ambassador? It is to enhance the reputation of the One who has given you the task of representing Him. It's that simple. God wants us to be good examples of Him.

In the politically correct world in which we live, some consider it offensive for us to share our faith, but Christ calls us to join Him in reconciling people to God. Christ knows that hell is real and that people are going there every day. That includes people we know and with whom we work and play and go to school. As faithful ambassadors, we listen to the voice of Jesus rather than the voice of a politically correct culture.

On Your Own

Read the following statement: *To a degree, servant leaders determine what others think of God.* In the space below, write your answers to these questions: Do you agree with the statement? Do you find the statement sobering? Before this lesson, was this statement part of your thinking?

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now give the group a better understanding of the depth and breadth of the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf.

Studying the Passage

Verse 21 gives us tremendous insight into what actually happened when Christ made it possible for us to be saved. An understanding of this truth can motivate us to fulfill the calling to be an ambassador. Jesus' physical suffering before and during the crucifixion was certainly awful. Our Savior experienced tremendous agony, but His physical suffering pales in comparison to the suffering this verse describes.

Verse 21. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf. This verse offers a description of what Christ endured on that day. Our language cannot adequately provide words that articulate what actually happened. Just think about the phrase "who knew no sin." We cannot fully comprehend the depth of that statement. Can you even imagine what it is like to know no sin?

And then this One, who knew no sin, actually became sin! How can this be? How could the One who is so totally opposed to something actually become that very thing? This is the miracle of our salvation. Jesus became sin so that we might take on His righteousness. Do you see this? One of the most horrific things to Christ, He endured that we might be reconciled to God and then become His ambassadors to the world.

On Your Own

In the space below, write answers to these questions: How do you think most Christians feel about becoming the righteousness of Christ, even given what it cost? How well do you believe our faithfulness as ambassadors adequately represents the depth of Christ's sacrifice?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share that with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same, issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Because you have been given a new identity, and because your sins are forgiven by the power of Christ, and because you were redeemed through Christ's completed work, and because you have been called to a ministry of reconciliation, you have been called to be an ambassador who represents Christ in the world.

We *are* ambassadors for Christ. We don't have to pray about it. He already has determined that this role is part of our identity as His children.

So what is job one for the ambassador? It is to enhance the reputation of the One who has given you the task of representing Him. It's that simple. God wants us to join Him in redeeming mankind.

Christ knows that hell is real and that people are going there every day. That includes people we know and share life with. As faithful ambassadors, we listen to the voice of Jesus rather than the voice of a politically correct culture. In love, we point people to Christ.

Jesus' physical suffering before and during the crucifixion was certainly awful, but when God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, it was far worse. Jesus became sin so that we might take on His righteousness. Do you see this? He endured something so horrific so that we might be reconciled to God and then become His ambassadors to the world.

Follow-Up Question

In what way is the extent of Christ's suffering motivating you to be His ambassador in the world?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.