

Vicar Andrew Wolfgram
Text: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
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Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Reconciliation of us, with God, to the world

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What comes to mind when you think of an ambassador? Do you think of a person from another country who is at an embassy here in the United States? Or perhaps, do you think of someone at an embassy in another country? What does an American ambassador do when they are in another country? They represent the country that they are from. They are in constant contact with people back home. They have a working relationship with people back home. An ambassador comes with a message from their native country to the country they are in.

What is the motivation of an ambassador? An ambassador loves their country and uses that love to motivate them to get the job done. To paraphrase JFK, "Their motivation is not what their country can do for them but what they can do for their country." Their goal is what they can do for the entity that they represent.

Christ calls us to go out and make disciples of all nations. We are called to go and make disciples. We are called to go to the ends of the earth to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

As Christians, we have been called to play a role in this world. As John 15:19 states: "but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world."

What is our motivation? Think about when you're at home and need to do chores. What is your motivation to keep working to get it done? Is it to be done with the task or your desire to have a clean house? Do we always want to go out and make disciples for Jesus? Does it always

fit into our schedule? Is our motivation to help our neighbor? Our motivation is not what can we do for Christ, but what has Christ already done for us and continues to do for us, because He loves us.

As our reading from 2 Corinthians 5 says: *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)*

While we love Christ, it is the love of Christ that motivates us. It's not the love that we have towards Christ that motivates us. It is the love that Christ has for us that motivates us.

As 2 Corinthians states: *From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:16-17)*

The flesh that Paul is talking about is our sinful flesh. Christ was perfect and never sinned, but we do. Christ lived a perfect life for you and for me. The Pharisees, scribes and teachers of the law tried to find fault in Jesus. They tried to find somewhere that Jesus broke the law. But they were unable to find any fault and He suffered and died for all and rose again. But because of Christ we are no longer seen by our sinful self but are declared justified. Declared right in the sight of God because of Christ's death and resurrection for us. The old has gone and the new has come. What does that mean for our relationship with God? Christ reconciled us to Himself. We are in a right relationship with God. In our vertical relationship with God we are now at peace with God. This is not only between you and I with God but with the whole world.

2 Corinthians continues: *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)*

As reconciled children of God what is next? What are we to do? We are called to proclaim this message of reconciliation of us with God to the world. We are called to proclaim to the world, that Christ died for the world, to restore the relationship that sin distorted.

The 2 Corinthians reading concludes: *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)*

Here at Our Redeemer we are about *Equipping Disciples, to Make Disciples, for Jesus*. Ambassadors are trained in what to do in different situations. They are trained to know how to answer questions posed to them from the country that they are in. They are trained to interact with others that are not exactly like them. They are trained to go places that they are not necessarily comfortable to go. They are trained to carry a message they are given.

You are continually being trained here as you are Christ's ambassadors. You are being equipped. In worship, you hear the Word of God preached. As 2 Timothy 3:16 states: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." In Bible study, you learn in even more depth the Scriptures' impact on your life. You are a disciple of Christ. You are growing in your faith life. You are being disciplined. As you are being disciple you are sent out as Christ's ambassador. You learn and live

out what He said and did for you. As an ambassador, you are sent out with the Gospel, the Good News to tell other people what Christ has done.

We are Christ's ambassadors. We are called to go out and proclaim what Christ has done for us. Proclaiming what He did on the cross for us, to reconcile us to God, to make things right... Proclaiming His glorious resurrection on the third day... Proclaiming our restored relationship that had been torn apart due to sin.

It was the immeasurable love of Christ that guided Christ's path... to the cross... to die... for you and for me. So, that we could be with Him forever. His love for us is immeasurable, and for that we are unbelievably grateful. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21