

Date: January 30, 2022

Topic: Ambassadors for Christ
Part 3 – The Ministry of Reconciliation

Scripture: 2 Cor. 5:18 – 21

A/V:

Outline:

Introduction

A. <opening illustration>

B. Overview of series

The Meaning – WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST – Position – Place – Purpose - Program

The Message – Our lives and our lips – Real Love – Redemption – Righteousness – Reprioritize – Regeneration - Reconciliation

C. Introduction to Today's message Today as we wrap up our series on "Ambassadors for Christ" we will be doing a "show and tell sermon" about what it means to have a "Ministry of Reconciliation" and then we will finish by looking at the ministry of church based on the "Model of Holy Communion". Turn with me back to 2 Corinthians 5 once again to see the key section about our ministry together as ambassadors.

I. The Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18 – 21)

18 All this is from **God**, who **reconciled us to himself through Christ** and gave us the ministry of **reconciliation**: 19 that **God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ**, not counting **people's sins** against them. And **he** has committed to us the message of **reconciliation**. 20 We are therefore **Christ's ambassadors**, as though **God** were making his appeal through us. We implore **you on Christ's behalf**: Be **reconciled to God**. 21 **God made him** who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in him we might become the righteousness of God**.

A. "Reconciliation" = katalasso = to return, redeem, and restore to favor – 5 x

B. This is God's work – 9x

C. The means of Christ – 6x

D. The ministry TO/FOR the world – 6x

II. The Model of Holy Communion:

A. The **Invitation** – the shofar – inviting people to the feast (Luke 14:21 – 24)

21 "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 22 "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' 23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

Getting the word out personally/through technology/through events

B. The **Reception** – The washing of feet – Honor of hospitality (John 13:12 – 17)

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Helping people know they are welcome

C. The **Reconciliation** – The Table (*the "Sulha"*) of Acceptance/Forgiveness/Restoration (John 15:13 – 17)

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

Process → Acceptance (feeling welcomed) → Forgiveness (opportunity to reconcile) → Restoration (Part of the team)

D. The **Communion** – The Breaking of bread and the Drinking of wine – The “blood price” (2 Cor. 5:21)

Substitutional Atonement - 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Agape love of Christ

E. The **Celebration** – The Feast itself – Fellowship, Friendship, Discipleship (Rom. 5:1,2)

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Process -> Fellowship (being with people) --> Friendship (trusting people) -> Discipleship (mentoring people)

F. The **Multiplication** – Sending out to bring others in (Matt. 28:16 – 20)

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Discipleship process → WS101 → WS201 → WS301 → Service → Leadership → Ambassadorship

III. Conclusion and closing Comments

- A. Closing Illustration
- B. Holy Communion
- C. Altar Call

Notes:

Possible Outline:

You see, there is an interesting Middle-Eastern custom that helps us understand this Psalm even further. Even to this day, between Bedouin tribes and in Arab villages communities there is the practice of “**sulha**” (an Arabic term, sulha is related to **the Hebrew root for the word “table” – “shulhan”**). Sulha means a meal between enemies for the purpose of reconciliation. If there is a conflict (for example, if someone from one tribe gets hurt by a member of another tribe), blood revenge may swiftly follow, usually resulting in injury or death. Before this happens, or even after it happens, an attempt at reconciliation is often made. The two families who are involved in a conflict come together to eat. The guilty party confesses they were wrong and the wronged party accepts the apology. Then, they negotiate a recompense or a “peace price”. This negotiation may last for a few days but once the agreement has been reached, the two families are fully reconciled, and a family that was wronged can never EVER bring up the incident again before the offender. From then on it is as if the whole matter had never happened. It's erased, forgotten altogether.

“For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while (he was probably a runaway slave), that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.” (Philemon 1:15-16)

Esau and Jacob reconcile

In a grand act of chesed (covenantal love and mercy), Esau, who perhaps had every fleshly right to continue hating his brother, embraced and kissed him as they both wept. (Genesis 33:4)

Joseph reconciled with his brothers (Gen. 45)

Yom Kippur itself is an annual ritual of reconciliation (or [atonement](#)) between the people and God. This day of reconciliation requires that the individual take responsibility for their part in personal conflicts.

Traditionally we cannot come before God in search of reconciliation when the sin that separates us from Him involves another person. We must first go and be reconciled with that person and then come to God. Of course, we see that same sentiment expressed in the Brit Chadashah:

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (*Matthew 5:23–24*)

I. Fake “Freedom” & Fake “Slavery”

- A. Greater love (vs. 13) – Love is the basis of our ministry
- B. Not slaves but friends (vs. 14,15)
- C. Fruit bearing lives = Purpose driven lives (vs. 16)
- D. Freedom = opportunity to reach one’s full potential

II. Friend

- A. Part of God’s divine plan – Let’s work together
- B. Loved by God = chosen by God
- C. Died for = placed a high value
- D. Full joy in relationship

III. Fruit

- A. Chosen by God – God takes the initiative
- B. Ordained to produce fruit
- C. Fruit = results of acts of love toward others
- D.

John 15:9

“As [Comparison statement]

the Father has loved (agapao) me,

so

have I loved (agapao) you.

Now [Aorist active imperative] [Time reference] [Aorist means something that started in the past – must be continued]

remain (meno = abide, Place – do not depart/Time – continue to stand/Condition – stay in unity with)

in my love. (agape)

10 If [Conditional statement]

you keep (toreo = to guard in ones’ heart and observe in one’s life = prioritize)

my commands, (entole = precepts established by the Christ)

[then]

you will remain (meno = future tense)

in my love, (agape)

just as [Comparison statement]

I have kept (tereo)
 my Father's commands (entole)
 and [Continuation statement]
 remain (meno)
 in his love. (agape)
 11 I have told (laleo = spoken) you this
 so that [Purpose statement]
 my joy (chara)
 may be in you
 and
 that your joy (chara)
 may be complete. (pleroo = overflowing – complete to the top)
 12 My command is this: [declaration statement]
 Love(agapao)
 each other (allelon)
 as [Comparison statement]
 I have loved (agapao)
 you.
 13 Greater (megas) love (agape) has [present tense] no one than this: [Declaration statement]
 to lay down (tithemi = to willingly lay aside/not continue to carry)
 one's life (psyche = Not only physical life – but rather feelings/desires/fears as well)
 for one's friends.
 14 You are my friends (philos = brotherly love)
 if [Conditional statement]
 you do (poieo) what I command (entello).
 15 I no longer call you servants (doulos = slaves),
 because [Evidence statement]
 1) a servant (doulos) does not know
 his master's business.
 Instead,
 I have called you friends (philos),
 for [Evidence statement]
 2) everything (pas) that I learned (akouo = heard)
 from my Father
 I have made known (gnorizo = thorough knowledge about)
 to you.
 16 3) You did not choose (eklegomai = selected to be set apart) me,
 but [Contrast statement]
 i) I chose you
 and [Continuation statement]
 ii) appointed (tithemi = to fix/establish) you
 so that [Purpose statement]
 4) you might
 i) go (hypago = go forth/go out) [Present tense]
 and [Continuation statement]
 ii) bear fruit (phero karpos = produce results for the kingdom of God)
 a) fruit that will last—
 and so that [Evidence statement]
 5) whatever you ask (aiteo = request to God)
 in my name (onoma = the authority of Jesus name)
 the Father will give you.
 17 This is my command:

Love (agapao) each other.

Jewish Feasts

In the Old Testament, God instituted a religious calendar for the Israelites to follow. Within each year, there were **seven specified feasts (Lev. 23), four in the spring and three each fall**. Through these feasts, the Jewish people celebrated their history, their faith, and the blessings of God. Through Jesus' life, the hope of each feast was fulfilled in a dramatic way.

1) Passover

Why To remember God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, when God passed over Israelite children and killed the firstborn of every Egyptian family.

When In the spring, on the 14th day of the 1st month

What Happened

Most Jews traveled to Jerusalem for celebration of Passover. Each family brought a spotless lamb to the Temple for sacrifice. These lambs reminded the Israelites of the lamb that was eaten on the night they were delivered from Egypt. The lamb also reminded Israelites of the blood price that must be paid for their sin.

Connection to Jesus

Luke 2 records the story of Jesus and his family traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Jesus slaughtered the family's lamb, an action that meant he was recognized as a responsible member of the spiritual community. Later, Jesus died on the cross at the exact moment of the Passover sacrifice. Like the Passover lamb, none of his bones were broken, and his blood made the final atonement for the sins of the world.

2) Unleavened Bread

Why To remember the escape from Egypt and God's provision of bread from the earth

When In the spring, on the 15th day of the 1st month >

What Happened

The feast began by offering the first sheaf of grain to God through a special ceremony in the Temple sanctuary (Lev. 23:10-11). Another aspect of this feast involved the baking of unleavened bread, called matzo. God commanded that the Israelites eat only unleavened bread for seven days after Passover as a reminder of their sudden deliverance from Egypt, when their bread literally had no time to rise.

Connection to Jesus

Jesus' burial coincided with the offering of the first grain. During his ministry Jesus described himself as "the bread of life." In God's faithfulness, he provided the true "Bread of Life" from the earth by raising Jesus' body from the grave.

3) First Fruits

Why To celebrate God's gift of harvest

When In the spring, 15th day of 1st month

What Happened

Israelites sacrificed the first part of their harvest, flocks, and earned money in recognition that God was the giver of every good thing. The people also acknowledged God's ownership of the land by bringing seven fruits to the Temple. One of these fruits included the pomegranate, a crop easily destroyed by foul weather. By giving these first fruits to God, the Israelites expressed their dependence on him and their trust that he would provide the rest of the harvest.

Connection to Jesus

The Feast of First Fruits coincided with Jesus' resurrection. When Jesus' followers returned to the tomb on the morning of the celebration, it was open and empty. Jesus became the first fruits of those raised from the dead

4) Shavuot - Other Names - The Feast of Weeks

Why Thanksgiving for the end of harvest and the anniversary of receiving the Law

When 50 days after Passover

What Happened

Joyful crowds gathered on the Southern Stairs, brought their offerings of wheat to the Temple, and celebrated the good harvest God had given. In Jewish tradition, true thankfulness to God was best shown by giving to others. So when the grain was harvested, the corners of the field were left standing to be gleaned by the poor. The people also celebrated the giving of the Law. This ritual paralleled Israel's history, which began with deliverance from Egypt on Passover and concluded when they received the Law.

Connection to Jesus

Shavuot coincides with Pentecost. Some scholars believe that the arrival of the Holy Spirit may have taken place on the Temple's Southern Stairs where the pilgrims gathered. Luke 24:53 states that the disciples remained in the Temple every day after Jesus' ascension to praise God. Peter was enabled to speak many languages, which would have made the gospel understandable to the people of varying backgrounds who traveled to Jerusalem for Shavuot

5) Rosh Hashana

Why To prepare for God's judgment

When In the fall, on the 1st day of the 7th month

What Happened

Rosh Hashana celebrated the beginning of a new religious year. The people celebrated by attending religious services and considering God's sovereignty and his future day of judgment. The shofar was blown-a sound that reminded Jewish people of their ancient past, God's great power, and their call for faithfulness in his coming judgment.

Connection to Jesus

Jesus, in keeping with this tradition, described a coming judgment that will be announced by the blowing of the shofar (Matt. 24:31).

6) Yom Kippur

Why A day for the nation to seek forgiveness. God passed judgment of the people onto a scapegoat

When In the fall, 10th day of the 7th month

What Happened

In preparation for Yom Kippur, the people fasted as a form of self-denial, repentance, and confession of sin before God. On the feast day, a priest entered the Most Holy Place and God appeared in a cloud over the ark of the covenant. Blood from sacrificed animals was sprinkled on the Most Holy Place and the altar to atone for the sins of priests. The high priest then placed his hands on the head of a scapegoat, symbolically transferring the sins of the people onto the goat. Subsequently, the scapegoat was taken out into the wilderness to die, symbolizing that God had forgiven the people's sins.

Connection to Jesus

The New Testament describes how the Day of Atonement applies to the death of Jesus: Jesus' blood, instead of the blood of the goat, now symbolizes atonement (Heb. 9:11-14). The death of Jesus fulfilled the ancient role of the scapegoat; through Jesus' death, sins are truly forgiven.

7) Sukkoth - Other Names - Feast of Tabernacles

Why To remember when the Jewish people lived in the wilderness before entering Canaan.

When In the fall, on the 15th day of the 7th month.

What Happened

God commanded that booths be constructed to remind the Israelites of their history of wilderness living. The Israelites ate their meals and prayed in these booths for seven days as a reminder of God's protective care. Succoth took place at the end of the dry season and was coupled with a water ceremony and fervent prayer for next year's rains. Solomon dedicated the Temple during Sukkoth as a fitting picture of God coming to live among his people.

Connection to Jesus

In the context of Succoth, Jesus dramatically presented his message. On the "last and greatest day of the Feast," in the midst of the water ceremony and prayers for God to send water, Jesus proclaimed, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37-38). Some scholars also believe Jesus was born around Sukkoth, which would be a fitting picture of Jesus "tabernacling" among his people.
