



# The Church as God's Ambassadors

(Note to leaders - when a question in the study is followed by possible answers, these are for your benefit, try to encourage your group to come up with answers for themselves)

Q *What comes to mind when you think of an ambassador?*

- An ambassador in a foreign embassy representing their home country
- A political ambassador making treaties, fighting for peace, with presidents and kings

In Friday's sermon Nicki laid down the background and context for the need for ambassadors of God's Kingdom.

- Creation started in Eden - God's kingdom, perfect in every way and man's position secure in God's love, with purpose and significance.
- Satan attacked through lies and deception with goal of bringing man into bondage and out of God's kingdom
- Now we see God's pain, not just that his people have rejected Him but that those He loves are now in bondage

## **1. What does this fallen kingdom look like?**

Q *Do you ever look at the world and feel moved by the pain and brokenness of man?*

Q *What in particular do you see?*

- Corrupt governments & leaders, wars
- Violent crime - hate crime
- People trafficking, broken families
- Lies, addiction in every form
- Pain and suffering

Q *Is this a modern phenomenon?*

- No, since the fall - consequences of world, flesh and devil

Ephesians 2:1-3

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Q *Are we quick to forget we also once followed the ways of this world and its ruler?*

2 Corinthians 4:4

<sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

*Q Is it helpful to see those lost and apart from God as victims as well as sinners in need of salvation? Why?*

## **2. God's rescue strategy**

Jesus is God's rescue strategy.

Luke records in 4:16-21 Jesus in Nazareth

...on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

*Q Jesus said that he fulfilled this passage. What did Jesus come to do? Discuss.*

- Proclaim Good News - to the poor (not just financially poor)
- Proclaim freedom for prisoners (in bondage to sin and to rulers)
- Proclaim recovery of sight (to those spiritually blind)
- Set the oppressed free
- Proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

Romans 5:8-10

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

*Q How did Jesus mediate reconciliation between God and his fallen people?*

Col 2:14-15

Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross

*Q What did Jesus achieve in terms of Satan?*

### 3. Our role as ambassadors of God's Kingdom

2 Cor 5:18-20

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Ambassadors are living in one kingdom and representing another.

*Q Have you ever represented a school, or team in sport?*

If so you were an ambassador for them - how you acted reflected on them.

Philippians 1:27

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ

*Q Where is our citizenship and how should it impact us?*

*Q Ambassadors exist to deliver a message. What is our message?*

- Good News - Gospel

*Q Who did Jesus proclaim this Good News to? Is ours the same role?*

Romans 10:13-15

<sup>13</sup> for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

<sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup> And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

*Q What is this verse saying?*

Being an ambassador will be costly. We must not get too comfortable in this world - we need to stay distinct. But also we must not be distant and detached but come to people where they are. Jesus is our example.

Paul travelled through many regions and adapted to the culture of those who he ministered to, but he never compromised the gospel message:

1 Cor 9:22-23

..... I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Eph 6:19

Say also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

*Q What can we learn from Paul's example?*

Ambassadors speak with authority. We are commissioned by Jesus and given all we need through his Spirit.

1 Thes 1:5

...our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

*Q What should accompany the gospel message?*

*Q Where must this message be taken?*

We must keep in mind what is at stake and take seriously our role:

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

#### **4. Full restoration of God's Kingdom**

The kingdom of God is now and not yet. When all nations have heard the Good News and the work of reconciling those in darkness with their God is going forward in every tribe and nation Christ will return and bring in His Kingdom.

At this time all who are reconciled with their God will be part of God's eternal Kingdom where God will abide with His people forever:

➔ What was lost in Eden will be restored

Revelations 11:15

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

*Q Are you part of God's kingdom? How important is it to you to take as many people with you into God's eternal kingdom?*