

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto
Sunday, July 20, 2014

People of God: Ambassadors of Christ

Joshua 1:1-9

Psalm 18:1-6; 20-30

II Corinthians 5:16-6:10

Mark 6:7-13

Mark 6:12, 13; II Corinthians 5:20

Ambassador: An ambassador is an official envoy, especially a highest ranking diplomat who represents a state and is usually accredited to another sovereign state as the resident representative of his own government.

In Roman Catholicism, it is the papal or the apostolic Nuncios.

Congress of Vienna held in 1815 termed Ambassadors as personal representatives of their own country's chief executive.

So being an Ambassador requires: representation in another situation, reflection of the sent body or person and seek out possibilities for the sent body or person.

Today's theme reminds us that we as the People of God are Ambassadors for Christ. Paul always was enthusiastic about the term.

1. **Ambassador: The Apostle**: An Apostle is a sent one. He/she has to be in a different context. The person is sent with certain authority. In the O.T. reading, we see God sending Joshua as the leader of the Israelites. With great surety they were given lot of possibilities. Their boundaries extended widely. The greatest Apostle was Jesus Christ Himself. As we read in Philippians 2:6-8, Christ emptied himself, was born in human likeness, he humbled and became obedient. Jesus sent disciples two by two and they could work for him (Mk. 6:7-13). Later on, after the time of Christ, the disciples were sent to various places, in fact they were scattered to spread the Gospel. Still later Missionary movements were eager to carry the message of the Love of God. In reality all people who believe in Jesus Christ are messengers of the Gospel. We are being sent to different contexts to spread the Love of Christ. Do we have that conviction? Wherever we are, we are sent to carry this message and look for the possibility to bring another life to Christ.
2. **Ambassador's Code of Conduct: The Word of God**: An Ambassador is to live by certain rules and regulations. For the People of God, the rule is nothing but, the WORD. The Book of Joshua vividly depicts that fact .Joshua 1:7&8. (1) Be careful to act in accordance with all the law, (2) Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, (3) The book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, (4) Meditate on it day and night. The Word of God should become part and parcel of the life of an ambassador. What is the place of God's Word in our life? How do we treat it? Sometimes it is a very passive priority in our life. Are we conducting our life in accordance with the law? Are we following the track of the Word of God? Do we have the patience to meditate on it? Illustration of Barnabas (the Apostle), Barsabbas (one who was chosen to be part of the lot to choose a person instead of Judas Iscariot) and Barabbas (the robber). Psalmist in Psalm 18 says he was righteous, clean, kept the ways, he has not departed from God wickedly and he did not put away the statutes from him (Ps.18:20-23). Let us be serious with the Word of God in our lives. Let us not read the Word of God but meditate it so that we could become blessed.
3. **Ambassador: The Assured**: Our Heavenly Parent is not at all a task master. He longs to have fellowship with his creation, especially his children, the human race. The Bible clearly says that if we do take the path of God in our life, then we will be rewarded. That is the complete history that we come across in the Bible. Our free will should follow the path of God. The Book of Joshua also speaks of prosperity. But following the Word of God is the condition. People everywhere and always have been seeking prosperity. But the prosperity that is not from God will perish. So as an Ambassador of God, we are to stick on to the regulations of God. As

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People of God, we are to seek possibilities for God. We are to participate in the Mission of God (*Missio Dei*). Taking the joy of Salvation to the surroundings we are placed should be the priority.. Christian life is a rewarded life, no doubt. We are assured of goodness in this life and in eternity as well. Also we are assured of protection (Joshua 1:9). "...be strong and courageous; do not be frightened and dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

4. **Ambassador: Called to Confront:** Today's Gospel portion is sandwiched between two narrations; one being the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth and the other being the beheading of John, the Baptist. If we are to enjoy the blessings of God, we need to confront difficult situations for the sake of our Lord. Paul speaks of a long list of hardships that he endured. There was dishonor, there were bad reports, he was named as an impostor, he was unknown, he was dying, he was beaten, he felt sorrowful for himself, and he had to undergo poverty and had nothing in his life. Most often we are poor confronters like our ancestor, Adam. Had he confronted God, then the situation, the history of human race, would have been different. Christ endured hardships for us. Apostles gave themselves to be broken apart for the sake of the Gospel and missionaries attempted great challenges to bring the fruit of Gospel in different continents, including Asia and Africa. Can we in our generation take up the challenge of sharing the Gospel of our Lord? Westerners changed us for God and now the westerners need the change. What Mission can we do as a faith community? Can we whole heartedly give the Messiah to the unreached? We are called to confront difficult situations. Our generations should be taught the seriousness of the matter. It is said that the person with Christ is a Missionary and the person without Christ is the Mission field. Can we share our Lord to a person who has never heard of Jesus as the Savior of the world? Remember, it is the duty of each one of us as the people of God.

As People of God we are Ambassadors of Christ. We have to represent Christ in our life situations. We are to seek possibilities for Christ. That is what the Great Commission reminds us; "to make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28:19).

1. **Ambassador: The Apostle**
2. **Ambassador's Code of Conduct: The Word of God**
3. **Ambassador: The Assured**
4. **Ambassador: Called to Confront**

May the Spirit of the Lord work in us and challenge us to be real Ambassadors of the one who became an Ambassador for our salvation.