

# Pray As An Ambassador of Jesus

2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2

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Today we are beginning a new series on Praying for Sinners. In our October newsletter I shared that we are launching Twenty-eight Days of Praying for Sinners. There is a list of fourteen scriptures passages. You can begin today or whatever day reading through these passages. I encourage you to look for the actions God wants us to take. Also, look for God's promises. I ask that you pray for God to help you carry out the actions and to claim the promises. When you finish the first fourteen days, start over again with the same passages and pray for sinners to take action and claim the promises.

In our passage this morning is one of the most important verses in all of scripture. For in this passage is the explanation of what Jesus did for us.

***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 (ESV)***

**In this strange world we cannot deny our role as representatives of Jesus.** We do live in a strange world. All around are sinners, who don't trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Ambassadors are the representatives of their leader. This person wherever they are and wherever they go is taking the message of the leader. They speak and act with the authority of the leader. Whatever message the leader has provided that is what the ambassador says. They are the mouth piece of the leader in a strange land.

You and I are ambassadors of Jesus and His kingdom. Wherever we are and wherever we go we are taking the message of our leader. We speak and act with the authority of the leader. The message of Jesus is our message to the people in this strange land. There are people all around us who need to hear the message of Jesus.

I think about it this way. One of the star football players for the Ohio State Buckeyes is an ambassador of Ohio State. Wherever he goes people recognize him as an Ohio State football. His message is the message of Ohio State football.

We have teachers among us, Woody and Conner. When they are out and about in town, people see them as teachers. They represent their school district.

From the moment you invited Jesus to enter your life, when you confessed your sins, calling upon Jesus to forgive you, you have been an ambassador of His Kingdom. In that moment Jesus entered your life through the presence of the Holy Spirit. You are filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered with the message of Jesus in your actions, your words, and your thoughts.

At times though I think we become silent ambassadors of Jesus' kingdom. That is we don't speak the message of His kingdom. We don't share His authority. We don't live according to His authority.

We encounter people who are sinners. Their lives are sticky, they are a mess. People who are addicts are sticky, their lives are a mess. We may not want to be involved with them. People who are going through a divorce are sticky, their lives are a mess. In the midst of that we might choose to become silent ambassadors.

***For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)***

**Too many people think they made themselves righteous.** The problem is we confuse righteousness as doing right things, right actions. That's not the righteousness of God.

Adam and Eve before the serpent were righteous. They were in a right relationship with God. Noah was righteous. He and his family were the only people who were in a right relationship with God. Moses, who wasn't perfect, was in a right relationship with God. David, who made lots of mistakes, was in a right relationship with God.

They believed God, they trusted God when they did not understand and could not see what God was doing. That's being in a right relationship with God, to trust Him when we can't see or understand what is happening.

God gave to Moses Ten Commandments to show us how to be in a right relationship with Him. But these commandments demonstrate that we can't be in a right relationship God. We can't keep one of the commandments. When we look at something and say that we want it more than we want God, we aren't in a right relationship with God.

In the Old Testament, before Jesus, there were two ways to be in a right relationship with God. One was to call out to God and confess that we needed God. The other way, was a result of us as human being needing to see in order to believe. So, God gave this command, which Paul may have had in mind when wrote these words.

***When a leader sins and unintentionally violates any of the commands of the Lord his God by doing what is prohibited, and incurs guilt, or someone informs him about the sin he has committed, he is to bring an unblemished male goat as his offering. He is to lay his hand on the head of the goat and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the Lord. It is a sin offering. Leviticus 4:22–24***

The priest would select this animal with no blemishes, lay his hands on it confessing his sins, asking God to accept the animal as an offering for the sins he committed. Then he would slit the animals throat, collect the blood and sprinkle that blood on the sinner, and on the altar where the animal would be burned.

Jesus is that sacrifice for us. He is the perfect sacrifice, with no blemishes, who took away our sin and the punishment for our sins.

***All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)***

All of our sin, past, present, and future was placed on Jesus. He took away all of our sin by His death and through His resurrection He has given us new life, an abundant life, that is forever.

There are sinners all around us who need Jesus. They need to confess their sins, trusting Jesus to forgive them, for what they don't understand and what they cannot see. They will be in a right relationship with God.

***Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 Corinthians 6:1 (ESV)***

**God's grace has changed us and Jesus can change anyone.** I've said this many times, that we are not the same people today that we were when we gave our lives to Jesus. He has shown us our sins, taken away our sins, and made us into different people. There are people all around us, sinners who need Jesus to change their lives.

You and I are working with God, we are His ambassadors, with His message to sinners. We are in a partnership with God. God has partnered with us, made us His ambassadors to tell sinners about His grace.

Have you ever worked hard on something to get it just right, and then it's thrown away? I don't know about you but that makes me feel like I've wasted my time and my energy. Sinners who say that want to be forgiven, but return to their old sins are wasting the grace of God. It's as though Jesus is saying, "you wasted my time on the cross. I died for nothing."

Jesus didn't die for nothing. He died to save sinners from their sin. No matter what sin they've committed Jesus died to take away that sin. He died to give them a new life right now and eternal life in heaven.

We are working with God as His ambassadors to help sinners receive His grace. No one has to do anything other than receive God's grace in Jesus. By confessing we are sinners, turning from our sin and turning toward Jesus, we are receiving God's grace.

When I get a gift and then put it in a desk drawer and never use it, I have received it in vain. The person who gave me the gift could have skipped giving me the gift. It was in vain. They wasted their time and money. When I receive the sweater and wear the sweater, then the gift giver wasn't acting in vain.

When a sinner confesses their sin they are receiving God's grace. They are in a right relationship with God. As they live trusting Jesus for what they cannot see and do not understand then remain in that right relationship with God. They are not living their life in vain, but with purpose and with direction. They are ambassadors of Jesus headed toward eternal life in heaven.

There are people around us who look like they could never change. Jesus sacrificed His life so that they could be forgiven. He took away their sin so that they could be changed from sinners into His ambassadors.

We look at people and we think they will never change. Jesus knows what is needed for them to change, His grace. Jesus knew what was needed for them to change, His grace. No matter the sinner, we are the ambassadors of Jesus and His grace. We are working with God, for His kingdom to come on this earth, in the lives of sinners.

***For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV)***

Paul shares this quote from the prophet Isaiah to declare that there will be a day of judgment.

**Pray that every person will to choose Jesus as their Savior and Lord.** The day of salvation is the day that Jesus returns. On that day when Jesus appears in the sky is the day that all who trust in Jesus will be saved to eternal life in heaven.

Too many people today believe that life on this earth is all that there is. Too many people believe that when they die they will automatically go to heaven. Too many people think that Jesus won't return.

There is a day of salvation when Jesus returns with His angels, in that moment there will be a judgment. On that day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord of all.

Jesus told a parable about this, sharing that a king would put the goats on one side and the sheep on the other. The goats will go to what scripture calls hell. The sheep will go to heaven.

On that day when everyone bows confessing Jesus as Lord, some will be saying thank you Jesus for taking away my sin. While others who are confessing will say, Jesus give me one more chance, don't send me to hell. Forgive me.

But then it will be too late. Because that is the moment of judgment. In an instant sinners will be sent to hell. There is nothing on this earth that can describe hell. For sinners will burn in the lake of fire forever. They will be separated from God for eternity. They will be suffer from diseases and illnesses. They will be in pain and agony that will never cease. They will not receive mercy, but they will receive what they deserve for not trusting in Jesus to take away their sins.

But, those who believed Jesus died as the sacrifice for their sins, who claim His power over death, who trust Him for what they don't see or understand they will go to heaven. They will be with God forever. They will be at peace. They will never suffer disease and illness, pain or suffering. Jesus will be with them for eternity.

We are ambassadors of this kingdom. We have this message to share. It begins with prayer. We need to pray for sinners to choose Jesus. We can pray for the hearts of sinners to be softened. We can pray for sinners to have open minds. We can pray for sinners to repent of their sins.

We are ambassadors of Jesus. We have message to share with people living in a stranger world.