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Series: [The Ministry of Reconciliation](#)

# The Ministry of Reconciliation (3)

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[2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)

(Continuation from 11/03/13)

## The Ministry of Reconciliation

[2 Corinthians 5:18-20 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

<sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

A.T. Robertson, many years ago, said, “The pulpit is the Golgotha on which the preacher gives his life for the reconciliation of the world.” This is our calling.

Now Paul uses a very graphic term to describe the nature of that calling when he says in [verse 20](#), “Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ...we are ambassadors for Christ.”

[2 Corinthians 5:20 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Quite an interesting term, [presbeuane](#) from the verb [presbeuo](#). It’s a very rich term. It is related to the term, though it’s not the exact term, it is related to the term for “**elders**.” But in this case it is the word for ambassador.

[Presbeuo](#) and [presbutes](#) are connected to [presbus](#) which means “old”, which, of course, is connected to [presbuteros](#) which means “elders”, which we are familiar with. It is a word that means ambassador, but it has that idea of being old because in ancient times old and experienced men were usually the ones chosen to be ambassadors of emperors and of kings. It’s a very noble word.

It still has nobility about it when we hear about someone being the ambassador to some country; it has the ring of dignity about it. It conveys a great deal. An ambassador represents his government in all of its character and all of its dignity, in all of its philosophy. To scorn then an ambassador or to mistreat him is to scorn and mistreat the government which he represents. To send him away is to break off relations with the government and the ruler whom he represents. An ambassador speaks holy for his ruler; he is his ruler’s mouthpiece. He never utters his own thoughts. He never offers promises, demands his own things, but

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rather those things of his kingdom. And certainly an ambassador's person and character and virtue lend weight to the authenticity and dignity of his kingdom.

So, an ambassador then is a messenger. An ambassador is a representative. His message, his authority is given to him by his king. And in Paul's day such a duty was as highly respected as it is today, if not more so. Generally speaking when the Roman government would conquer a particular country, they would put into those countries as many as ten ambassadors who would have responsibility for representing their interest and their presence in that conquered land.

So an ambassador is also in a foreign land. He spends his life with those who are strange to him. He has to speak a different language. He has to interface with a different culture. He has to bear a different life style. He has to endure a different tradition. He lives really in a foreign world. And in that foreign world he represents his own king, his own monarch, his own kingdom and he brings the message of his sovereign. Very graphic terms, aren't they, in which to understand our calling.

Here we are in this alien world and we are ambassadors for the kingdom of God. Our citizenship is not here, it is in heaven. We belong to another dimension and we have been called into this role of ambassador to tell the people of this perishing world that they can be reconciled to the King of our Kingdom who desires to make them subjects of His eternal Kingdom and glory.

Now remember, the Apostle Paul was under major assault in Corinth by those who wanted to discredit him. And here he defends himself and he defends his ministry and defends his calling as an ambassadorship for God on behalf of Jesus Christ. He reminds them that like all truly called preachers, he is given the commission of preaching the word of reconciliation; he is the ambassador of God in behalf of Christ. We are ambassadors, [huper](#), **(instead of; or in place of) in behalf of Christ**. In [Ephesians 6:20](#) he refers to himself as an ambassador in chains for he was in chains at that particular point.

[Ephesians 6:20 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> **"for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."**

So Paul says the preacher comes with authority from his King, representing the Kingdom. He comes with a word of reconciliation from the court of heaven to plead with people to be reconciled to God who is King of all the earth. And God is still making such appeals to sinners and He's still using preachers to do it. In [Romans](#), you're familiar, aren't you, with [chapter 10 verses 13](#) and following,

[Romans 10:13-15 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> **for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."**

<sup>14</sup> **How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?**

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**<sup>15</sup> How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"**

God is still preaching the message of reconciliation through the foolishness of preachers. That's what we do. We then are ambassadors for the ministry of reconciliation, preaching the word of reconciliation for the eternal King on behalf of Jesus Christ.

That then is the core of the text. It is about preaching the ministry of reconciliation. It is about being ambassadors. We then are called to preach reconciliation.

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**<sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**