

## “Ambassadors . . .”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/dJFnUX2OlwY>

Ambassadors are senior diplomats with a great deal of responsibility. They are called to be representatives of their sending nation in any situation in which they are deployed; they maintain an embassy which is their “home soil in a foreign land.” Paul describes his ministry to the Corinthians as an “Ambassador for Christ” – and given that his example is commended to us as one to follow, we might consider what it means for us to be described in this way. Paul begins by describing us as a “new creation” – representatives of a new world – as ambassadors, we might consider our calling to be advocates of that new world, seeking to create a glimpse of it in the here and now – “to create a piece of heaven on earth”. This is a Kingdom of reconciliation, described here by Paul as consisting of three elements which you are invited to reflect on further:

**How am I reconciled to God?** The ambassador is a representative of the monarch or leader of their sending nation; they have an intrinsic relationship with that individual. We might notice as Paul begins to speak of ambassadors with a ministry of reconciliation, he begins with our reconciliation with God. We cannot be Christ’s ambassadors in this world unless we nurture and sustain our relationship with Jesus. Everything we are or seek to be as Christian disciples depends first and foremost on our relationship with God. Paul highlights that here – (v18) God reconciled himself to us through Christ; (v20) we are called to be reconciled to God.

**How are we reconciled with one another?** If we are to be a community that speaks of reconciliation and one that claims to be reconciled with God, our message will only have credibility if we demonstrate it to be true. You can’t speak of reconciliation and then live a life that is scarred with division and dispute. Remember that these letters of Paul were first written into real life circumstances – in the earlier chapters of this letter, and Paul’s earlier letter to the Corinthian church, it becomes clear that this was a community in which relationships at times became strained. So Paul appeals to them – you are a new creation, you are called to share a message of re-creation – you have to live as those who show the world what that looks like. You cannot speak to the world of reconciliation if there is division and strife within your lives as a people of God.

**What is our ministry of reconciliation?** If we are a new creation, part of God’s different and better world, how can we offer the world we are in now a glimpse of something different? How can we be the thing we represent? While an embassy might be a physical building, it is more than that, it is the home of a set of values, and it has a purpose, which in our case, is to be part of God’s ministry of reconciliation. Our world needs peacemakers - we need to be a people of peace. Our world needs hope – it needs to see different modelled and displayed within the Jesus community. But we also need to be those who, from these foundations, work for peace and reconciliation in our hurting, broken world. Our “embassies” might be closed at the moment as our physical buildings are not able to function normally, but our work as ambassadors, our call to be reconcilers, is undiminished.

### PRAYER

Creator God, who longs to see this world restored to all that it was once made to be, help me to be an agent of reconciliation amidst the brokenness and struggles that confront me. Draw me closer to you, make me one with every sister and brother in Christ, and help me to be a living example of the hope and healing that the cross of Jesus makes possible. AMEN