Today, we’re going to talk about giving Christ. This is always challenging because it’s about our responsibility before the Lord and the role of being an ambassador for Christ to tell others the Gospel.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Who am I? Few questions shape our lives more profoundly than the answer that we each we give to that one. Of course, most of us don’t begin our mornings by looking in the mirror and consciously asking our reflection, “Who are you?” I don’t recommend us to ask that question out loud, in the presence of our family. They may grow very concerned. “Who are you?” Jason Bourne might ask that question, but most of us don’t. (Laughter!) But every day, whether we’re conscious of it or not, some answer to that question shapes our attitudes, our actions, our relationships, our priorities. Some people get up in the morning and connect their identity to what they do. So, who am I? “I am a student. I’m an engineer at CAT. I am a physician. I am a teacher.” Others connect their identity to family relationships. Who am I? “I am a dad. I’m a mom. I’m a husband. I’m a wife. I’m a brother. I’m a sister. I’m a son. I’m a daughter.” Others connect their identity to a political ideology, to a race, to a sexual orientation, to religious affiliation, or to some hobby, some habit in their life.

So how about you? If someone were to come up to you after the service this morning and ask the question, “Who are you?” what would you say? What is the center of your answer
to that very important question? If you are in Christ, Paul has something very, very important to say about our identity in 2 Corinthians 5.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.

When he uses the word, “according to the flesh,” he means simply on the basis of outward appearances, on the basis of externals. We regard no one and their identity according to outward appearances, according to external matters of their life.

Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Paul says, “Here’s my testimony. When I thought of Christ and who He is, I only thought of what I could see, what I could receive, the externals that I understood.” As followers of Jesus, we no longer think of people’s identity on the basis of externals. We don’t regard people by what we can see with our physical eyes. We don’t regard them whether they are male or female, whether they are Jew or Gentile, whether they are slave or free, whether they are Bears or Packer fans. God does not look at the outside of the person. It’s not as though these externals are completely obliterated and meaningless. It is that they’re not central. They’re not fundamental to who we are. God looks upon the heart. Remember what God said to Samuel about His choice for the next king.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

He says, “Samuel, don’t pay attention to the tallest, the strongest, the most handsome person in your choice of the next king. That’s not what I am looking at, at all, when I consider people’s identity.” Left to ourselves, we will always look at the outward part of man.

Paul admits that there was once a time in his life that he was so consumed by externals that his entire view of Jesus, God’s very Son, was based on externals. As a Pharisee, Paul thought of Jesus as being born under scandalous circumstances and thus was worthy of disdain. Paul thought of Jesus as being uneducated and thus an ignorant man. Paul thought of Jesus as being raised in a dusty, no account village as a carpenter’s son and thus of no importance. Paul thought of Jesus as being so wrong as to be nailed to a cross and thus cursed by God. But everything changed when Paul met Jesus personally on the Damascus Road. His eyes were suddenly opened to Jesus’ true identity. Paul now sees Jesus as this glorious Lord, as this loving Messiah, as this majestic king, as this sufficient Savior!

So the first issue I want to ask you about this morning is: Is your view of Jesus based upon externals, based upon superficial things? Paul would have raised his hand and said, “Yes. I understand. I was once there. That’s all I could see of Jesus because I was blind to His glory.” Paul testifies here in verse 16
Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Our eyes are opened to Jesus’ true identity. God has transformed our eyes to be able to see that which is true of Christ. Let’s read verses 16 and 17 again.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.

He says, “Because our view of Jesus changed, our view of every person has changed. We don’t view anyone just according to these externals. That’s the way of natural man, but that’s not the way of the believer.”

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Something amazing has taken place! That’s the way we view people. It’s on the basis of what God has done in their soul to change them from being impoverished to being rich in Christ. He has changed them from being dead in their sins to being alive unto God. From now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.

If we are outside of Jesus, do we know what God says about who we are? You see, God says if you are outside of Jesus Christ, then you’re a lost sinner who needs His mercy. That’s your core identity. It doesn’t matter whether you are a winner or loser in life. It doesn’t matter whether you dress in really great expensive clothes or rags. It doesn’t matter whether you are a prison inmate or a pastor. It doesn’t matter whether you are using your talents to discover the cure for cancer or squandering your talents on loose living. All these things matter in this world of superficiality and externals. But to God, if a person is outside of Christ, God says that person is like a sheep wandering from God, going his or her own way. And it’s the way of destruction. It’s the way of eternal emptiness and nothingness.

This Gospel truth often offends those who are on the positive side of the external balance; the rich, the successful, the moral, the disciplined. These folks listen to what Scripture says about their core identity outside of Christ and say, “How dare you describe my core identity that way! I have worked hard to be respectable. I’ve lived a very good and moral and upstanding life. Don’t I get any credit for working hard and doing what is right?”

Now Beloved, let me say this. I, as a pastor, can’t see into your heart. But I know God can. And here is what God says. This is God’s testimony about every one of us outside of Christ.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

That’s yours and mine. It fools us as to its true character. It doesn’t just have a little touch of a cold. It’s desperately sick. So God, in love, sent His Son into the world so that our
identity as condemned sinners could be changed. And that’s why there is glory in verse 17.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

If we understood who we were, this verse would be one of the most significant, joyful verses in our lives. We are new now. We’re no longer in that old state with that old identity that was dark and had no future. But now we are in Christ and everything becomes new. Every part of our identity changes when we are in Christ. It’s Christ who transforms who we are in our core identity, from the inside out. And this transformation is all a work of God’s grace. We have no reason to boast about this transformation because none of it is our own doing. All of it is a work of God. And all we can do when we see this transformation that takes place, that transfers us from sinners who were slaves to sin, to children of God who are now alive in Him, people who were guilty and condemned to people who are now clean and accepted by the holy God of creation. All of that is a work of God. None of it is a part of our own doing.

So the rest of this morning, I want to park on one particular change in our identity that appears in verse 20; the believer’s new identity, at least a part of it. And there are many aspects to this new identity, but this is a part of it that Paul emphasizes here in 2 Corinthians 5. As people who are made new in Christ, we are now

**The Believer’s New Identity: Ambassadors for Christ.**

20 Therefore,

In view of God’s work in Christ, in view of the old passing away and the new coming, in view of this ministry of reconciliation that has been applied to us as we placed our faith in Jesus,

20 Therefore, we

We who are believers, we who are in Christ, we who have been made new by Christ,

we are ambassadors for Christ,

Notice that the language Paul uses is not the language of potential. It’s the language of reality. So if you are in Christ, it’s not, “You can become an ambassador for Christ. You can apply. Here’s serious courses you go through. Here are some prerequisites. And then you can become an ambassador for Christ, which is a very lofty position.” That’s not the language Paul uses. He doesn’t use the language of potentiality. He uses the language of reality. He says, “If you are in Christ, this is true of who you are. You are an ambassador for Christ Jesus.”
Clearly, Paul is using this metaphor to communicate something very important about our new identity, about who we are. So let’s think for a moment: What is an ambassador? There’s a definition that I’ve come up with. An ambassador is a person who is sent by his or her own country’s leader to a foreign land to represent and communicate the official positions of his own country. That’s what an ambassador is.

God says, “Jesus is the King over My kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.” If you are in Christ Jesus, Jesus has transferred you from the kingdom of darkness into a new kingdom, the kingdom of His own Son whom He loves. You’re no longer citizens of this world. You are citizens of heaven. “As a citizen of heaven now, I am sending you to a foreign country, to the world in which you were born, physically. But I’m sending you now as My agent to represent Me into this country that you no longer belong to. You are given authority by Me to represent Me in this foreign land. There are some positions about who I am, about what I require, about what I’m offering, that you represent now. That is why you’re in this country. The only reason why you’re in this country now and not in heaven now is because I have made you an ambassador to stay here with a very specific mission. And I’m sending you into this world as an ambassador for Jesus Christ, My Son. I will hold you accountable for the way you represent Me. All ambassadors are held accountable by their home country. And I want you to know as you enter into that, you’re entering into a hostile kingdom. It’s not a kingdom that is friendly to Me. But I want you to know that as you represent Me, I will protect you. I will make sure that you will absolutely make it safely home. Nothing that happens to you in this hostile territory will keep you from arriving safely back home.”

As believers living in this world, God has given us each a commission. It’s a commission to be an ambassador for Christ. We exercise that commission both by the way we live. We still live according to the values of our home country, not the values of this country. So we don’t assimilate. We know that we’re always going to be foreigners because we’re ambassadors. We’re not citizens. But also, it’s by a message that we communicate. That’s how we represent God in this world.

Christian, do you know that you are an ambassador for Christ? Do you know that if you are in Christ, you represent Jesus to this world? That’s who you are. That is core to your identity. If we are in Christ, we may be unfaithful or faithful, but we are ambassadors. When we come to Jesus for the forgiveness of sins to gain eternal life, the hope of heaven, Jesus does not give us a menu of choices regarding what parts of our identity we want to put on our plate and what parts of our identity we want to leave off. We can’t check the box that says, “I am now a child of God.” And leave unchecked the box that says, “I am an ambassador for Christ.” That’s not the way God works in salvation. He brings all of it to our plate and He says, “Here is your new identity.”

Decades ago, when George Shultz was the Secretary of State during the Reagan administration, he kept a large globe in his office. When he interviewed newly appointed ambassadors, he would test them. He would say, “You have to go over to the globe and prove to me that you can identify your country.” They would go over, spin the globe, and then they would put their finger on the country to which they were sent. Every one of
them did this without exception until…There was a man by the name of Mike Mansfield who was appointed ambassador to Japan. And Mansfield spun the globe and put his finger on the United States. He said, “This is my country.” George Shultz would say, “I tell that story now to every future ambassador. Never forget that you’re going over there to that country, but your country is the United States. You are there to represent us. Take care of our interests and never forget that you are representing the best country in the world.”

Friends, if we are in Christ, our country is heaven. You and I represent Jesus to the people of this world. We are not part of this country. This country is passing away. This world is passing away. We are part of another country. And we are right to take care of heaven’s interests, and never ever forget that!

**The Believer’s New Mission: Begging people to be reconciled.**

That is what we do as ambassadors.

18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

You might underline the words, reconciled and reconciliation. That’s who we are in Christ. We are a reconciled people. Five time, he uses the word “reconcile.” God has made our mission very clear. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. He’s entrusted us with a message of reconciliation. Simply stated, we are called to be here to implore people who are not citizens of heaven to become citizens of heaven, to be reconciled to God. “We beg you,” Paul says. “We beg you on behalf of Christ.” We are Christ’s representatives and we are to look around at the people in this world and say, “We beg you. We urge you. We implore you. We plead with you, every persuasion that we can possibly make for you. Be reconciled to God. Eternity is in the balance over this issue.”

God says, “The reason why I left ambassadors in this world is so that the people of this world would be urged, pleaded with, to find peace with Me through My Son.” God sent His Son as a sacrifice for sin so that a way to peace, a way to reconciliation would be made open. So that citizens of this country that is passing away and has no future, a country that is in direct opposition to God Himself and the kingdom of heaven, might have hope of transferring their citizenship over to this better country, over to the worship of the true God.

God, in His Word, is going to describe the people of this world, citizens of this world as enemies of God. There is a truth about that. First, it’s very clear that that’s the way God
describes all of us in our natural condition, people who are yet without Christ. Most of the people in our world don’t realize that they are hostile to God. If you ask them, “Are you hostile to God? Are you angry with God?” They answer, “No, no, no. God and I, we’re on good terms.” But they are wrong about that. You see, one of our messages, and it’s the hard part of our message, is to tell people that what they thought was a good relationship is really no relationship at all. God is deeply offended by their life, by their willingness to go their own way, by their refusal to submit to Him, submit to His Son, to receive His Son as Savior and Lord. God sends ambassadors to this world to tell the citizens of this world first, that they have a problem. That problem is they are separated from God by their internal rebellion against Him.

Now fortunately, He doesn’t just stop there with the message. That wouldn’t be a message of reconciliation. It wouldn’t be a ministry of reconciliation. In our hostility against God, God still loves us and He loves us to such an extent that He sent His only Son to die in our place so that we could be reconciled. As ambassadors for Christ, our mission is to implore people around us, “Be reconciled to God! There is a problem between you and God. You must be reconciled to Him in order to connect to His blessing, in order to connect to His life, in order to know Him, in order to truly worship Him.

When a believer asks the question, “What should I do with my life?” A lot of young people ask that question, but a lot of people who are newly retired ask that question as well. People who are middle aged and kind of having a little bit of a crisis also ask, “What should I do with my life?” 2 Corinthians 5 is so instructive to us. The central mission of our life is to be an ambassador for Christ. It’s to look at our friends and our coworkers and our neighbors and our family members and to simply beg them. It’s to do everything in our power to plead with them to be reconciled to God. We know what the end will be for them if they are not reconciled to God. And we know that because that was our end until we were reconciled. And now we have our eyes opened.

You see, if people are not reconciled to God, they will face a certain and terrible and eternal judgment on the last Day. So God, in His wisdom, makes His appeal to them through us. Why would He do that? Couldn’t God have made His appeal through supernatural means and not just simply through weak means, flawed means like us? God, in His wisdom chose to set reconciled people to be the very ones who would be the instruments of communication of this call, of this message to be reconciled to God.

What qualifies me to be an ambassador, to implore people to be reconciled to God? The answer is we’re qualified to tell others to be reconciled to God by our reconciliation to God. That’s what qualifies us. If we’ve been reconciled, then we can tell others, “I was there.” That’s what Paul does for the rest of his life. “Here’s what I used to think about Christ. I thought of Him only on the basis of these externals, according to the flesh.” He says, “But no longer. And now I want to tell people who Christ is and what He has done for us, and how through Him, we can have new life in Jesus.” You see, we used to be enemies of God too, but God in grace, reconciled us through His Son.
Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s our faith that connects us to God’s blessing in Christ. We have been reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And then he says this.

Romans 5:10 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.

This is who we used to be. We used to be enemies.

I want us to consider how important our faithfulness to the mission that God has given us is. I wrote of this in the devotion book, so it may be familiar to you, those of you who are reading that. Consider for a moment the California fires in November of this past year. They were the deadliest on record. And I think all of us saw some home videos that were terrifying! They were home videos that parents were taking as they were driving through flames with their children in the car. They don’t know whether they are going to make it through the flames or not because the flames were rushing in all around them. The speed at which these fires moved caught many off guard and created a nightmare for them. And some of those videos captured some of the intensity and horror these fires produced in the lives of families. State officials sent out alerts for residents in the path of danger to flee from their homes to a place of safety. So there are people who sent out alerts, but many of those warnings came too late. So those who died in the flames either didn’t receive a timely warning or they didn’t heed the warning that they received.

God, in His Word, sends out such a clear warning that a fire is imminent. It is coming. It is certain. It is swift. It’s a fire of judgment that will come certainly upon every house, every person. And yet, God, in declaring that warning says, “Here is the safe passage. I’ve made a safe passage for you in sending My Son and having Him die for your sins.” He endured the flames of punishment. He was burned up by those flames so that we could be protected. And God calls us now to flee from that certain fire that is closing in around us, and place our lives in the care of Jesus.

When a person finds safety, “I’m free of the fire!” that person naturally looks back at the people who are still endangered by the fire and says, “I need to get as many people out of that flame as I possibly can.” If you escaped from your neighborhood in California and you thought, “There’s still time. I can call my neighbors. I need to call them now because if they wait a moment longer, they will be consumed by the flames that I just narrowly escaped.” Wouldn’t love require us to go out and tell them, to implore them, to plead with them even if they said, “No, I really don’t believe that”? We would say, “No, I saw it. I lived it!” Wouldn’t we implore them for the sake of their soul to be reconciled to God? And the answer of course is yes.

The Believer’s New Message: Reconciliation through Christ
Verse 19 tells us that we have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation. So this message is central to our mission. No one is a faithful ambassador simply by living a good example. There’s a phrase that I wish would be removed from the vocabulary of the Christian. If you have said it, I would say to repent of it and then turn away from it. And it’s a little line that says “Preach the Gospel. If necessary use words.” Have you ever heard that? It is impossible to preach the Gospel without using words! Can I say that clearly enough? We have been given a message of reconciliation. It is a message that God encapsulated inwards for us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He has printed them on a page for us to proclaim.

Now of course, if we proclaim the message without living the life, of course we are denying the very thing we are teaching. We have become hypocrites. So of course, a life is part of our ambassadorship. But it’s not enough. Many believers say, “I’m just trying to live out a good life. They see me go to church every Sunday. They see me mow their lawn or bake them some cookies. I just hope they see my life.” No, they’re not going to see your life. They won’t! They need to hear something more than that. They need to hear the message.

As ambassadors, we don’t make up our own message. We don’t have our own words to speak. We are given this message by the One who sent us. That’s what ambassadors do. They don’t create their message that they give to the country that they’re in. They say, “President, tell me, what’s the message? What do I need to say?” And then they are faithful on the basis of how clearly they communicated that message with persuasion and with a desire to communicate good things that would be persuasive and helpful.

What is this message of reconciliation that God has given us to tell? My observation, and it’s sobering, is that many who attend Bible teaching church’s week after week are unable to communicate the message that God has given us regarding reconciliation. If this is true of those who attend Bible teaching churches, it is an exponentially greater problem for the majority of Christians who attend churches that do not teach the Bible. And Satan is at work to confuse the message. He confuses it with things that are often true, but not central, not core.

Many times I ask people, “If you were to stand before God today and He would ask you, ‘Why should I let you into My heaven?’ What would you say?” It’s one of the questions that is not original to me. I borrowed it. It’s very helpful. Just this week, I talked to a person that I met for the first time. He said, “I don’t know. I don’t know the answer.” I can’t tell you how many times I have talked to people who have been involved for years and years and years in what I know to be Bible-teaching churches, some of them in this church and some of them in other churches, who say, “I don’t know.” Or they give an answer that’s not accurate. It’s not representative of the message God has given us.

I say that for a couple of reasons. First, a lack of clarity on this message may indicate that the person hasn’t embraced, hasn’t received the message of reconciliation. It may. It doesn’t always, but it may. That’s a big concern! It’s a huge concern! So if you’re unable to give a clear explanation of the message of reconciliation, I would urge you to pursue it
with all your might this week, this month. Don’t delay! Say, “I need to know the answer to that question because I’m an ambassador. I’ve been given a message. I need to know what it is so that I can communicate it. I need to know.” I will spend every amount of time—morning, evening and in between—to talk with you if you want to say, “Pastor, I just want to become clear.” That is one of the best questions I’ve ever been asked. I will give any amount of time, I will exhaust myself in talking to folks about that, and I know we have other Elders who will, too. It’s so important! It’s vital!

And secondly, a lack of clarity on this message keeps the church of Jesus from communicating this message to a world that needs it. Understanding and believing the message of reconciliation is central to any person’s ability to be reconciled. Let me talk about it just briefly. Verse 21. I think this encapsulates this message. I know that this explanation is going to be brief, but hopefully it will be really clear and helpful.

21 For our sake he [the Father] made him [the Son] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him [the Son] we [people who are born into this world; born in a state of sin] might become the righteousness of God.

This message begins with the love of God. We had a huge problem that needed fixing. God did not have the problem. It wasn’t that God was lonely or God couldn’t be happy without us. Heaven doesn’t need us in order for God to be satisfied! That’s not true. It’s for our sake. Underline those words. God is the one who reconciles. We are not the ones who create peace between us and God. It’s not us climbing a stair to heaven, or doing some things that creates peace. It’s God reaching down and doing something through His Son that will bring reconciliation. And He does this at great cost to Himself because He loves us. It’s for our sake. What did God do to bring reconciliation?

21 For our sake he [the Father] made him [the Son] to be sin who knew no sin

The message centers upon this person, Jesus. He is God the Son, come in the flesh. God made Christ who never once sinned, to be sin. What does that mean? I believe it simply means that Jesus became our sacrifice for sin. He became guilty of sin when He took our sins upon Himself on the cross. So the Father punished Jesus like we deserve to be punished. Jesus became sin as our representative, and God poured out the punishment that we deserved upon His Son. He made Him to be sin; to experience its guilt, to experience its shame, to experience its punishment. Why would He do that? Jesus didn’t deserve that. He never sinned. He was perfect. He was sinless. Why did He do that?

so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

And here we speak of this great transfer. It’s the sweet exchange that takes place. When a person is in Jesus, our sins are transferred to Jesus. And when Jesus died upon the cross, those sins that are even yet future for us, were laid upon Jesus and Jesus became guilty of those sins, treated as a guilty one, punished for those sins. Isaiah says this:
**Isaiah 53:5-6** But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace [reconciliation], and with his wounds we are healed. 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 [the sin] of us all.

And then there was this sweet exchange. Our sins were laid upon Christ and Christ’s righteousness—who is sinless, who is completely righteous—was placed upon us. That’s the sweet exchange. Our sins on Christ; Christ’s righteousness upon us. So that God now, who treated Jesus as though He were guilty of our sin, treats us as though we have the merits of Jesus’ righteousness. That’s the sweet exchange. That’s the gospel. How can we obtain that exchange? It’s through faith in Jesus. It’s through simply believing in Jesus as the Savior who is willing to make that exchange. It is a free gift. Our message is not that God forgives us because He is kind and He looks past our sins. That is not the message of God in the gospel. Our message as ambassadors is that God forgives us because His justice is fully satisfied by Jesus, the One who acts as our Substitute. Any gospel that is not centered on Jesus as our sin-bearer and as our sacrifice, is not the gospel. It is a false gospel. Don’t believe it!

Now remember that Christ’s death does not mean that everyone is automatically righteous. That’s why we still beg people to be reconciled to God. It is through active faith in Jesus. What must I do to be saved? Paul would say to the Philippian jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) Let me ask you friends: Have you been reconciled to God? It’s the most important question that we could possibly answer for ourselves. Let me close with four applications now.

1. Be reconciled to God!

That’s the first call. There’s no sense in thinking about being an ambassador until we’re first reconciled to God. That’s how this happens. If you’ve not embraced Jesus by faith, please grab hold of Him by faith. He is offering peace with God Himself.

2. Write down three people who you know who need to be reconciled. Pray for them.

Let’s just simply begin to pray that God would open doors for us and that God would begin to soften their heart. Pray that God would provide opportunities.

3. Make a plan to share the message of reconciliation with a friend.

This past week, we brought over a little basket to our neighbor with some fruit and a candle and a book. And what was the book? Well it was Erwin Lutzer’s *How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity With God*. And when we gave it, I said, “Let me talk about this book and why we’re giving it to you.” And you know, they received it so well. And I think our neighbor is going to be interested in talking more about the book. Now sometimes, people don’t receive that well. I understand that. But make some plan, whether it’s inviting a person to church and then asking them over to lunch and just simply asking some bold questions. “Do you have a personal relationship with God?”
Send a text of Scripture saying, “I’ve been praying for you today.” Look for ways to begin spiritual conversations. Make a plan.

4. Share your stories with other believers.

Last week, I was at Living Hope. There is a guy there who was a Sunday School teacher of mine when I was in high school. Can you believe that? His name is Ed Nau. Every time I talk with Ed Nau, from high school to this very present day, he tells me some story of him sharing Christ. I mentioned it in my sermon. I said I wanted to let everybody know in the church that this guy has encouraged me all my life about being an ambassador, about being a witness. Every time I talk to him I think, “Ed does this. I can do this, too.” Ed came up to me last week and said, “Let me tell you a quick story.” I’ll just quickly tell you this as my close.

He said, “I was driving down the road and I saw a hitchhiker. I always pick up hitchhikers.” Now, I never pick up hitchhikers. But Ed always does. (Laughter!) He said, “I’ve picked up hitchhikers all my life, and this person had an aroma.” He used the word “aroma.” He said, “It was unbelievable! It was far greater than any person I’d ever had in my car before. I had to roll down the windows, and it was winter. I asked him, ‘Where are you going?’ He said, ‘I’m going to Florida?’ ‘Oh, what city in Florida?’ So the guy said.”

Ed is telling him the gospel the whole time. He’s talking about the gospel. He finally gets out and Ed says, “Hey, there is a friend of mine who lives in Florida. Look him up. He’d love to talk with you.” So he gave this guy his friend’s address. Ed said, “Two days later, my friend called me up. He said, ‘I want to thank you, a lot, Ed.’” (Laughter!) Ed said, “What do you mean?” His friend said, “Well, at 2:00 in the morning, someone knocked on my door. He told me that you sent him to me and that he could find a place to stay, here. So, I took him in, Ed. I gave him a shower.” Ed said, “Just recently, I went down there to visit my friend. That guy is now a manager at a local fast food restaurant. He is on fire for the Lord, and he is being used by God to share the gospel.”

Now I’m not here to tell you that every time we pick up a hitchhiker, that’s how the story is going to end. But I’m here to tell you that this really fires me up to share the faith, because we don’t know. So share our stories!

Let’s close with reciting this together. Let’s look at verse 20 and let’s recite it out loud together as we close.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.