

SERMON FOCUS: I must not receive the grace of God in vain.

SERMON FUNCTION: The hearer will examine to see if he is living as an ambassador of Christ.

BACKGROUND: This is actually Paul's third letter to the church at Corinth; the second has been lost. They had previously been engaged in a lot of division and had followed false apostles. They had since repented and repaired their relationship with Paul.

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2

INTRODUCTION: If the United States wants to send an ambassador to another nation, we don't want to send just anyone. We want to send someone who will represent our nation well wherever he goes. There is a whole career path of graduate degrees and work as Foreign Service Officers before one can be nominated to serve as an ambassador. Our ambassadors are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. It's a big deal, because you *want* the person to serve the interests of the United States well. It's tempting for many to treat being an ambassador for Christ like being a United States ambassador. They leave it to the professionals. But that's not the way God works. Today we'll see that as the result of receiving new life and a new mind, we have a new purpose which very much includes representing our Lord. Let's look at those now.

MESSAGE:

1. GOD GIVES US NEW LIFE

- a. (17) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"
- b. *Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* -- John 3:3 (CSB)
- c. When you are first born, you are not a slightly improved version of a previous self.
- d. When you are reborn, you are not a slightly improved version of your old self.
- e. EXAMPLE: The old lumber from a barn used to build Berean Baptist.
- f. In the same way that a new baby is a brand new person, one who has received new life in Christ is a brand new person. This brand new person has a new mind, which God also gives us.

2. GOD GIVES US A NEW MIND

- a. (16) *"From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way."*
 - i. In our previous life, we saw and made our judgements with just our five senses.

- ii. With the new mind, we see things from a spiritual perspective.
 - iii. With the new mind, we see events from a spiritual perspective.
 - iv. With the new mind, we see people from a spiritual perspective.
 - v. With the new mind, we see Christ from a spiritual perspective.
- b. We may have known people, things, and even Jesus from a worldly perspective before, but when we receive new life in Him, we see things differently.
 - i. We see Him through the lens of our experience with Him.
 - ii. We see that He keeps His promises.
 - iii. We see Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. We see Him as our King.
- c. The new mind gives us a different way of looking not only at Christ, but at the world in which we live.
 - i. Instead of being hopeless, we have hope.
 - ii. Instead of fear, we have faith.
 - iii. Instead of hate, we have love.
 - iv. Instead of enemies, we see people as those for whom Christ died.
- d. When we receive our new mind, we also receive a new purpose.

3. GOD GIVES US A NEW PURPOSE

- a. (20) *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, ‘Be reconciled to God.’”*
- b. Our purpose is to be Christ’s representatives in the world, calling for them to be reconciled to God.
- c. As ambassadors, the following applies to us:
 - i. We are citizens of Christ’s Kingdom representing Him here on earth.
 - ii. We have the obligation to present ourselves well in this world.
 - iii. As ambassadors, we have a message, *“Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.”* (6:2)
 - iv. This is not our home. We will go to our home one day.
 - v. We must keep the highest ethical standards, because we are in service to our King.
 - vi. We have a royal call and purpose.
 - vii. When our purpose is done, we will be called home. (Abe)
- d. We also know a really simple way to share the message of Christ with those around us.

4. THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLE FORM (adapted from Dr. James Merritt).

- a. Bad News: We are all sinners separated from God.
- b. Worst News: There is nothing we can do about our sin problem.
- c. Good News: Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
- d. Best News: Salvation and eternal life are a free gift, but you must receive it.