

Greetings Salem,

II Corinthians 5:20 says, "Therefore, we are Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us." I want to think today on what it means to be an ambassador for Jesus. An ambassador's responsibility is to deliver the messages of the home country to the residing country. He or she is there to represent his country for better or worse. How the ambassador portrays himself or herself is what the residing country will think about the home country. If he or she is arrogant, then it stands to follow that the residing country will think that way about everyone who lives in his home country. In the same way, if the ambassador is generous, then the residing country will likely view everyone as generous. The burden of an ambassador is to represent his home country well in his residing country. I want to think about how we are ambassadors of Christ in this foreign land of this world. My prayer is that all of us can be an ambassador of light in the dark, sick world we live in.

In this verse, I want to make note of the word "We." He does not say I or you, but we. Implying that this is something we all do together. It is something that everyone who calls Jesus as their Savior should be participating in. All of us. Often, as I have worked in ministry, I have found that some Christians believe that the work of an ambassador is only for the pastor, a missionary, or an elder. Sometimes Christians believe Jesus could not possibly want me, an ordinary layperson, for an ambassador. However, the more that all of us can testify to what Jesus has done, the more that people will see that testimony and believe that Jesus is the Christ. In addition, the word "we" is instructions to pastors, missionaries, and elders as it says that we do not do this alone. We too must work together to advance God's kingdom.

This is why I am so glad for what Salem has been doing over the past few months to work together as Christ's ambassadors. From working with Ellen Hopkins Elementary by donating winter gear and supplies, to assisting the Inyu and Amuri families in a Habitat for Humanity build to provide them their new homes, to our tremendous work in Nicaragua, the Salem "we" has been powerful testimony of the gospel. Moreover, we have been a blessing to our missionary partners locally, regionally, and around the world by giving 13.7% of the budget to these causes. This has been a good, longstanding tradition at Salem. I am also a witness to the many faithful people who serve our kids every Wednesday evening.

We also need to be ambassadors to each other. We have been a source of support to Seth & Nikki as they strive to struggle well. In addition, as Darren mentioned in the congregational meeting, we are grateful to have the opportunity to pray for the needs of the congregation and praise God for what He is doing in

your lives. We invite you to pray for us as well. Salem, you have also been an ambassador through your giving. At the congregational meeting, I was so encouraged to see the report that Dale gave that we are able with faith and wisdom to grant a 5% increase in the budget this year. Thanks for your faithful support.

Of course, our work is not possible without the working of a gracious God who supplies our every need. His strength and power are so evident in these examples and many more. Keep up the good work of an ambassador.

Doug Sikkink
Elder