

Blending Conference - Cleveland, Ohio
April 3-5, 2026

THE GATES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Message 6

**Ambassadors of Christ Commissioned
with the Ministry of Reconciliation**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:16—6:13; 7:2-7; Eph. 6:19-20

I. The ministers of the new covenant are ambassadors of Christ—2 Cor. 5:20a; Eph. 6:20:¹

- A. An ambassador of Christ is one who represents God, the highest authority in the universe:
 - 1. God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ—Matt. 28:18.
 - 2. Jesus is the Christ—the Lord of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords—the highest authority—Acts 2:36; 10:36; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16.
 - 3. The Lord needs some ambassadors on earth who are qualified to represent Him—Matt. 28:19.
 - 4. A new covenant minister is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to represent the highest authority—2 Cor. 3:6; 5:20.
- B. As an ambassador of Christ, Paul was “the acting God”—2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12; 2:10; 10:1; 11:2:
 - 1. Paul was one with Christ to be the acting God in comforting the believers—1:3-4.
 - 2. Paul conducted himself in the singleness of God, for he was an imitator of the simple and lived God—v. 12.
 - 3. Paul’s coming to the Corinthians was the coming of God as grace—vv. 15-16.
 - 4. Paul forgave a particular matter in the person of Christ—2:10.
 - 5. Paul entreated the believers through the meekness and gentleness of Christ—10:1.
 - 6. Paul was jealous over the saints with the jealousy of God—11:2.

II. As ambassadors of Christ, the new covenant ministers carry out the ministry of reconciliation—2 Cor. 5:18-20; 6:1:²

- A. The apostles were authorized by Christ to represent Him to do the work of reconciliation—5:18, 20.
- B. The ministry of reconciliation is not only to bring sinners back to God but also to bring believers absolutely into God and to make them absolutely one with Him.
- C. Until we are wholly one with the Lord, being in Him and allowing Him to be in us absolutely, we will need the ministry of reconciliation—1 John 4:13.³
- D. Two steps are required for men to be fully reconciled to God:
 - 1. The first step is to reconcile sinners to God from sin—2 Cor. 5:19:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for our sins that we might be forgiven—1 Cor. 15:3.
 - b. Originally, we were not only sinners but also enemies of God; through the redeeming death of Christ, God has justified us, the sinners, and reconciled us, His enemies, to Himself—Rom. 5:10a; Col. 1:21-22.
 - c. This is the objective aspect of Christ’s death; in this aspect He bore our sins on the cross that they might be judged by God upon Him for us—1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:11-12.
 - 2. The second step is to reconcile believers living in the natural life to God from the flesh—2 Cor. 5:20:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for us, the persons, that we might live to Him in the resurrection life—vv. 14-15.
 - b. This is the subjective aspect of Christ’s death; in this aspect He was made sin for us to be judged and done away with by God that we might become the righteousness of God in Him—v. 21.
 - c. In the objective aspect of His death Christ bore our sins; in the subjective aspect He became sin—1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21.
 - d. Because we are still separated from God and because we are not fully one with God and altogether in harmony with Him, we need the second step of reconciliation.

- e. The subjective aspect of the death of Christ needs to be applied to our situation and to our natural life—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:24.
- f. By the two aspects of His death, Christ fully reconciles God’s chosen people to God—Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19-20.

III. We need to work together with God by a life (not by any gift) that is all-sufficient and all-mature, able to fit all situations, able to endure any kind of treatment, to accept any kind of environment, to work in any kind of condition, and to take any kind of opportunity for the carrying out of our ministry—John 14:6a; Acts 27:22-25; 28:3-6, 8-9:⁴

- A. To work together with God means that we are in God; only a person who is in God can bring others into God; our closeness to God is the measure of the result of our work—2 Cor. 5:20; 2:10.
- B. If we have been fully saved and have an all-fitting life, then any situation or circumstance is right for us to minister life to others—Phil. 1:20; 4:22; 2 Tim. 4:2a; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.
- C. If we would have an all-fitting life, we need an enlarged heart, a heart to embrace all of God’s people—2 Cor. 6:11-13; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10; 1 Kings 4:29:
 - 1. To be enlarged by growing and maturing in life is equivalent to being fully reconciled to God.
 - 2. With an enlarged heart we are able to embrace all believers regardless of their condition, and with an opened mouth we are free to speak to all believers frankly concerning the real situation into which they have been misled—Matt. 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2.

IV. We need to be enlarged to have the intimate concern of the ministering life—2 Cor. 7:2-3; 1 Thes. 2:8; Phil. 2:19-20:⁵

- A. How fruitful we are does not depend upon what we are able to do, but on whether or not we have an intimate concern—1 Cor. 12:31b; 9:22; Matt. 9:12-13.
- B. A ministering life is a life that warms up others by cherishing them in the humanity of Jesus to nourish them in the divinity of Christ—Eph. 5:29; Prov. 25:15.
 - 1. Paul was very human and emotional in his ministering of life—2 Cor. 7:2-7.
 - 2. Paul is a pattern of one who cherished the saints in the humanity of Jesus and nourished them in the divinity of Christ—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; Acts 20:19-20, 27, 31.

V. Ephesians 6:19-20 says, “And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak”:

- A. Paul was asking the believers to pray that the word would be given to him; he desired to open his mouth with boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel; Paul needed both the word and the boldness to declare it.⁶
- B. The mystery of the gospel is Christ and the church for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose; this mystery implies the entire New Testament economy:
 - 1. Christ is the mystery of God, and the church is the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3-4.
 - 2. Both Christ and the church are for God’s economy, which also is a mystery—vv. 8-11.
 - 3. All these mysteries are related to the gospel—6:19-20.
- C. “I believe that the Lord intends for a gospel preaching atmosphere to be developed in all the local churches. Pray for such an atmosphere to become prevailing”—*Life-study of Ephesians*, msg. 66, pp. 555-556:
 - 1. We need to give full messages on the high things concerning God’s economy; let us tell the unbelievers of God’s eternal intention.
 - 2. Do not underestimate their ability to understand; they may understand much more than you expect; this kind of gospel preaching will draw unbelievers to the Lord.
 - 3. Our burden is to make known the mystery of the gospel; pray about this; pray that the Lord will give us utterance and open our mouths with boldness to teach and to preach the mystery of the gospel; we all need to declare the gospel in this uplifted way.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

AN AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST

The apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ. An ambassador is one who represents the highest authority. The United States government has many ambassadors sent out to many different countries. These ambassadors represent the government of the United States. The highest authority in this universe is God, and God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ (Matt. 28:18). God has appointed Christ to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14). Today Jesus is the Christ, the Lord of all, the highest authority. For this highest authority there is the need of some ambassadors on this earth who are qualified to represent Him. The Lord's ministry is not a matter of merely being a preacher or a teacher but of being one who is authorized with the heavenly authority, representing the highest authority in the whole universe. First, we need to be captured by Christ, and eventually, we need to become a representative of Christ on this earth to deal with the earthly nations as an ambassador.

Some Christians have the title "Ambassador of Christ" printed on their witnessing card along with their name. Many years ago I had a card that said "Bondslave of Christ—Witness Lee." At that time I did not dare to entitle myself an ambassador of Christ, but now I have a fuller realization that we all have to be ambassadors of Christ on this earth. We are not only the captives of Christ. Eventually, we have to be the ambassadors of Christ representing Him on this earth for His interests...The highest authority is Christ as the Head, and we as members of the Body have to be representatives of the Head. As representatives of the Head, we are ambassadors. (*CWWL, 1967*, vol. 2, "An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit," ch. 6, pp. 171-172)

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

In [2 Corinthians 5:18-30] Paul goes on to speak of the ministry of reconciliation: "But all things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; how that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not accounting their offenses to them, and putting in us the word of reconciliation. On behalf of Christ, then, we are ambassadors, as God entreating through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God." We need to read these verses very carefully. The word "then" in verse 20 is a connecting word joining verse 20 with the preceding verses. According to verse 20, the ambassadors of Christ are one with God; they are like God, and they entreat as God. Their word is God's word, and what they do is God's doing. Furthermore, the words "on behalf of Christ" mean representing Christ. As those who represent Christ, the apostles were ambassadors of Christ. Today an ambassador is a person authorized to represent his government. In like manner, the apostles were authorized by Christ to represent Him to do the work of reconciliation.

Paul's composition in 5:20 is unusual. After saying "we are ambassadors," he says, "as God entreating through us." Paul seems to be saying, "We are ambassadors of Christ, and we are doing a reconciling work. This is like God entreating you through us. We are one with Christ and one with God. Christ is one with us, and God also is one with us. Therefore, God, Christ, and we, the apostles, are all one." The ministry of the new covenant is a ministry in which God, Christ, and the ministers are one.

Paul's word in verse 20 is strong and emphatic. He says, "We are ambassadors, as God entreating through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God." God, Christ, and the apostles were one in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation.

TWO STEPS OF RECONCILIATION

Paul's word in verse 20 about being reconciled to God is not directed to sinners; it is directed to the believers in Corinth. These believers had already been reconciled to God partially. However, they had not been fully reconciled to Him. It would not be true to say that the Corinthian believers had not been reconciled to God at all. In 1 Corinthians chapter one Paul refers to them as saints, as those who had been called by God into the fellowship of His Son. Therefore, they surely had been reconciled to God to some degree. Perhaps they had been halfway reconciled to Him.

The books of 1 and 2 Corinthians show that the believers at Corinth, after being reconciled to God partially, still lived in the flesh, in the outward man. Between them and God there was the separating veil of the flesh, of the natural man. This veil corresponds to the veil inside the tabernacle, the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, not to the veil at the entrance to the Holy Place. The Corinthian believers may have been in the Holy Place, but they were not in the Holy of Holies. This means

they were still separated from the place where God is. Therefore, they had not been reconciled to God in full.

In verse 19 it is the world that is to be reconciled to God. In verse 20 it is the believers, those who have already been reconciled to God, who are to be reconciled to Him further. This clearly indicates that there are two steps for people to be fully reconciled to God. The first step is as sinners to be reconciled to God from sin. For this purpose Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3) that they may be forgiven by God. This is the objective aspect of Christ's death. In this aspect He bore our sins on the cross that God might judge them upon Him for us. The second step is as believers living in the natural life to be reconciled to God from the flesh. For this purpose Christ died for us—the persons—that we may live to Him in resurrection life (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This is the subjective aspect of Christ's death. In this aspect for us He was made sin to be judged and done away with by God that we may become the righteousness of God in Him. By the two aspects of His death He has fully reconciled God's chosen people to God...

FULL RECONCILIATION

Although the Corinthians had been saved and reconciled to God halfway, they still lived in the flesh; that is, they lived in the soul, the outward man, the natural being. The veil of the flesh, of the natural man, still separated them from God. This means that their natural being was a separating veil. Therefore, they needed the second step of reconciliation. In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul was working to accomplish this second step. He was working on the Corinthians to cut the veil of the flesh asunder, to crucify their natural life, to consume their outward man. What the Apostle Paul was doing in 1 and 2 Corinthians was to cleave the separating veil of the flesh so that the believers at Corinth could enter into the Holy of Holies.

The blessings of God can be found in the Holy Place, but God Himself is in the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place are the blessings of the Spirit, the lampstand, and the incense altar. But in the Holy Place there is not the direct presence of God. In order to have God Himself, we must be reconciled further and come into the Holy of Holies. We must take the second step of reconciliation to be brought into the presence of God. This is full reconciliation. This reconciliation brings us not only out of sin, but also out of the flesh, the natural man, the natural being. Then we are brought to God and become one with Him. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 37, pp. 321-325)

WORKING BY AN ALL-FITTING LIFE

In [2 Corinthians] 6:1 Paul says, "And working together with Him, we also entreat you that you do not receive the grace of God in vain." "And" here indicates a continuation. In the last part of chapter five (vv. 16-21) the apostle told us that they, as the ministers of the new covenant, are commissioned with the ministry of reconciliation for the Lord's new creation. From this verse to the end of chapter seven, he continues by telling us how they work. They work together with God by a life (not by any gift) that is all-sufficient and all-matured, able to fit all situations, able to endure any kind of treatment, to accept any kind of environment, to work under any kind of condition, and to take any kind of opportunity, for the carrying out of their ministry...

I would say that in 6:1—7:16 we can see that the apostles work together with God by an all-fitting life. This portion of 2 Corinthians does not indicate that they work together with God by an all-sufficient power or by an all-wonderful gift. Today's Christians, however, mainly devote their attention to power and gifts. Some may inquire, "Do you have power? Don't you know that Dr. So-and-so is a powerful preacher? What gifts do you have? Oh, Dr. So-and-so is very gifted." But among Christians today there is very little talk about life or about living. Those who do not have genuine power may pretend to be powerful. For example, in a presumptuous way they may pray, "In the mighty name of Jesus I bind all the demons!" But it is most interesting that in 2 Corinthians Paul does not talk like this. Actually he says very little about either gifts or power. As used in 2 Corinthians, gift does not refer to miraculous gifts, and power does not have the connotation commonly given by Christians today. If you read carefully through the entire book of 2 Corinthians, you will see that Paul's concentration is on life. Hence, in 6:1—7:16 we see that he worked together with God by an all-fitting life.

Being a minister of the New Testament does not depend on gifts or power; rather, it depends on having a life which is able to fit into any kind of situation. To be sure, in 6:1-13 the word all-fitting is not used. But if you consider what is contained in these verses, you will see that they describe a life which certainly is all-fitting. As we shall see in a later message, here Paul mentions eighteen qualifications, three groups

of items, and seven kinds of persons. Paul, therefore, was qualified to be a minister of the new covenant in all these ways.

In 6:1-13 Paul does not list among the qualifications such things as philosophy or psychology. If we would be proper ministers of the new covenant, we must have the eighteen qualifications mentioned by Paul and three groups of items, and we need to be seven kinds of persons. Only in this way can we be qualified to be a co-worker with God for His New Testament ministry.

In 6:1 Paul does not say that the apostles work together with one another. No, he says that they were working together with God. The apostles were not only commissioned by God with their ministry, but they also worked together with Him. They were God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9). Paul and his co-workers were working together with God. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 39, pp. 339-342)

THE INTIMATE CONCERN OF THE MINISTERING LIFE

What we have in 7:2-16 is the intimate concern of the ministering life. Every believer who loves the Lord and who wants to come up to God's standard should become a minister of the new covenant. As long as we are believers in Christ, we should be New Testament ministers, no matter whether we happen to be apostles, evangelists, elders, or deacons. Such a minister is a person who supplies Christ to others for the building up of the church, His Body. When I was young I heard that every believer should be a preacher of the gospel. Now we see that we should be not merely gospel preachers, but ministers of the new covenant, those who minister Christ as life so that the church may be built up as the Body of Christ. This ministry should be carried out not only by apostles and elders; it should be carried out by everyone in the church.

The goal of the Lord's recovery today is to recover this ministering of Christ by all the believers so that the church may be built up. This understanding is based on Paul's word in Ephesians 4, where he says that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers perfect the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ. For us all to be church builders, to minister Christ for the building up of the church, we need a ministering life. In order to be new covenant ministers we need such a ministering life. We need to live a life of ministering Christ to others for the church...

A FRUITFUL LIFE

The ministering life we see in 2 Corinthians is a fruitful life. We may be "spiritual," "holy," and "victorious" and yet not be fruitful. There are problems with that kind of spirituality, holiness, and victory. It is questionable whether those qualities are true and genuine. Is it not unusual that one could be "spiritual" without being fruitful? According to the Bible, being spiritual is for the purpose of being fruitful. In the Gospel of John the Lord does not tell us to be spiritual, holy, and victorious. Rather, in John 15 He charges us to bear fruit, even to bear much fruit, abiding fruit. This is to live a ministering life...

THE NEED FOR GENUINE CONCERN

Some mothers seem to be short of wisdom. Yet even though they are not clever, they raise their children in a very good way because they have a loving concern for them. Such mothers have a tender, intimate concern for their children. On the contrary, some step-mothers may be knowledgeable, gifted, and clever; however, they lack the necessary concern for the children. In taking care of children, what is most important is not knowledge or ability—it is an intimate concern. The same is true in taking care of churches or in shepherding the saints. What is needed is the intimate concern of a ministering life. The brothers who hold conferences with churches must have a genuine concern for the churches. They should not merely be interested in giving excellent messages as a display of their knowledge, talent, or capability.

When I was young, I was somewhat troubled by chapter seven of 2 Corinthians. I regarded the Bible as a sacred, classical book, and it seemed to me that 2 Corinthians 7 was not a classical writing. I could understand why chapters like Romans 5 and Romans 8 were in the Bible, but I did not know why a chapter like 2 Corinthians 7 was included. In verse 6 Paul says that he was encouraged by the coming of Titus, and in verse 7 he goes on to say, "And not only by his coming, but also by the encouragement with which he was encouraged over you, informing us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal on my behalf, so that I rejoiced the more." It seemed to me that such a verse should not be in the Bible. Have you ever checked why 2 Corinthians 7 is in the New Testament? If you have never thought about it, this may indicate that you are somewhat careless in reading the Word. I can testify that the more attention I pay to this chapter, the more I love it, and the more I learn from it and am affected by it.

This chapter reveals that we need an intimate concern. If we have ability to carry on a work but lack an intimate concern, our work will be fruitless. What is needed to establish a good family life and church life is intimate concern. How fruitful we are, how much fruit we bear, does not depend on what we are able to do. It depends on whether or not we have an intimate concern.

Brother Nee told us that in preaching the gospel we need to have a genuine concern for others. As long as we have the proper concern for people, we are well on our way to be qualified to be used of God for their salvation. A very good testimony of this is in the book *Seen and Heard*. In that book, the writer, James M'Kendrick, tells us of standing in front of a group of unbelievers and weeping, without saying a word. Nevertheless, a number were saved, for he had a deep concern. Eloquence, gift, and power can never touch people as deeply as your concern for them...

WARMING OTHERS

In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul was very emotional. In verse 13 he says that he “rejoiced more abundantly over the joy of Titus.” J. N. Darby points out that it is not possible to render exactly in English the Greek idiom for “more abundantly.” Paul was very human and emotional in his ministering of life. Paul was so emotional because his concern was so deep and intimate. Without this kind of concern, we could never be abundantly rejoicing in the way Paul was. Instead, we may be as cold as a freezer, altogether lacking in concern for the saints. Instead of warming up others, we make them even colder. Nothing can grow when it is in such a frozen condition. We need the weather of spring to come to thaw us out and warm up our life. Once again there is a need for a ministering life. Do you know what a ministering life is? It is a life that warms up others. Learn to warm others. This is to have an intimate concern for them.

Many have read 2 Corinthians 7 without touching the matter of Paul's intimate concern. If we do not have this kind of concern for others, we shall not be fruitful. If I would minister life to the saints, I must have a genuine concern for them, a concern that is emotional, deep, and intimate. I must be so concerned that, at times, I may appear to others to be foolish or beside myself...

We all need to be enlarged in our hearts, reconciled fully to God. Then we shall have a life that is a ministering life, a life that can bear much fruit. Only the ministering life enables us to bear fruit. Fruit-bearing is the issue of a ministering life. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 44, pp. 379-386)

Concerning the Apostle

That Utterance May Be Given to Him

In [Ephesians 6:19] Paul continues, “And on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel.” The Greek word rendered *utterance* also means word, speech, expression. Paul was asking the believers to pray that the word would be given to him. He desired to open his mouth with boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel. Paul needed both the word and the boldness to declare it.

The mystery of the gospel is Christ and the church for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. Some Christians preach a gospel in which there is no mystery. But Paul declared the mystery of the gospel. This mystery implies the entire New Testament economy. Christ is the mystery of God, and the church is the mystery of Christ. Both Christ and the church are for God's economy, which also is a mystery. All these mysteries are related to the gospel.

I believe that the Lord intends for a gospel preaching atmosphere to be developed in all the local churches. Pray for such an atmosphere to become prevailing. In our gospel meetings we must do more than sing and tell others that Christ can meet their need for satisfaction. On the contrary, we need to give full messages on the high things concerning God's economy. Let us tell the unbelievers of God's eternal intention. Do not underestimate their ability to understand. They may understand much more than you expect. Surely this kind of gospel preaching will draw unbelievers to the Lord.

In our gospel meetings we need to both preach and teach. We should teach in a preaching atmosphere. Surely the saints will want to bring their relatives and friends to this kind of meeting. Our burden is to make known the mystery of the gospel. Pray about this. Pray that the Lord will give us utterance and open our mouths with boldness to teach and to preach the mystery of the gospel. We all need to declare the gospel in this uplifted way. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, msg. 66, pp. 555-556)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967*, vol. 2, “An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit,” ch. 6.
2. *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msgs. 14, 37-36, 39, 44.
3. *Life-study of Ephesians*, msg. 66.

¹ The Ministry Magazine, vol. 7, no. 5, June/July 2003, “Crystallization-study of 2 Corinthians,” msg. 9, pp. 199-200.

² The Ministry Magazine, vol. 7, no. 5, June/July 2003, “Crystallization-study of 2 Corinthians,” msg. 9, p. 200.

³ Crystallization-study Outlines, “Crystallization-study of Exodus (4),” msg. 7, Roman Numeral III.

⁴ The Ministry Magazine, vol. 7, no. 5, June/July 2003, “Crystallization-study of 2 Corinthians,” msg. 10, pp. 223-225.

⁵ The Ministry Magazine, vol. 7, no. 5, June/July 2003, “Crystallization-study of 2 Corinthians,” msg. 10, p. 225.

⁶ Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 66, pp. 555-556.