



In Nomine Jesu

2026 MCN Sunday Sermon—2 Corinthians 5:16-21—Christ's Ambassadors

Introduction:

The phrase “He who dies with the most toys wins,” while attributed to Malcom Forbes¹ probably in the 1980’s, is a theme that seems to have always been a part of humanity in every culture. There is even a *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode titled, “The Most Toys.”² The worldly understanding of what it means to be human is that we are mere mortals who easily die and cease to exist or we slip into a spirit world which we convince ourselves is a “much better place.” As mere mortals we believe we have no supernatural abilities and responsibilities. Our bodies belong only to this world, so ... get on with gathering toys and enjoying experiences because it is soon over.

Then Paul shows up and says, “Stop it.” Quit focusing on our earthly condition.

- I. “Regard no one according to the flesh.” ESV
 - i. NIV “from a worldly point of view.”
 - ii. NLT “from a human point of view”
 - iii. KJV “no man after the flesh”
 - iv. NASB “no one by the flesh”
Σάρξ: flesh, fleshly, life, body, bodily, bodily condition, earth
- b. Humans try to manage the fear that comes while only thinking according to the flesh by:
 - i. Believing there is nothing after death so go for the toys.
 - ii. Trusting that we are going to be reincarnated and start over.
 - iii. And (a favorite of Christians and non-Christians everywhere) believing that all good people go to heaven which is a nice place where we will get to do what we love the most, golf, etc.
- c. Paul says, stop thinking this way.
 - i. First, we are not mere mortals. We are eternal beings. “Mere mortals” is a phrase often used in movies where the immortal villain mocks humanity. CS Lewis in “The Weight of Glory” says, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.”

¹<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902130231/https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/opinions/wp/2016/10/24/he-who-dies-with-the-most-toys-now-loses/>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Most_Toys#cite_note-3

- ii. Second, yes, these bodies can die, but all will rise from the dead. “There will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.” Acts 24:15
Judgment Day is real. Matthew 24-25. Some will live for eternity in glory and others apart from all that is good.
 - iii. Finally, what makes it possible for people to live for eternity in glory has nothing to do with how good we are or how hard we try to be good. Paul in our text says, “All this is from God, who through Christ **reconciled** us to himself” vs. 18.
- d. Reconcile: Originally an exchange of coins of equal value. Καταλλάσσω. Vs. 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. Exchange Christ’s perfection for sin so we become perfect. Reconciliation = Forgiveness in Solid Decl. 567.30. To alter, exchange. Restoration of original understanding between people. In NT, used only in the sense of to reconcile. Men reconcile with one another. In non-Christian religion, reconciliation is the work of man. God acts unilaterally in Christ. Reconciliation is his gift.
- II. The text says that there is good news in this message that there are not mere mortals who simply die. God, in Christ, reconciled **the world** to himself, and entrusted this message of reconciliation to those of us with faith. (vs. 19) “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” (vs. 20) **The world** needs to hear this good news.
- III. Those with faith in Christ are different from others. New hearts that don’t fear God or judgment. In this way, Christians have superpowers that are given by God. The Spirit enables us to love unconditionally, to share God’s love even when it is uncomfortable or risky, etc. “God is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work” (Phil 2:13).
- IV. We look at *the world* with this eternal lens.
 - a. Family.
 - b. Neighbors.
 - c. Those far away without the opportunity to know this truth about what will happen after death.
- V. MCN, like many organizations, began with an idea to be of service to God by sending ambassadors to serve in cross-cultural ministries. When looking at future work, someone asked, “What is it we can do now?” Someone else suggested MCN “go after low hanging fruit.” In the first year of MCN’s work, this resulted in sending five people to serve in three different countries. It turned out that the “low hanging fruit” was nothing more than God’s open door to serve in His mission. Today MCN has 50 missionaries serving in 22 different countries as God continues to open doors to missionary service abroad.

- a. What about our congregation? Is there low-hanging fruit (and by that we mean God's open door) that we are ignoring?
 - b. What about me personally? What open door am I ignoring where I can be an ambassador of reconciliation?
- VI. Sarah Huhn, who serves in Taiwan at Concordia Middle School, wrote in a recent newsletter that she overheard a conversation between 7th graders who had a lesson on the crucifixion. One asked, "Jesus died... so is that the end of the Bible then?". Another answered, "No, there must be more because He came alive again!"³

This is the good news that death is not the end of the story. Just as Jesus "came alive again," so will we. We are pilgrims of eternity that understand that there is no winning in gathering toys. Christ has already won for us. ***The world*** needs to hear this good news that in Christ, we are reconciled to God.

Please pray with me: Heavenly Father, I will live today in time, but know I am an eternal being. While the needs of my body cry out, remind me that by virtue of my baptism, I am Your ambassador of reconciliation. Invade my heart so that I see opportunities You give to share the good news of Your reconciliation in Christ with those near and far. In His name we pray this. Amen.

Notes: This sermon outline is presented in outline form that hopefully makes it possible for the preacher to adapt content as fits his own style of proclamation. The law we see in the temptation for humanity to forget that we are eternal beings. We try managing God out of our lives so we can live comfortably in the flesh. We can't avoid the truth that there is a God and a judgment day. Christians view eternity without fear because we were reconciled/justified before God. Reconciliation in 5:19 is understood as justification. Romans 5:10 "For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" Then as those who by faith trust in our Savior, we become ambassadors of reconciliation.

³ Sarah Huhn, Serving in Taiwan Newsletter, December 2025.