

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG42 – Ambassadors for His Kingdom

We are in this world as ambassadors for Christ. We are messengers from His Kingdom. Our involvement in the world should be to serve His purpose, which is to beg people to be reconciled to God, the Father, through Christ the Lord, and to infuse the principles of God and His coming Kingdom into this age. I want to study this concept a little bit with us. We will have to really understand our salvation clearly and understand how He has commissioned us as these ambassadors.

I want to begin in Philippians the third chapter, starting at verses 20-21. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." Now that in itself would be fun to get in and unpack a little bit more about this transformation of our bodies from the humble state into the state of His glory. But we'll leave that for another podcast.

I want to also read this Scripture out of the James Moffatt translation of the Bible, because I think it gives us a little nuance of understanding. He says, "But we are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body that belongs to our lowest estate till it resembles the body of his Glory, by the same power that enables him to make everything subject to himself." So he uses this concept that we are a colony of heaven. The other version, which is the New American Standard, talks about the fact that our citizenship is in heaven. I like both aspects of this, because they play together to really, I think, bring a clarity of what we're talking about. Our citizenship is in heaven, and yet we are here on this earth; but we recognize that we are here as a colony from heaven. We are heaven's colony here in this earth.

Now in order to get this understanding, again, we'll have to look a little deeper into the idea of salvation and how it works. But first I want to read out of Second Corinthians 5, starting at verses 18-20. It says, "Now all of these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Here again in Corinthians, Paul is giving us this idea about being ambassadors. Now we'll read a Scripture that shows this was very real to Paul. He saw himself as an ambassador. So what was going on in the process of our salvation is that we were being reconciled unto God the Father, through Christ; and then this same process of reconciliation was handed off to us. It's that idea that is being termed as ambassadors of Christ. We know that in Christ, we are reconciled to God. We are talking about the basics of our salvation, and it is important that people really understand the dynamics of what happens to an individual in salvation. I think too often, we limit it to an idea that once we receive Christ, our sins are forgiven, and that's sort of what it's all about. We pray the sinner's prayer; and by praying that, we ask Christ into our life, our sins are forgiven, and we from that point have eternal life.

But what is actually taking place here is the fact that we are living in this earth. We are part of this earth. We were born into this world. We live in the world, and in the process of living in the world as unsaved humans, our spirit is dead to God. Our soul is alive, our mind is alive, we function as human beings here; we can live our lives, but we are not reconciled. Our spirit is no longer alive to God. This is what transpired in the Garden. Remember God said, "If you eat of the fruit of the tree, you're going to die." And Satan comes along and says, "Well, see, you're not going to die." And they ate the fruit and it seemed like they didn't die.

What died was their spirit. Their spirit was given by God. It was a part of Him, and it was infused into the creation of man and woman. And by virtue of that, it says that man became a living soul. The life came, the soul was born, the mind was born, out of this infusion of the spirit into the creation of man and woman. So when they sinned, what died? Well, it was that spirit. They died unto God. They were decoupled, in a sense, from God. The mind was still alive, the soul was still alive, the flesh was still alive, but the spirit was dead. It was dead unto God. So when Christ comes, He reconciles us to God. That is accomplished because our spirit in Christ now is made alive again. So this is where we get this idea that we are transferred or transformed into another realm. And by virtue of that process, we then are existing in the world still, but we now exist as ambassadors because our spirit is alive to God; and we are no longer of this world, we are of the Kingdom of God. Something has taken place in that salvation experience which not just frees us from our sin, but it makes us alive, it makes us part of the family of God, and it removes us out of this realm that we have lived in, into His Kingdom.

Colossians addresses this. In chapter 1, verse 13, it says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." So in this process of salvation, our spirit comes alive; we're literally transferred out of this world. I know we don't see that physically happening, because nothing necessarily physically happens. The Scripture says, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; behold, old things have passed away, all things are made new." But normally after you're saved, you look in the mirror, it still looks like you. You don't see, because the transformation that takes place is not necessarily a physical one. It doesn't change. Your soul was still alive. Your mind was still alive. Your flesh was alive before that happened. What happened is your spirit comes alive to God. You are literally transformed. You're taken out of this world as you had existed in this world, and you're moved from here into the Kingdom of God. You now dwell in that Kingdom. And this is what is being addressed in these original verses by Philippians, where it says "our citizenship is in heaven." How did that happen? It happened through the salvation experience, wherein your spirit came alive to God – it was regenerated unto God. You were reconciled unto God. You were transferred out of this age, as you had lived here, out of this world, and you were then placed into the Kingdom of God.

And then the Moffatt version brings this other aspect, that we are a colony of heaven. So we see that we still exist in this earth, but we exist here now not as people who are a part of this age or part of this world. As the Scripture says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." So we live here in this world, but yet we are here as a colony now of heaven, or a colony of the Kingdom. So this makes sense, when you think about an ambassador, what an ambassador is. I'll look at the dictionary definition of ambassador: "An official envoy, especially a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment." The second definition is that it's "an authorized representative or messenger." There again, that sounds very much like who we are here as a messenger from God. This is from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* if you want to look it up on your own. It gives this idea of what an ambassador is all about.

We understand the concept of an embassy. Whatever country we live in, if we go to another country, we're a foreigner in that land; and yet if we have an embassy from our nation, then that actually, that property of the embassy, is counted as being from our home country. If I as an American go to Israel, I may not be a citizen of Israel; I may have an American passport. But if I go to the American embassy – which by the way is now in Jerusalem, thank You, Lord – then I am on my home turf. That ground, that building of that embassy, is in fact the United States of America when I am on that ground.

And that is what Moffatt is trying to convey to us. We are a colony of the Kingdom. We dwell here on this earth, but where we dwell and the way we dwell as ambassadors of Christ means that our life, the place we live, the ground we encompass, all now is the Kingdom of God. It is no longer a part of this world, it is His Kingdom. So we begin planting a flag, a stake here on this earth, that represents – and not only represents, but literally becomes – the Kingdom of God. So again, all of this is an aspect, it's part and parcel of the salvation experience that we have when we pray that prayer and ask Christ into our life, and ask Him to reconcile us to the Father, to wash us of our sins. But we're asking Him to be born anew into His Kingdom. We're asking Him to transport us out of this age, out of this world, and to transport us as members, as citizens of His Kingdom, no longer to have our residence here as part of this world. If we are in this world, our passport is from His Kingdom. We live in His Kingdom as ambassadors of the heavenly realm. I want us to get this very clearly, because as we are in this world, we need to clearly understand and know why we are here, and what we are all about, what God has sent us to do.

I want to read some more Scriptures and hopefully just continue to clarify this idea. Again, one thing I want to point out is the fact that Paul understood himself to be an ambassador. In Ephesians 6:19 he says, "And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel." Remember one of the definitions of an ambassador is to be a messenger; and that's what he is doing. He is asking for the utterance to speak the message that he as an ambassador will give. In verse 20 he says, "For which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." So Paul recognized he was in this earth as an ambassador; and he had a message to this world, to the government of this world, to the inhabitants of this world, that they needed to be reconciled to God the Father through Christ.

I want to go on to Ephesians, and again, hopefully some of these Scriptures will just clarify to us the idea of the depth of what transpires in our salvation experience. Ephesians the second chapter, starting at verses 1-3 says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." So up until our salvation experience, we differed in no way from anybody else in the world, because all are dead unto God. Their spirits are dead unto God, being unregenerated from the whole Adamic nature of sin that we all live in. So we were like everybody else – we were in this world, we were of this world, we acted like the world, we indulged as the world did.

Verse 4 goes on to say, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace, you have been saved.)" So we see this salvation, not only were we saved, but in verse six it goes on to say, "And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We have been taken from this age, from this world, and transplanted into the heavenly realm, into the place where Christ is.

Now again, we must understand this, because this is part of our eternal dwelling. We know that the Kingdom is the Kingdom of heaven; and we know that Christ was from heaven, and He returned into heaven. He said that His Kingdom did not come from this realm of earth, it came from the realm of heaven; yet we understand that He is now bringing that Kingdom into the earth. So it comes from heaven into the earth. That's what we begin by being ambassadors. We are the first representatives of the reality that the Kingdom of God, which is in heaven and exists from heaven, is coming to earth, is in fact in the earth because we are in the Earth; and that Kingdom is taking over this earth. And we know that Christ will rule and reign in the earth and over all the earth to bring peace and bring His Kingdom into this realm.

I just want to clear up that point, because I don't want people to get confused that, "Yes, now we're transported into heaven and we live in heaven and eternity is in heaven, and that's where we are from, and that's where we live forever." No. He created us as humans; He put humans on the earth. He created angels as spirits; they are occupying the heavens. All of these realms will exist through eternity, but we will be those who are taking over and living in this earth. You say, "Well, I thought there's a new heaven and a new earth." Somebody wrote to me recently and said, "I don't know if I agree about your concept of the Kingdom, because it said there will be a new heaven and a new earth." That's fine, however that works out. We don't know what that means and how it's carried out by God, because He says the same of us: we are new creatures in Christ. If I look at myself, I seem like I'm the same old guy; but I know my spirit is alive to God. I know I have been transported by salvation out of this realm and into being part of His family. So if there is a new heaven and a new earth, that's fine. Christ will still be the Lord over the earth, and He will still rule and reign on the earth; and we will be with Him on this earth, and all of it will have been derived from the nexus point of the heavenly realm. So that should not be confusing to people. People at this point who die, their bodies return to dust, their spirits return unto the Lord. If they are believers, they become part of the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us. If they are not, they are put on hold until the time of the resurrection and judgment comes and takes place. But it doesn't make heaven the eternal dwelling place where we live. We are humans, made to live in the earth. When Christ was resurrected, He ate the fish, He walked around, He still had a physical body; and so that was representative of who we also are in the resurrection.

I hope this is not confusing to people; but I know some are confused, because I think the teaching has not really clarified this. So in our salvation, once again, we are transformed. We are taken from this realm and moved into the family of God because our spirits are now reconciled to Him and alive unto Him. We are then in this earth as His ambassadors; and wherever we are, we are representative of, in fact, a manifestation of, that Kingdom. We are the colony of heaven here in this place. Thank you, Lord. This is all so wondrous, and it's all from this tremendous experience that we have in our salvation.

Ephesians 2:18-19 goes on to say, "For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." So again, it says, we're not just strangers on this earth. We're not disconnected. We're not dead to God. Now we are fellow citizens. We have just changed countries, and we have become citizens of heaven. We are of God's household, and we are a part with all of the saints.

Colossians 3:1-3 says, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." What a beautiful experience we have in this salvation. Don't limit it. Don't take away from it by saying, "Oh, I accepted the

Lord, and my sins were forgiven me." No, wondrous things happened, and those things continue; our salvation continues to unfold before us, as He brings His Kingdom into this earth.

First Peter 2, starting at verse 9, says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." See, as ambassadors, we have a message. We're here to give that message, the excellencies of Him who called us. Thank you, God, for calling us out of darkness. That experience is available for all mankind to have. Verses 10-11 say, "For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." In other words, don't get caught up in this world. You don't belong to this world. You're an alien here. You're an ambassador here. You're representing another country. You don't represent this country, and you don't get consumed with the affairs of this country, of this world, and the things of this world.

Christ really emphasized this separation that happens for us when we become His. In John, the 18th chapter, verse 36, "Jesus answered, 'My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'" In the Greek, it "doesn't originate from this place." And so His Kingdom doesn't originate from this world. It takes over the world. It colonizes the world, and it takes over and replaces the governments and the kingdoms of this world with the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. So He is not from this realm. That's why He had to leave here to go receive the Kingdom, because that's where the Kingdom originates from.

In John 15, then, He connects us to this process. Verse 18 says, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." Now, this is kind of a neat expression of salvation, that He chose you out of the world. He chose to take you out of the world and to bring this mercy and salvation into your life. Once He did choose you, you are no longer of, or from, this world.

In John 17, starting at verses 14-17, He says, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Remember, Christ was sent into the world by the Father as an ambassador, as the first one who was crying out, "Be reconciled to God." He was the original ambassador of the Kingdom. And so He's crying out for all to receive that process of reconciliation. And He says, "I am not of this world. I do not ask You" – and again, this is His prayer to the Father. He says, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." Lord sanctify us in the reality of this truth that we are not of this world; we are no longer. We may have been from this world. We may have been part of this world. But in our salvation experience, in our conversion, in our becoming citizens of heaven, we are no longer from this world. We are new creatures and new citizens with new passports. Sanctify us, Lord. Let our minds grasp the truth of this, because I think it impacts how we live and how we relate.

If we honestly have this be real, this truth, the truth sets you free. And the truth, this truth should set us free from feeling that we are just a part of this world like everybody else. We are not. That was changed when He chose us and brought us unto Himself and reconciled us unto the Father, and then left us in

this world. He said, "I'm not asking You, Father, to take them out of the world. I'm asking You to leave them in this world. Just protect them from the evil one."

Verse 18 says, "As you sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." As God sent Christ as an ambassador from the Kingdom into this age to bring the message of the Kingdom, remember what He preached: He preached the Kingdom of God. As He preached the Kingdom and preached the Word of sanctification in salvation, He said, "He sent us into the world." He has put us, He has left us here in this world as these ambassadors, just as He was in the world. Verses 19-20 say, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word." I add this one verse because many theologians say, "Well, this only applies, these prior verses only apply to the disciples and the apostles." Verse 20 doesn't agree with that: "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word." And that's anyone who is saved – they believe by virtue of the Gospel that was brought to us, not just by Christ when He was here, but by the apostles in the beginning and from all of those who have since then been ambassadors into this world. We heard this message from some ambassador who was here to proclaim the message of the Kingdom of God coming to this earth, and proclaim that in our acceptance of Christ, as the One who reconciles, we were transported out of this world as members of it, and we were connected to the Kingdom of God and made part of God's family.

But He left us in the world, and He says very clearly, "I'm not of this world, but I'm not taking you out of the world. And as You sent Me, Father, I am sending them into the world." We know that in many ways; but what I want to do in this podcast is just drive it home for us. Because I think, unless we really are able to separate ourselves from the things of this world, if we're not able to see our salvation as something more than just the forgiveness of our sin or stumbling, we are not functional here as the ambassadors. He did something far more than just forgive you of your sins. He gave you a new citizenship. He gave you a new family. He brought you into a new country. And then from that country, He left you in this age as His ambassador to see others reconciled to the Father through the message, as well as to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is coming upon this earth.

I want to remember just some very specific points here. When we are saved, our spirit is born again and reconciled to God, very simply. From our salvation, we are no longer of this world. From that moment, we are citizens of God's Kingdom. And we must recognize that we have been placed on this earth then as ambassadors of that Kingdom. Who we are and where we are is the Kingdom of God. As ambassadors, we cry, "Be reconciled to God through Christ." And we also proclaim and announce Christ's Kingdom which is coming to earth.

I bless this podcast to you, this message. Yeshua, we ask that You give us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to understand what You are speaking to us in this teaching. Let it be alive and real, and let us by Your grace be Your ambassadors to a world that is greatly in need. Amen.