

Church of God

The Biblical Grandview

The Salt and Light of an Ambassador

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Sermon Transcript

Cleaned and edited from Vosk AI speech-recognition output

Costco has become a mainstay in our culture today, at least in the U.S. Most of us probably own or have memberships to it. Even Sam's is kind of the same. I have a question, like, can you find Christ at Costco, or should you even be looking for Him there?

Now, I'm not talking about the product inventory, or where you might find what location may be, or if you can find a Bible at Costco. I'm sure they sell Bibles there. But I'm talking about you and I. Can we conduct ourselves in a way that somebody could find Christ-like attitudes?

Now, I would say I'm a, if I called a connoisseur, a collector, a hobbyist, if you will, of Costco ants and Sam's food samples. I don't look like a person that skips food samples. If they're clean to eat, I, I take a sample, or one, or two, or three. Well, more.

Most recently, I've started to the people that hand out food, and past maybe a year or so I've always made sure to thank them for that food. And I say, even more recently though, I've started, load times you can see their name tag, I've started even using their first names and thank him, just as a way. Maybe it's

my age. I like to engage people, if I can read it before getting pushed along. Because, as you will find, that the least Christ-like spot in Sam's is that there's a hot food sample and you're somebody that's blocking the cartwheel. People will give you bad looks, and people do not like you to block the way. Tempers might flare.

It's something, you know, I've noticed what I go through and grab snacks like this, and even more recently, um, that a lot of people just don't say thank you. People just grab a snack and go. It's there for them to take for free. There's no requirement. There's nothing in your Costco membership that says you have to be polite, that you have to thank people for free food that you're getting. It's part of what you deserve.

Being nice, or reasonable, or personal at Costco is an absurdly inconsequential way to prove that we are Christ-like. But isn't that the point of us being lights to the world, always shining, always present, always ready to give a testament through our actions, no matter how small they might be?

I even, a, sometimes I found people in the backwoods of a Costco that were set up to give some...actually, it was brisket, beef brisket, and the lady had not given away any of it. And I engaged her, start talking. She goes, take all you want. Like, you can have all the samples. And I didn't take all I won it, but I did take a lot more. And there nobody at her, at her stand. The reason being as there was

ice cream cake a few rows down, and that was surrounded by people.

It doesn't take much to be personable. And I'm using Costco as an example. This covers any place, anywhere we are, brethren. The small, small, inconsequential things. All I'm trying to do is just engage with somebody. If, if you call somebody by their first name, they have a better reaction, especially to something that you don't have to do by saying thank you.

You, those baptized members of the body of Christ, we are representatives of a soon-coming government of God. And if you are an ambassador for a kingdom, people judge you and your homeland based upon how you act in that foreign country. So the question I have to ask ourselves as we go about our daily lives than, whether at home, whether running errands, or whether it's in the checkout line, is this: how well it might represent that future government? How well the people looking towards me specifically, in whatever interaction I'm having in that day, as being an ambassador for king they know nothing about yet? Someday they will. Someday look back and, like, I remember that guy. He pushed me out of line for that key Costco treat.

Well, today I would look like look at five illustrations, maybe, that show us how we can maybe represent this Kingdom of God better, in a better light, through our actions.

Point one is to be a good example.

You know, they say first impressions only happen once, and I know that's an incredibly observant statement on my part, but it's true. You can't take back, sometimes, a first impression. You know, are we leaving people with good impressions or bad impressions in our simple, just fly-by-by-night interactions that we have daily with people?

You know, we have a limited amount of time to profess God's way of life to this world. We will only be given so many years and only so many human interactions in our lives. Our first mandate as ambassadors is to be a good example.

Matthew 5:14-15: You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

You know, light helps to guide people, obviously. But just a verse earlier, in Matthew 5:13, Christ says we are also salt. Besides, you know, its preserving nature, salt makes food taste better. It brings enjoyment to the daily mundane necessities of eating food. And we are meant to be exactly the same way. Our example should guide mankind towards God, not away from Him. That is what a good ambassador for this way of life should do. Our daily actions should

bring, if nothing more than just a little joy, to those we encounter.

We're not professing Christ to these people when we just have these random encounters, but we all professing a Christ-like attitude. God knows what we're doing. God knows who He's calling, why He's calling, and we are instruments in that most many times. But doing this consistently is not easy. When you're out in public, sometimes you're tired, sometimes you don't have time. But it's vital we make the most of that time. It's vital we make the most of any interaction that we can have.

Ephesians 5:15-16: See then that you walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

The CEB, or the Common English Bible, translates this as, take advantage of every opportunity. Every opportunity. Anytime that we can interact with somebody. No, we're not going to be at all perfect this. We're not going to be all one hundred percent in this. We're hopefully past getting passing grades at this. This is something difficult in this day and age, but it's something we have to try to achieve. It takes effort that we cannot let up on.

Galatians 6:9-10: And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Don't grow weary in this attempt. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us all do, or at least do good to all, all

especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Paul says, don't grow weary. That means that it's not going to always be easy to be this good example. If he's telling us not to do something, it's because we have tendencies to do it. This takes trying. To be a good example takes intentionality.

Paul reinforces this in Colossians 4:5-6: Walk in wisdom towards those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Bringing some sort of joy, bringing something that's a little bit better, that's seasoned to anybody we interact with these. How often do we really get the chance to make an important, lasting impression? If that is the impression we leave with somebody as bad, what are the consequences?

Well, Scripture gives us a great example, someone who got it right, and that's Onesiphorus. He has mentioned twice in the entire Bible, but he was written about in the Bible because of his good impression. And it wasn't just a one-time thing either. This was a continual attitude he had.

2 Timothy 1:16-18: The Lord grant--and this is Paul speaking--the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, was not ashamed of my chain. But when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out zealously, and he found me.

The Lord grants him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day. And you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

So, Paul said of him, he often refreshed me. He was nice. He helped Paul with what he was doing. He was not ashamed of my chains.

You know, Paul was in prison, probably not a safe or pleasant place to go to visit. He helped me very diligently, diligently, and found me. And this took effort.

You know, compare that to the example of those Paul mentioned just a verse earlier, 2 Timothy 1:15: This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me.

Among them are Phygellus and hermit Hermogenes.

Not only did Paul mentioned an entire region, not just a couple of people, an entire region that abandoned him, but he called out to individuals by name.

Were they scared? Were they too busy? Were they interested in helping at all?

Whatever the reason, their examples were bad enough that got them permanently recorded in the Bible as warnings.

So, what do you choose? What kind of example do we want to be? You don't.

We have the opportunity to shine, to enhance the lives of those around us. It is essential that we do just that.

Point two: be ready to give a good answer.

You know, we should sound like we know what we're talking about, to be as articulate and clear as possible. If you are communicating important truth, you need to understand it deeply. Because if we are ambassadors, if we are representing the Creator of the universe, we need to be ready to give that good answer.

Why? 1 Peter 3:10-12: For you who love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the face of Lord is against those who do evil.

You know, the outcome of Christ coming to this earth, to reveal the Father, gives us an incredible opportunity—as stated in verse twelve--that God's ears are open to us, that God can recognize us, and that we can go before the very throne of God. And because we have that access, we have to be ready with good answer to the world when that pops up. We'd ever know when it's going to pop up.

Peter continues in 1 Peter 3:15-17: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asked you for a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness

and fear, having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evil-doers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

You know, the world's religions are filled with men pleasers. It's easy to tell people what they want to hear. It's easy to tell people and show people that you can become wealthy, that you can enjoy this life to its fullest by just sitting in a little bit more money to me. Start with me first, and I will show you how well you can live by following God. That's what our modern society, and there's many people that disdain that kind of Christianity, other Christians in this world that aren't called by God today. But that has taken root in our society, and it's a man-pleasing religion.

This is not popular to be a God pleaser. Christ Himself is brutally and unjustly murdered because He was a God pleaser. He spoke to mankind with perfect gentleness, perfect respect, perfect love, but mankind refused to listen to what He had to say. Giving that good answer isn't always going to be pleasant. Giving that good answer isn't always going to end with people saying, I get it, I understand God now. Like, no, it's not. But we still have to give that good answer.

Not much has changed for our generation either. In fact, it's probably Go back to 2 Timothy 4:2-4: Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of

season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but according to their own desires because they have itching ears. They will heap up for themselves teachers. And they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. That doesn't mean we're supposed to stop giving a good answer.

We can never stop giving good answer even if all around us refuse to hear it; because we're going to likely give good answers to those who are not pleased to hear it. Truth goes against the conventions of society today. But we must hold that line. We must continually have that good answer.

But the instructions then given to Timothy later in this chapter. I'm reading out of the Common English Bible for this.

2 Timothy 2:14-16: Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words. It is of no value and only ruins those who listen. It's important.

It's not just those that are speaking those quarrelsome words it's those who listen it ruins them as well. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

And 2 Timothy 2:19-21: Nevertheless, God's sound solid foundation stands firm. In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay. Some are for noble purposes and some for and innoble.

If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes made holy, useful to the master and prepare to do any good work. We have to prepare ourselves for doing these good works and we will be remembered by God the Father for everything that we do. We have to make sure God can use us for those noble purposes--those articles made of gold and silver.

You know if you try to fight fire with fire in this current age lowering ourselves to arguments and the godless chatter of this world--we only hurt ourselves and we will hurt those that hear us.

We can affect others around us. We can become ambassadors that give people disdain that people do not look towards and think that's a great country that the ambassador comes from.

It's an easy to give an answer that makes us feel good at times it makes us fit in that satisfies our temporary desires.

Paul, when writing to Titus said that we must show integrity and reverence when in these states.

Titus 2:7-8: And all things shown yourselves to be a pattern of good works in doctrine showing integrity reverence

incorruptibility. Sound speech that cannot be condemned that one who is an opponent may be ashamed have being nothing evil to say of you.

And that's not easy. That takes preparation.

Good answers please God and then make a tool that God can continually use us.

Point three: don't stop what we've started.

As ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, there cannot be an abandonment of the responsibilities or walking away from what we've started. God has called us to be tools and how He uses us is entirely up to His discretion.

Are job is simple though-- we just don't start or don't stop but we've started. You know do we sometimes disagree with how God is using us in certain circumstances. Possibly or second guessed the way that he's working with certain people or why he's working individuals in a particular way. Do we grumble maybe his schedule is not our schedule that he's either working too fast or too slow that our continual prophesying is just not coming to age as we see it fit.

Well, that's wrong and a dangerous attitude to develop. When that attitude goes unchecked, we quickly become unprofitable servants--unusable tools. To combat this, we have to have an

absolute desire to follow God and never look back. We know that what Christ said in Luke 9:62: No one having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God.

That's a strong statement. That's a scary statement thinking that if I turn away at all --we know people we all know people that have turned away and that's turning away forever. People still have chances to come back they can still always repent.

But there comes a point when you turn away that you no longer desire to repent and those people are not going to be fit for the Kingdom of God. So, do we have that endurance to stick with it? Are we willing to trade the easy comfortable confusion of this world that wonderful serene haze for the difficult eye opening and clear truth of God? Christ lays down the cost of this kind of disciple discipleship and Luke 14:27: And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Skipping to Luke 14:34-35: getting back to that salt that we are to become.

Salt is good but if the salt has lost its flavor how shall it be seasoned. If it is neither fit for the land nor for the dung hill but men throw it out. He has ears to hear let him hear. If we have lost our flavor, if we are not doing what salt should do, then it is thrown into the dump, we have absolutely no use.

But the fact that we are sitting here today that we observe these days means

that we've answered that call. But once we embark on that lifelong journey. We cannot turn back we cannot be that salt that loses its flavor--that through washing by this world standards to just lose all the purpose of that salt; to become nothing but tasteless additives. Now we know that conceptually we all know that conceptually we were told that baptism but how much do we inherently push to return to that state of being.

In this journey that we've all decided to take upon takes constant daily course correction to keep moving towards God. Christ warns against an attitude of self-seeking kind of convenient religion. That's what the world likes to hear that's what is a man pleasing religion. But it's not what Christ called us to.

He confronted the religious leaders of his day, in John 5:39-40: Use search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life and these are they which testify me. But you are not willing to come to me that you may have life that's verses 39 to 40. The world today is absolutely no different probably worse. It denies Christ while claiming to profess him because modern society seeks to find God not on God's terms not on the terms that Christ laid out but on their own terms.

Just one example Paul gave talking about this completion of sticking with it not giving up--2 Corinthians 8:9-11: If you know, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for

your sakes he became poor that you through his poverty might become rich. And in this I give advice it is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago. But now you must also complete the doing of it that as there was readiness to desire it so there may also be a completion out of what you have. We have to finish what we've started with the same eagerness we began with.

And that's difficult. It's hard to keep that flavor of the salt in our lives. And that eagerness can only be sustained if we maintain that humble attitude that Christ spoke about that he got on his disciples because they didn't exude that attitude--it was a Matthew 18:3: Assuredly I say to you unless you are converted and become as little children you want no means enter the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. A child trust completely and just keep going.

Another mark for those that cannot enter the Kingdom of God as those that don't have that childlike attitude.

Point four: we must have patience to be ambassadors.

You know staying the course and dealing with the world around us requires a tool that doesn't come naturally to the human mind --to represent the kingdom well and as God would desire it; over our lifetimes we have to have patience to become a masters and to stay ambassadors.

Think about Moses and the Exodus: God to live delivers Israel.

He performs miracles that we just heard about.

He brings them to Mount Sinai. Moses goes up to get the commandments. He comes down and what are they doing they're worshiping the golden calf. They forgot.

Later they complain about the water they complain about the food they complain about almost ever anything. Finally, Moses after all of this what does he do. He loses his patients. He strikes a rock.

And we know what that costume. Just like David so we heard about earlier. David lost that great blessing that thing that he worked so hard to do because of an attitude. Moses lost getting into the Promised Land because of what an attitude he didn't have patience.

And I can't blame them. Would we have done anything differently? Could you have lasted forty years with that group? Remember these people didn't have the Holy Spirit.

We do and still we cannot seem to get stay together as groups as Churches of God. And what excuse do we have when our temper is lost when we fail to follow after God to follow after have that patience as true ambassadors to God, when the ambassadors themselves can have patience with one another. Patience is not naturally occurring to

mankind even to those with God's spirit. It takes incredible amount of effort to keep patience.

Something we have to build--James 1:2-4: My brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials.

That's the hardest scripture to read and try to really truly believe and want to believe candidate joy when you fall into various trials. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.

Trials being worked with by God going through this world, dealing with this world as it is what's going to develop that patience. Trials though that is one of the keys to developing patience. We must work to have it as we grow in faith. Then as we go through those trials throughout our lives we will grow in our patience.

My fifth and final point: repetition makes us better.

If you want to master a skill sport a language. Don't give it one shot. I don't watch one YouTube video and figure out everything.

You practice over and over and over again. Would we think living a Christian life be ambassadors for God is going to be any different? Repetition is what makes us good Christians and not parting of the waters, not going up on

Mount Sinai and fasting forty days. We don't have to do that to become better Christians.

It's a small thing I talked about to begin with. Those small little interactions that can build and build and build continuously throughout our Christian life. But we will not grow if we sustain ourselves only with spiritual milk. If we get to this level and just stay and just exist. God didn't call us to be monks living in monasteries. He called us to interact with this world. And we must grow and reach new plateaus and then put a foothold in those sustain ourselves and those plateaus working to get to the next plateau.

1 Peter 2:1-2: Therefore, laying aside all malice all deceit hypocrisy envy and all evil speaking. As newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby.

We have to desire that. But we have to grow away from it at some point. We have to grow needing more than that at some point.

You know it's kind of like that first love of the truth that is our foundation. We can exist forever on that first love. We have to grow and become deeper. You know it bound us to God the Father.

It was our first impression of God's way of life. For those were the basics. We have to get to the advanced levels. We can read in Hebrews 5:12-14: For though by this time, you ought to be teachers you need someone to teach you

again the first principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness for he is a babe.

But solid food belongs to those who are full age that is those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Notice that phrase by reason of use--not by reason of knowledge. It's by reason of use. We all have the knowledge.

We've all been given the knowledge. We all carry Bibles. We have many Bibles probably. We don't read them all at the same time.

We don't read one at a time but we do even do that--reason of use. It means constant practice repetition. And we stopped practicing way of God's way of life. We don't just stand still.

We drift backwards. It's like floating in a river. We have to constantly be working to go upstream. We aren't practicing God's way at the only alternative then is what, practicing Satan's way of life.

There isn't a grey area.

Paul had to pick the Corinthians for just this same kind of exact lack of lack of spiritual maturity 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: And I brethren could not speak to you as spiritual people but as to carnal as to babes in Christ those that still were living on just the milk. I fed you with milk and not with solid food. For until

now you were not able to receive it and even now, you're still not able.

For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men. You know the daily repetition of prayer, study, meditation, choosing the right way of life insurers there is no room that there's no time there's no foothold for the ways of the world to route into our minds. In brethren, it's easy to get frustrated with this world. It's easy to get frustrated with our calling at times and even just life in general. When you're in pain it's hard to look at the bright things in this life. The short-term outlook for those who follow God can sometimes look pretty grim.

Quite often it looks pretty grand because we're not of this world. Jesus reminds us of something in Matthew 10:16-20: Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men for they would deliver you up to councils and scourge you in the synagogues.

You will be brought before governors and kings for my namesake as a testament to them and to the gentiles. That when they deliver you up do not worry about how or what you should speak for it will be given to you in that hour that you should speak. For it is not you who speak but the spirit of your Father who speaks in you. That is kind of the key of how we are going to

maintain an ambassadorship and grow in that ambassadorship, to continually build and be examples to this world that doesn't want to hear from us.

Because we're not above our master. The world hated Christ. And we know that it will hate us as well. But look at what we have because of what Christ did for this world for the church and for you and I. We have an understanding that the very divine family that exist that were being born into that we have a direct unhindered connection to God the Father. Our Father does not tire it does not ignore cries when they are delivered with a humble repentant attitude. And he is above all things patient with us.

Because of this, we're not just survivors waiting for the end to happen. We are Christ's chosen ambassadors to a broken world. An ambassador does not command an army rewind rewrite laws in a foreign land.

An ambassador simply faithfully represents the character the values and the message of their king. So, let's strive to put in turn that incredible potential into a reality--to become those ambassadors that Christ looks towards that he says come enter into. Let's clean up our examples prepare our answers finish what we started practice patience and daily repeat the weightier matters of the law. Daily repeat them; not the matters that the Sadducees and Pharisees thought were the law but the weightier matters of the law.

By doing these things faithfully each and every day we will stand as true ambassador to the king and to endure to the very end.

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Editorial Notes

This transcript was cleaned from raw Vosk speech-recognition output. Edits were limited to punctuation, capitalization, sentence boundaries, paragraph breaks, and correction of clear recognition errors. The speaker's wording, cadence, and asides have been preserved throughout.