

Speaker: Pastor Robert Cowan, Jr. of River of Life Church in San Francisco

## CHAMPIONS! - HOW TO BE A CHAMPION OF HOPE, PT. 3

Scripture used: II Cor. 5:1-12, 18-20 (NKJV)

### OVERVIEW

This week's message was part three in our Champion series where we have been personally challenged to be ambassadors of hope on behalf of God in our communities. Being an ambassador carries responsibility for mature responses in times of crises and responding as Jesus would. Our communities are watching us, not for what we say but for how we act. Those around us watch Christians not to see if we fail but if we can bring a Christ-like hope to every situation. The world desperately needs what we have in Christ and looks to us to show the Way. We are called by God to serve - to serve as Ambassadors on His behalf to a lost and fallen world and show them how to be reconciled to God for He desires reconciliation.

Often we are torn between our calling as Christians and our own sin nature. There are behaviors which are desirable and appealing to our old nature but are contrary to the redeemed life we now have with Jesus. The "red line" dividing our old ways and those of our new life in Christ exists and we don't want to cross it to anger God or bring disrepute to His name. In our passages today, Paul reminds us to center our lives in our Redeemer and live to please Him in every way. We owe Him so much for redeeming us from sinful and selfish ways.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **Learn to be an Ambassador of Hope.** People are afraid again. Suspicious and afraid. Leaders do not know how to lead people and only God's Ambassadors can point others to the Way - to the loving God. God has appointed us as His Ambassadors. *But not if we are spiritually childish and immature. Therefore our responsibility is to GROW, and we actually hurt others when we refuse to grow.*
- 2) **Return to the center and actively choose to represent Christ!**
  - 1) *Be aware what we do as Christ-followers sets the standard in our community.* You have the responsibility to be like Jesus. Without hope from you there is failure. We hurt others by not living to the standard of Christ.
  - 2) *The old ways across the "red line" are familiar to us and under stress we want to return to what is comfortable and familiar.* But we are redeemed from the old patterns and now know how to pray. When we seek His face, He is quick and ready to be there for us. Walk away from how we used to do things and the old ways of living. That is of the old you. Don't go back!
- 3) **How we live demonstrates our hope, especially in difficult times.** *Hold firm even when we don't understand.* If you break in adversity, you take away others' hope. Our most powerful place to be in response to crisis is praying and forgiving. God is looking. He's hoping, He's loving us. Isn't it great?!

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** How does anyone REALLY "grow and mature in Christ?"
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** What does it mean to you to "live in order to please God?" What does that look like?
- 3) **DO** Identify a behavior that is not pleasing to God. List people who have been impacted by it. Make a commitment to find a solution in your Connect4 settings below:
  - One-on-one - Initiate individual conversations
  - Family chats - Engage in safe conversations with your immediate family
  - Life Groups - Share stories safely with trusted friends in your Life Group
  - Community Conversations - Join a diverse group of 8 other people in a facilitated dialogue over the next 3 months. Sign-ups are now open.