



Friday, September 2, 2016

**"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world,
I give them a mission in the world."
(John 17:18)**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's hard to believe that September is here—the summer seemed to fly by so quickly! I hope that this letter finds you well and rested. I am excited about the days ahead and trust that God has great things in store for us at *Living Waters* as we begin our second year together!

It is incredible to think that our God is actively at work in the world. Even more incredible; however, is that He invites us to join Him in that work. This assignment is called our mission, and it is very different from our ministry. Ministry is our service to fellow believers in the Body of Christ—at *Living Waters* and in the wider Church. Mission, however, is our service to the world around us—especially to those who are unbelievers or not yet part of the Church. God has created us for both ministry and mission, and both are equally important parts of our calling as followers of Jesus.

Jesus clearly understood His life mission. At age 12 He said; "I must be about my father's business (Luke 2:49)," and 21 years later, dying on the cross, He said; "It is finished (John 19:30)." These two statements frame a well-lived, purpose-driven life, as Jesus completed the mission His Father gave to Him. The English word 'mission' comes from the Latin 'missio,' which means 'sending.' Being a Christian is all about being sent into the world as a representative of Jesus Christ. We are members of Christ's Body and, as the above verse from the Gospel of John suggests, Jesus' mission is our mission. What is that mission? Introducing people to Jesus so that they can be brought into a life-changing relationship with God! The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:18; "...Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also." Once God saves us, He sends us out as ambassadors of His love and grace. There are several reasons why we should take this mission seriously—both as individuals and as a church community.

#1. Mission is not optional. Jesus calls us not only to come **to** Him, but to go **for** Him, and His Great Commission contained in Matthew 28 was not just given to priests and pastors, but to all of His followers. Jesus' words to "Go and make disciples of all nations..." are not optional—they're mandatory—something that we are all called to do. Remember: you are the only Christian some people will ever know and your mission is to share Jesus with them!

#2. Mission is a great privilege. Although it is a profound responsibility, it is also an incredible honour to be used by God—as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians; "God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favour and be reconciled to him." Our mission involves two great privileges: working with God and representing Him. In fact, the Apostle Paul calls us "co-labourers" and says; "We are workers together with God." Jesus secures our salvation, puts us in His family, gives us His Spirit, and then makes us His agents in the world.

#3. Mission is the greatest gift we can give. If your neighbour was sick and you knew the cure, it would be criminal to withhold that lifesaving information. Even worse would be to keep secret the way to forgiveness, purpose, peace, and eternal life. We have the greatest news in the world and sharing it is the greatest kindness we can show to anyone.

#4. Mission has eternal significance. Because your mission will impact the eternal destiny of other people, its more important than any job, achievement, or goal you will reach during your life. The consequences of your mission will last forever—nothing else you do will ever matter as much as helping people establish a relationship with God!

#5. Mission gives life meaning. American philosopher William James once said; “The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.” The truth is, only the Kingdom of God is going to last—everything else will fade away. Knowing that, why would we give anything else a higher priority? As Paul writes in Acts 24:20; “The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me...” We weren’t placed on earth to do nothing or to just live for ourselves—God invites us to participate in what He is doing in the world.

#6. Mission brings glory to God. The night before He was crucified Jesus prayed to his Father; “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” Will you be able to say that at the end of your life? God created us for a purpose and discovering that purpose and living it out should be our life’s goal.

#7. Mission is blessed by God. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said; “More than anything else, put God’s work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.” The secret of being blessed by God is participating in His agenda for the world—to be a part of what He is accomplishing on earth. Instead of praying; “God bless what I want to do,” let us pray; “God help me to do what you are blessing!”

Our mission begins the moment we say "yes" to God in obedience, faith, and love. Fulfilling this mission will require us to abandon our own agenda in favour of God’s agenda—as David prayed in Psalm 119:36; “Turn me away from wanting any other plan but yours.” One of my primary goals for *Living Waters* over the next few months is to help people discover and live out—as individuals and as a community—the unique life mission that God has for them. I have put several things in place to help us do this, including: the Fall sermon series on the Book of Ephesians, *Faith Explored* (Adult Sunday School), the Alpha program, Life Groups, the DVD study: *Promised Land*, and a Weekend Parish Retreat at Camp IAWAH with Bishop Charlie Masters. Attached is a detailed outline of our Fall schedule and I encourage you to participate as fully as possible.

As members of the Body of Christ, to whom gifts and talents have been entrusted, let us offer ourselves without reservation to our loving God and His kingdom work, as we respond to Jesus’ words; “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)

Faithfully,

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“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”
(John 7:37-38)