

SERMON

Various Texts

Life in Mission

Nunawading and Waverley, 3-7-22

Dear friends in Christ,

In the latest census figures, those identifying as Christian have fallen from 52% five years ago to 44% last year. No religion is 39%, up 9 percentage points. This may sound depressing but it may suggest to us that more people may be curious about what we follow and why.

Mission starts from the Father's heart for a lost world. That the world does not see this is what makes its alienation from the Lord even greater. Let's turn it around. People live for something but can it nourish them, give them hope in a pandemic, comfort them in loss of a loved one, provide them with purpose when they see no meaning, buy them health or restore relationships? We only need to look at rising rates of depression, that one in three people are lonely, the hedonistic life-style and cult of the individual to see that Western civilisation is collapsing. People need to be saved and as Christians called into our Lord's mission, we meet that need.

Let's look at 10 passages from holy Scripture and what they say about a life in God's mission.

1. Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord said to Abram: "Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Go out and be a blessing! Find a need in people and meet it. Love is our first response. Being loved by our Father, redeemed by Christ and made alive in the Spirit, we want to bless others with acts of service and the gospel. The other emphasis is on the word **go, leave behind** what gets in the way of this mission and be led by the Spirit.

2. Exodus 19:5-6

Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine, and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.

Recognise who you are and why the Lord has placed you in this church and in this city. A life in mission is dependent on us understanding who we are meant to be for other people. It involves consciously praying for the Lord's hand to move in people's lives so that we are mediators between God and others.

3. Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Who should I send? Who will go for Us?" I said: "Here I am. Send me."

Be prepared to make a sacrifice. There is nothing more de-energising than being torn in your mind, knowing you should have a life of mission but wishing you didn't have to. So, we pray for a willing spirit.

4. Matthew 24:14

"This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come."

Recognise the Father's great plan for his world and that it will finally end the way things are being run today. He is controlling all things so that they eventually lead to his goal to restore creation at the end of human history. The Lord has brought us in to this great movement and we are now his agents.

5. Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Speak and act with authority because you know the way, and the truth and the life and these things cannot be found anywhere else. Our life is about making disciples; in the family and outside of it. All Christians are teachers, helping people to understand what has gone wrong and how Christ is the answer.

6. Mark 16:15

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”

Some Christians will leave their country but for most of us, the whole of creation has come to us in our multi-cultural nation.

7. Luke 24:46-48

“This is what is written: the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

The Holy Spirit speaks through us and just a comment or a word of encouragement can have a powerful effect. If we seek the Lord in a life in mission, the Spirit will create situations where we can act in word and deed.

8. John 20:21

Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Christ stands behind us, urging us on during moments of failure and despondency. In congregations today, the lack of commitment can be demoralising. Only Christ’s peace can fill us with strength and the will to go on. Let us actively draw on that peace and never give up.

9. Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The Holy Spirit unleashes his miraculous power when we step out in faith, do the hard work and take risks. From time to time, he will show us how he can change peoples’ lives in astonishing ways.

10. 1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Father has bestowed on us the highest status. He has chosen us, called us to himself and bestowed on us a crown of royalty, and a priestly office. Therefore, in a room, a neighbourhood or nation, we are the odd ones because we proclaim a message that Christ is Lord and anyone can receive his mercy. Our culture is one of blaming and shaming. We are bearers of a precious gift, the gift of mercy.

Let us live in mission know who we are and what the Lord has called us to do.