

Giving is Mission

As part of the family of God, we are on a mission. It was given to us by Jesus Christ through the apostles. And when we choose to follow obediently and give to the furtherance of the church, then we are choosing to give to the mission of the church.

Jesus' mission when He came to the earth was to rescue humankind from their sin and re-establish their relationship with God, the Father. Nothing stood in His way or distracted Him from completing that mission. The devil endeavored to tempt Him away. The Pharisees accused Him of breaking the law so that He would be condemned. Even His disciples stood in His way from time to time before they fully understood the will of the Father. Through it all, Jesus continued on His journey to give life and peace to all who would believe in Him. Through the giving of His life, Jesus gave us all the opportunity to enter into His kingdom. He gave us all the chance to be forgiven, to be re-born, and to live in eternal fellowship with the triune God.

Before ascending back to His Father, Jesus placed His mission into the hands of His disciples.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

When filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles shared the gospel of Jesus and the church of Christ began. Jesus intentionally created this institution, charged it with His mission, and then placed the responsibility for managing it into human hands. We are the church, and we are called to take up this mission.

As believers grow spiritually and mature in their faith, they gain the understanding that all they have is given by God and belongs to Him.

With the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, believers learn to trust in God and recognize how they can use what they have been given to give generously to others, so that all people may come to know Jesus.

This means we don't just give to missions, but that Christian giving, in and of itself, is the mission to which we are called: to give a portion of that which we have for the sake of the gospel. Jesus Christ gave life to the dead, both spiritually and physically; Christians humbly follow His example by giving of themselves to the spiritual and physical welfare of others.

The mission statement of the New Apostolic Church is tied directly to the Great Commission:

Reaching out to all people in order to teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptize them with water and the Holy Spirit. Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy serving Him and others.

Giving is mission because givers move the mission forward. Because Jesus willingly gave His life on the cross, the mission advanced. Because the apostles left the room in Jerusalem and gave their lives to proclaim the gospel, the mission progressed. If the first Christians hadn't been willing to share what they had been blessed with, whether it was great or small, how far would the message have spread? Jesus led the way for us, and He is our example to follow. We want to make His mission our mission; and as He was willing and generous to give His all for us, let us adopt the same willingness and generosity to see the mission of His church fulfilled.

What will it take for the mission to be fulfilled? What will need to be given? God sent His Spirit to lead decision-making, but not an endowment to fund the mission. He left that to us. The institutional and visible church is dependent upon the financial support of the believers to fulfill its divine purpose. When we look upon our world through the lens of the love of Christ, then we readily understand that

financial assistance, along with our time and gifts, is needed for the message to be carried forward.

To reach out to others and teach the gospel requires our willingness to devote ourselves to the teachings of Jesus Christ and surrender to the impulses of the Holy Spirit. Why would we do this? Simply because we recognize the mission of God is to save us. And we've been called for a purpose.

Our faith in Christ is a gift, and our role in the mission of Christ is a privilege and an honor.

When we are fully aware of how we came to be in relationship with God, then we devote ourselves to learning more about Jesus, and give our will over to the Holy Spirit.

When we take up the mission of the church, we find that we are called to share our stories of faith with others to show how we have been saved and transformed. We give of ourselves in this way to help others see the power of Christ. We may feel inadequate in our knowledge of the gospel, and we may be afraid to talk about Jesus because we've never done so before outside of the church, but give yourself fully to His mission and experience how He will provide for you. This can be seen again and again in the book of Acts. Some examples are when Peter and John spoke

before the Sanhedrin in chapter 4; Stephen boldly proclaiming the gospel in chapters 6 & 7; Philip teaching the Ethiopian eunuch in chapter 8; Peter going to Cornelius and his family in chapter 10; when Paul and Silas were imprisoned in chapter 16, and when Paul is shipwrecked in chapter 27.

Where do we start? Look around at those who are closest to you. Spouses can share and remind each other of the good news. Parents can teach their children through reading Scripture, praying together, and by being an example in their willingness to give and share with others. In our neighborhoods, let's not confine ourselves to our homes, but see whom God has placed around us, and seek His guidance in how we can impact our neighbors for the sake of the gospel. And finally, as we go throughout each day, let's be mindful of the mission, and resolve ourselves as disciples of Jesus to give what we have to help others experience the great love of God.

We encourage you to give yourself to this mission, to be united with other believers in demonstrating your willingness to share and give to the continuing spread of the gospel. Be open-hearted to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as He guides your giving, and every day, seek to do your part to further the mission by sharing the gospel and glorifying God. - **LRK / MJB / VAA**

