

# Welcome to St Mary's Church

**Autumn 2017**

**Sermon series:**

***'The Mission of God'***



Mission. It's one of *those* words, isn't it? We're always banging on about it. And it's not just churches: everybody has one – companies, charities, even some individuals have 'mission statements'. If you're late, you might find yourself saying you're 'on a mission' to get somewhere.

**But what about God? What's *His* mission? Does He even have one? And if so, what does that mean for us? Is it just for a few specialists?**

Often we read the bible as a book about how to know God and lead a good life, and then try and find the bits about mission. *But what if the whole bible was one big mission text?* What if it's all about God's purposes for the world, a long-term vision to bring his kingdom 'on earth as it is heaven', and one day, to bring even those together, a perfect new creation under the Lordship of Jesus himself?

As Richard Stearns writes in his excellent book *Unfinished*: 'The kingdom of God was a clarion call to follow Jesus by joining him in his mission to reconcile humankind to God's purposes: [a kingdom] based on God's truth, love, forgiveness and compassion. It was a call to go into the world to reclaim, reform and restore it for Christ. It was a call to launch a revolution that involved nothing short of the overthrow of the prevailing world system. *It is not an overstatement to say that the sole reason the church exists at all is to carry out this assignment;* for, once it is completed, the church will be dissolved into God's eternal kingdom.'

**Mission is not just an add-on to the church's life. It *is* the church's life.**

Come on a journey with us this Autumn as we discover more about God's mission, and ours: what it means to live this out – in our lives, our church, and our community. We'll be taking familiar passages in Luke and reading them with new eyes on Sunday, and reflecting on them midweek. You are all warmly invited to join us in this exciting journey. We're on a mission!

### **3<sup>rd</sup> September: Intro – God’s Mission and Ours**

*John 20:19-22, Colossians 1:15-20*

‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ God is always on a mission – but the amazing news is that he invites us to be a part of it. Jesus sends us, as God sends Jesus, to bring his reign of peace and joy to the world.

*10<sup>th</sup> September: All-Age Service on a different theme*

### **17<sup>th</sup> September: Mission Priorities**

*Luke 4:14-30*

The mission of the kingdom – God’s reign of peace and joy – is good news! Freedom for prisoners and all who are oppressed, God’s favour to a needy world. But it’s easy to be distracted, to get ‘churchy’. “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing” – are our priorities aligned with God’s?

### **24<sup>th</sup> September: Mission Demonstrated**

*Luke 4:31-41*

God’s mission comes not just with words but with action – and with power. What is proclaimed is also demonstrated, in a very real sense – how can we be a church which practises what we preach?

### **1<sup>st</sup> October: The Call to Mission**

*Luke 4:42-5:11*

Jesus was always clear about his priorities. He called both communities (v44) and individuals (v10) to partner with him in living and sharing the good news. Will we hear that same call today? Fancy some ‘fishing’?

*8<sup>th</sup> September: HARVEST All-Age Service*

### **15<sup>th</sup> October: Compassionate Mission**

*Luke 5:12-26*

Mission never begins with a strategy, but with compassion. Jesus’ good news was fuelled by love, creating a desire to bless those he ministered to in tangible ways. ‘I am willing.’ Who is God calling us to walk alongside, filled and fired with His love?

## **22<sup>nd</sup> October: Mission Across Boundaries**

*Luke 5:27-39*

So far, so good. It's all upbeat, isn't it? But mission is also challenging. God calls us to get alongside surprising people, using surprising methods. What is God showing us as to whom, and how, we should minister? Are we ready to be surprised?

## **29<sup>th</sup> October: Confrontational Mission**

*Luke 6:1-11*

Mission is, on a fundamental level, about conflict. Two kingdoms collide. We are to be people of peace – but sometimes to be true to our calling will also bring confrontation. God is in control – will we, in faith, keep choosing His purposes and hold our course, come what may?

## **5<sup>th</sup> November: ALL SAINTS A Mission Community**

*Luke 6:12-26*

Jesus chooses Twelve to be with him, and then sets out an extraordinary vision of kingdom life, where the world's values are turned upside down. What kind of 'upside-down' community is God calling us to be?

*12<sup>th</sup> November: REMEMBRANCE Service*

## **19<sup>th</sup> November: Sacrificial Mission**

*Luke 6:27-36*

Following Jesus is the most exciting thing we will ever do – but there is a cost, too. He calls us literally to live like him – loving enemies, giving generously. 'Christian' means 'Little Jesus' – what is God showing us today about kingdom lifestyle?

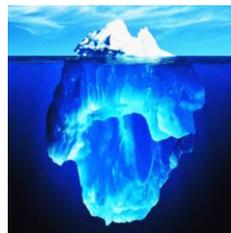
## **26<sup>th</sup> November: The Mission of the King**

*Luke 1:26-38*

The last Sunday before Advent is the 'Feast of Christ the King'. As we prepare for the excitement of the next few weeks, let's remind ourselves of who this King is – one who will 'reign for ever', whose 'kingdom will never end.' Our mission is about the here and now – but it is also eternal. How can we be investing for eternity today in The Mission of God?

## Going Deeper – Midweek Meetings

To underline the importance of this series in our life as a church, we're offering two different midweek meetings, which are open to all in our churches, and to which you are all warmly invited!



### **Wednesday Afternoon Group 1.15-2.45pm @ Wavendon Rectory.**

A chance to discuss Sunday's theme informally as part of a group. Tea and coffee on tap! Begins Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, meeting weekly.

### **A Wednesday evening (7.30-9pm) central event at All Saints, MK Village.**

Still informal, but with a mixture of further inputs from the front combined with discussion in groups.

*NOTE: Most weeks this will be held at All Saints, with only the first and last meetings on a Tuesday at St Mary's, to avoid other diary clashes:*

Location	Date	Topic
<u>St Marys</u>	<u>Tues</u> 12 <sup>th</sup> Sept	(1) God's Mission & Ours <i>John 20:19-22</i>
All Saints	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept	(2) Mission Priorities <i>Luke 4:14-30</i>
All Saints	Wed 27 <sup>th</sup> Sept	(3) Mission Demonstrated <i>Luke 4:31-41</i>
All Saints	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> Oct	(4) The Call to Mission <i>Luke 4:42-5:11</i>
	Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<i>No meeting scheduled</i>
All Saints	Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	(5) Compassionate Mission <i>Luke 5:12-26</i>
All Saints	Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct	(6) Mission across boundaries <i>Luke 5:27-39</i>
All Saints	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	(7) Confrontational Mission <i>Luke 6:1-11</i>
All Saints	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	(8) A Mission Community <i>Luke 6:12-26</i>
	Wed 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<i>No meeting scheduled</i>
All Saints	Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	(9) Sacrificial Mission <i>Luke 6:27-36</i>
<u>St Mary's</u>	<u>Tues</u> 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	(10) The Mission of the King <i>Luke 1:26-38</i>

Although we are encouraging people to come regularly, please feel free to come to whatever you can. The evening sessions in particular will be self-contained so you can dip in and join us for any particular evening.