

Living Water Ministry News

March 2020
Volume 29, Issue 2

HIM WE PREACH

The Apostle Paul was certainly a man on a mission. We know that his mission was to preach the crucified and risen Christ. In his letter that we have been studying, Colossians, he wrote “Him we preach” (Col. 1:28). This statement follows the glorious description of Christ (vv. 15-18), the glorious reconciling work of Christ (vv. 19-23), and the logical response of Paul to these truths—to render sacrificial service (vv. 24-29). It also sets the stage for chapter two, where Paul will begin to warn the church. Paul teaches us that it is this gospel that is the power of God unto salvation.

Living Water Ministry (LWMN) is excited to announce that its Christ-centered approach to ministry will now be extended to returning citizens of every type. We pray that the Lord will use us to reach those who are weary and heavy laden with the message of Christ’s redeeming and liberating love. Christ commanded his disciples to go out into the highways and byways and compel souls to come in (Lk. 14:23). Paul preached the gospel message to Jews, gentiles, kings, prisoners, and guards. It is fairly safe and surely comfortable ministering to the church and those who profess the name of Christ. But, to reach out to the brokenness and darkness of those living severed from God and His Christ is spiritual warfare and ministry in the trenches.

*“Him we preach...”
(Col. 1:28, NKJV).*

As supporters of the Lord’s kingdom extension through this ministry, I ask that you come alongside us in this endeavor. We desperately need your prayers, particularly for wisdom in this new endeavor, that our ears would be attentive to His voice in His Word and that our hearts would have courage to run hard after it. In addition to prayer, we are looking for help in two other areas: volunteers and housing.

Volunteers are the backbone of any ministry. Often, I have had volunteers testify that it is they who are the ones being ministered to. These very same dear saints often had great internal battles before volunteering, with the enemy, the flesh, and the world all having their assault on them. We have many opportunities to serve: from mentoring to office help, and handymen to professional service needs. Come serve alongside us, but be warned—you will likely end up being ministered to!

Lastly, our immediate need is housing. LWMN realizes, that with the new ministry focus, our need for more homes to offer men a Christ-centered living environment will greatly increase. If you have a house that you would like to sell, please contact us. We are a non-profit that operates on a very small budget with very little overhead, but through us the Lord has had a very large impact on many lives. We currently own three homes debt free and are looking for two more in the immediate future.

Thank you all for considering us, for praying for us, and for supporting us.



*Serving Men Paroling from
Prison and At-Risk Youth*

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Living Water Ministry Network Annual Banquet

*Has been rescheduled
for October 6, 2020
6:30pm*

**“CHRIST IN YOU,
THE HOPE OF GLORY”**

**English Hills
Event Center, Ballroom**

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Registered 501(c)3 Non-Profit



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FREE

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

A promise and a caution. Christ set us free from the burden of our sin. We are now free to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit, we have the power to say "no" to all unrighteous deeds. In His power, we can flee all the temptation that is common to mankind. We can turn our backs on the culture that does not have righteous values. We are free to use the spiritual gifts God has given to all of us.

The caution, then, is that when all is going well with us, we tend to return to the sinful ways that had us in their grip. The culture starts to look attractive and we join in, as "everyone is doing it." Stand firm—live free from the sin that entangles. Live in victory. Flee those sinful temptations. Be free.

FIRST IMPRESSION

A tall man with a kindly face intercepted me as I strode across the reception atrium of the Grand Rapids Greyhound terminal. In the first few hours of my release from a 20-year incarceration, I traveled the lower peninsula's beltline and found myself in the city for the first time. Meeting up with Greg Oliver at this bus station was my whole plan.

The only people I knew from Grand Rapids were still in prison. I walked through the terminal, all of my things bundled in a large, clear garbage bag, with a stern look of purpose belying my anxiety. The stately man asked me to confirm his suspicion—that I was the man he had come for.

I took my second big leap when I said to him, "Yes, that is me." The first big leap came when I initially agreed to come and live with Living Water Ministry Network.

The decision to come to LWMN was an easy one. Being long estranged from me, none of my family or friends were asking me to come do my parole with them. Besides, the ministry's living rules and expectations seemed a good fit. All that was left for me, as I emerged that day from the coach, was to dive in and start my new life. A lot of hope and faith urged me on—hope that the people behind the ministry really were God's people, and faith that God was behind my acceptance into the ministry.

Greg asked about my trip. He wanted to know if I was hungry. He quietly listened as I talked on around my nervousness. As we hustled about meeting my first day obligations, I sensed that he was serving me. I felt dignified and cared for. We talked about some of the things I would face, and I believed that I would be challenged but not alone.

Our arrival at the Franklin home that first night confirmed that fact as Kurt and the residents warmly welcomed me. I was given every accommodation including plenty of space. They left me to decompress and safely contemplate how I would meet the world.

Under the ministry, I have full responsibility for the turns my life takes. The days bring plenty of challenges. They threaten to overwhelm me, but I am reminded that I am not alone. My parole officer works with the ministry. The ministry works with agents of change in the community, and I am renewed daily by their gifts and talents and by the grace flowing through their examples of dedication.

In all, the marks of God's work through his earthly kingdom have been clear to me in this experience. The unconditional love, authority, unity, and lasting charisma of LWMN has definitely confirmed that the faith and hope of my leap were God-breathed.

IMPACT OF LIVING WATER MINISTRY ON MY LIFE

During the last twelve years of my life, there have been more changes than in the previous 33. I am now 64 years old, and one thing I have learned is that *life begins when you accept Christ into your life*, not when you are born. While I was in prison, I truly came to understand what it meant to give my life over to the Lord. I learned to depend on faith alone for the first time in my life. It was not until I arrived at LWMN that I really got to see God in action.

From the moment I walked in the door at the home, I was greeted with a fierce and loyal love from so many people that I had never met before. LWMN provided me with a reassuring love and kindness combined with answers to all my needs. All I had when I got out of prison was the shirt on my back, a box of junk, and a truckload of medical problems — the least of which was a malignant tumor that was threatening my very life. Undaunted, LWMN immediately began to find solutions for everything from medical needs to shoes on my feet. The speed at which issues were taken care of was blinding. Nothing was too difficult or costly. I say that with the understanding that although it cost me nothing, others gave until it hurt without reservation.

I could go on and on but it would fill a book with all the miracles I witnessed and got to be a part of. All I know is this has made a huge and permanent change in my life. I am now cancer free for over two years, own my own vehicle and home, and have money in savings. God put me in this ministry for a reason and I can never thank or pay Him back for all that has been done on my behalf. All I can do is accept God's grace and pay it forward every chance I get. I do not really know how to thank all the various individuals of LWMN for all they have done except to never let their hard work in my life be in vain.