



A John and Eileen Sala Prison and Teaching  
Ministry

# Little Lambs

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Dear Little Lambs,

How thankful we are to have the Olympics behind us. Once the bastion of amateur athletics, the Olympics have made a mockery of the word “amateur.” Consider this. The twelve members of the U.S. men’s basketball team earned a combined *annual salary* last year in excess of 300 million dollars. You heard that right! That’s more than the entire national budget of some of the smaller countries gathered in Paris.

However, before we say goodbye to Simone Biles et al, may we suggest to the Olympic Committee that a relatively new sport be added to the 2028 Los Angeles Games. This “sport” is uniquely American and is spreading like wildfire across the country. Probably, we have all talked to someone involved in the sport, or perhaps we have even been that someone. And this sport is so new that it does not even have a tacky name like “pickleball.” Open to everyone, men and women (and those in between), young and old, prince and pauper, this new sport is: **Searching for a new church home.** Laugh if you must, but this movement has almost become a national pastime in America. And really, what could possibly be more important in *my Christian walk* than asking “What can this church do for *me*?” Don’t *I* have a right to be comfortable?

The sport of searching for a church that meets *my* needs is a new phenomenon. In our grandparents’ day, a small town might have had only a couple churches to choose from. But today, the sheer number of churches across America is staggering, and the many choices on the church menu are very tempting.

The basic rules, the “whys and wherefores” of the game are fluid. First, does the church sing the songs that *I* like? If “The Old Rugged Cross” was good enough for my Grandpa, then it’s good enough for me. Secondly, does the preacher talk about money all the time? Jesus never did. Thirdly, some of those so-called “praise bands” have drums and guitars, cymbals and even trumpets. You know, if God wanted those things to be used, He would have said so in the Bible. And look out for the crazies who raise their hands and clap and even shout. What are they thinking?!! And does the Pastor run past the allotted sermon time with an “altar call?” That’s a real non-starter for *me*. Time and space do not permit but we could list a host of other serious concerns—a too-early 9:00 a.m. start time, the color of the carpet in the sanctuary and all that preaching from the Old Testament. Wasn’t that repealed a long time ago? You can see how important it is for *me* to find *my* niche.

If you have not detected a blather of sarcasm, you should have your pulse checked. But the “me first” philosophy illustrated here is a pandemic far worse than the Chinese variety. That whole concept is wrong-headed and contrary to the Word of God. It has permeated every aspect of our culture and it has poisoned our churches—and that is no laughing matter. Self-denial is such a bedrock principal of New Testament theology. No Scripture is more definitive than Jesus’ own words: **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”** Luke 9:23 (KJV).

Even posing the question “What can this church do for *me*?” suggests a dangerous misconception—to think that “church” is all about me, myself and I. Not as an excuse but no doubt part of that fantasy stems from ten-thousand self-centered t.v. commercials, like Burger King’s incessant “Have it your way.” Well my friends, we cannot always have it *our* way and still follow Christ. We must put the other guy first for a change. And don’t think of ourselves more highly than we should. Selfishness is but another form of unrighteousness. And *my selfishness* can rob the other man of his favorite hymn; or worse yet, cheat someone who really, really needs that altar call.

So if the “church search” bug bites, why not ask a different question, “What can I do *here* to be a part of God’s plan?” Or just find out where God is working in your church and join Him. And besides, rumor has it that the Olympic Committee has already decided on the next new sport—Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.”

Blessings to all,  
Mike Rider, Volunteer

Hello Little Lamb, Greetings from William B. I am writing you to ask for a Bible Study. You are God's love to me! There is no better love to me like you all in the world. You may say I am not just someone's pen pal hobby! I am not a hobby! I am a person, created in the image of God. I know you all would like to bring light into my life. The light of the good news that changed my life. I need y'all's help. Jesus, God's son, died for me as my substitute so that I can live in heaven with God forever, being totally forgiven, not because of anything that I could ever do, but as God's free gift to me because of his love for me. In spite of who I am and how I've messed things up in this life, but I would like you all to offer me an opportunity to study God's Word through Little Lambs School of the Bible, please. Thank you all. We always want to remember, it's not how we start, but how we finish the race that matters. No matter what kind of start my life had, I can have a new life in Christ and He will see me through to the finish line, or even carry me over that line if He needs to and take me home to be with Him forever, when I become his child and follower. Thanks for reading my letter. I know you all don't judge no one; Christ has freely forgiven us! *Of course we enrolled William immediately into our bible study. We are very excited to be a part of his spiritual growth.*



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Dear Mrs. John Sala Hello Mrs. Sala! I hope you have ben doing well. My name is Brian M. I just finished reading you incredible story! And let me tell you, that was inspiring! I just wanted to thank you for sharing your story. I am 30 years old and in prison for just one year! Before I read your book, I was stressed out and depressed. Due to the fact I also hurt a lot of my family members because of alcohol and drugs. I can relate when you told the story of your father drinking. My father also drank and ended up dying because of it. As also the oldest in my family I feel bad I didn't lead as an example. I thank God my little brother didn't follow my footsteps. Anyway, I just wanted to say your story moved me and made me go back into reading the scripture and looking things on the bright side! I have a girl friend with an alcohol problem also. On probation, she stopped drinking and has been going to church and reading the bible! I am going to write her and talk about your story. I'm going to go to our Chaplin when I'm out of orientation and get right with God! I need to repent! I've been doing things wrong in my life so much and wondered why things went wrong especially in my relationship with my girlfriend. She told me that it's because we didn't put God in the center of our relationship. If you can please pray for Brian and Jasmine! *Brian gave us the address of his girlfriend and we will reach out to her this week with an offer to do the bible Study.*

Dear Partners,

I am happy to say I am back at work at the ministry and writing to you now. Although I have been here physically, every day, it was not a full capacity. Now I am so much better! I sincerely want to thank each and every one of you who prayed for me. There were times I was unable to pray and knowing that my friends were praying for me lifted above my circumstances. On August 26, I had spinal surgery in Sarasota for a ruptured disc. Alas, because of the nature of the disc and surgery, I was given the task of doing nothing but waiting for it to heal. No bending, no twisting, no lifting, no stretching, no sitting, Only walking was permitted. I fully hope that the disc has re-encapsulated itself and will cause no more problems. Through your prayers and my daughters, I made it through these 5 weeks with one more week to go. Please, never underestimate your prayers. God can move mountains through you. Through the ladies and men at the office who took care to see me every day and watched over me and through Aldo and the men at 2nd Chance Ministry who did countless things for me that I could not do for myself, I want to thank you! I can truthfully give credit to a very talented surgeon and my daughters, and prayer that I am healed and returning to my old self.

Now I can only imagine what all our prayers for the inmates can achieve. There are many prisons in North Florida that were in the path of the hurricane that need prayer. America needs prayer, Israel needs more prayer, our schools and children need prayer, our loved ones need prayer, government needs prayer, the hurricane victims need prayer. We could ask the Lord to show people through His eyes. Prayer, for this reason I am so grateful that "His mercies are new every morning! Great is thy faithfulness."

Your servant, Eileen Sala