

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

I'LL BE YOUR SERVER

You sit down at a restaurant and someone with a white towel over his arm comes over, announces his name, and says "*I'll be your server.*" You expect service. Just like the Israelites 2,000 years ago were expecting the Messiah to come and take their order, based on their Old Testament expectations. And at His first advent, Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies - except those yet to come.

That's where we fit in. We're like people waiting for our server to finish up his service - at Jesus' second advent. Except Jesus gave US His towel and role, telling us to serve - in His place - until He comes. You are saved to serve. "*Be like Me*" He says. Here are four ways to be intentional about serving.

1- Jesus is THE Servant-Leader. The prophet Micah says "He will be ruler" and "He will shepherd His people." In Matthew 20:25 the disciples ask to sit at His right hand to rule in His kingdom. We want the same thing. But Jesus says, "*Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.*" This is more than an example, it's a command. Jesus leads you as He models serving. You are to become the servant of others, for Jesus' sake.

2- You follow Jesus by serving. His followers are to become like Him in every way. Your basic instinct is self-preservation. But Jesus says in Luke 9:23, "*If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save His life will lose it, but whoever loses His life for My sake will save it.*" You might be waiting for the second advent of Jesus - but if you're not busy serving Him right now, then you're not ready for His coming, or for your rising in resurrection.

You must serve like Him before you can be exalted like Him. Matthew 25:31 shows what this looks like. Jesus will come again in all His glory, sit on His throne in judgment, and say to those on His right, "*I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.*" The righteous are incredulous. When did we ever serve YOU like that? they ask. Jesus declares, "*Truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.*"

3- You live out God's love languages. People feel loved by affirming words, physical touch, focused time, receiving gifts and acts of service. That's why Christians take care of one another, like Jesus said. That's why God is glorified when you sit in a nursing home holding the hand of a tired, ailing, perhaps confused senior saint. That's serving. Not holding some office or getting up in front of the church to be noticed. Rather, it is serving everyday needs of "*the least of these.*" In Matthew 20:32 Jesus spoke to, touched and healed the blind. And the lame, paralyzed, demonized. He cared. He served.

4- You're more blessed to give than receive. The apostle Paul called himself a common slave of the King. In Acts 20:19 he reminds how he lived, "*serving the Lord with all humility and tears and trials*" and "*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*" In Matthew 10:8 Jesus said, "*You received without paying; give without pay.*" Then "*I am sending you as sheep in the midst of wolves*" and "*those who endure to the end will be saved.*"

As a re-born member of God's family, you give away your new life, to Christ, for serving others. Like Jesus. Persevering in obedience. Trusting the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the route to intentional healthy Christian growth. Becoming more like Jesus - as you trust and obey His Word.

How can you grow more like Christ if you are not serving others? Could you get enough of this spiritual exercise? Be intentional. "*I'll be your server*" is show and tell. Don't make "me" the focus of your life when Jesus says "become like ME." 2 Corinthians 4:5 declares "*we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake.*" Jesus is not just your example, He's your power.