

GPS: Serving

November 8, 2009

I Peter 4:10-11

This sermon was preached by Pastor Kurt Jacobson at Trinity Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, Grace and peace to you all.

Today we conclude the message series “God’s Positioning System - living and giving like Christ” The goal of this series is to grow your spiritual well-being. Thus far we’ve sought guidance for growing in faith by focusing on the coordinates of worship, God’s Word, and prayer. The fourth coordinate is serving.

This coordinate is at the center of our church and is seen in our mission statement: Serving in Christ’s love and sharing the Good News.” The first word, our coordinate today, shows you a very important value of Trinity. To engage with this church is to be called by God into serving through your giving of time, money, abilities and all those comprise serving. Through your serving this church does amazing things in serving up Christ’s love for people and making a difference in the world.

There are many evenings I drive home marveling at how so many people serve to make our church so vital. I see God through you and your contributions. By your serving and giving of money, time and ability - this church serves in incredibly Christ- like ways. That serving includes

- ▶ teaching people of all ages about God’s love in Christ
- ▶ fostering relationships that spiritually bless us
- ▶ caring for the aging
- ▶ providing services for those big moments in your life: (weddings, baptisms, confirmation, funerals)

Far from this building across the world our church serves to

- ▶ build decent housing where people live in squalor
- ▶ feed children left orphaned by the ravages of AIDS in the African country of Malawi

But back here in this city, our church serves to:

- ▶ support a shelter for homeless families and serve hot meals to hungry people.

This mission of “Serving in Christ’s love and sharing the Good News” has been surprisingly prospered in the past year when God challenged us to step up and grow into the demands of serving a increasing population of people looking for food. Our church and our food pantry has been booming with the demand The statistics are stunning. Hundreds of people each month receive hundreds of pounds of food from us. Three afternoons a week a line of people forms in the hallway waiting for their turn to get a bag of food from our serving volunteers.. This serving ministry has grown so rapidly in the past year that we’re looking to move it to another part of our facility to better meet the needs of our guests and our volunteers. In serving the poor who come to this church every week I see Christ’s love being shared by you and so many who support this church. Thank you.

This mission “Serving in Christ’s love and Sharing the Good News” takes on so many other directions as you take it for yourself and carry the mission forth to your place of employment, to school, to other organizations where you volunteer, to the hockey arena or gymnasium, to the Senior Center and hospitals. Every where you go, you have opportunity to serve. And by serving as people of faith you contribute to the building up of the reign of God in this world. Thank you. Your serving extends to others the love and mercy of God and you make the world a better place.

By serving in Christ's love, we together as a church trump all the rotten news that wafts around us and we transform life with the Good News that God in Christ gives people life and hope.

This GPS coordinate: Serving is probably the most direct way you and I can grow in giving and living like Christ. There is one point to remember when it comes to being guided by this coordinate of serving. To live and give like Christ - the serving we do needs to be directed by God.

. Watch this: *"Who Do you Serve"* www.sermonspice.com

Have you ever asked yourself: "Who is the boss of my life?" Or to ask it another way "Who directs my life?"

We live in a culture where making our own way is highly esteemed. From an early age we receive accolades for our achievements and successes. We learn to think of them as being of our own making. By the time we reach adulthood we're well on the way to thinking "I direct my life!"

We love stories of the "self-made man or woman." The public's appetite is large for accounts of the underdog - like Meb Keflezighi who won the NYC marathon last Sunday. Growing up as an immigrant boy in California, Meb encountered enormous challenges to excel as a runner and becomes the first citizen of this country to win the marathon since 1982.

When we start to believe that our lives are self-directed and our successes self-achieved it's time to turn on the GPS and get the coordinate of serving. Serving others has the power to re-direct us when we start to think "I direct my life."

Here is something I want you to hear very clearly! If you take nothing else from my message today, please take this: You were created to serve God. You were created to serve God not just with your thoughts or your words. But with your life. When you serve in Christ's love, God will guide your life in amazing ways and provide opportunities and joys that you have yet to dream.

Look at these words: (Ephesians 2:10) *"For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."*

God has given each one of us the honor - the privilege of doing good works - on God's behalf and for this world. Neat, huh? God thinks so much of each of us that God decided *beforehand* - before you could ever prove yourself - before you had ever achieved any successes in order to impress God - before you were a known commodity to the world - God gave you the honor of serving and doing good works on God's behalf.

You know, from time to time I listen to people who are weary in their jobs or the grind at home. It's natural to wonder at times about our purpose - or whether we're doing what God wants us to do. But it really is simple - serve wherever you are and claim the honor of doing good works.

God has created you for a purpose - to do good works and build God's reign on earth as you serve with your time, money, and your abilities. How you do this is an opportunity God gives you every day. Sometimes it's scary to let God direct your life. Sometimes it takes great courage to step out and give. But when you put your faith into action - when your choices are guided by the truth that God has created you to do good works - the rewards are endless. By all the ways you serve others you bring glory to God and you live the answer to the questions: Who directs my life." Watch this: *"Where, What, Who"* www.sermonspice.com

This week you have a choice to show who's most important in your life. Your serving and giving to support this church is so very important. Thank you for the choices you'll make this week to live and give like Christ. Amen.