

Wait Watchers

Wise Waiting vs. Self-Serving

October 9, 2022

Today we're talking about how we hate to wait!



So without any further delay, answer *this*: **Are you a good waiter or more self-server?** Have you ever waited tables? If so, on behalf of *everyone*, I'm so sorry for how we are. Know why we refer to *servers* as *waiters*? Which I'm using for *both* sexes. **'Serving' requires attentive 'waiting'**.



Ever sit at a restaurant waiting for a *menu*; waiting to have your *order taken*; waiting for more *bread* or *water* or *coffee*? If you're the one doing the *waiting* there's something *wrong* with your *waiter*. The roles are *reversed*. **The waiter is making you wait on them!** And we can do that with the *Lord*. Cuz, **when we're not waiting, we're not serving**. So how often do you make the *Lord* wait on you to wait on *Him*?



[When a crowd] [of self-servers] gathered, so that they were *trampling on one another*, [not so good at waiting on the Lord] Jesus began to speak *first* to His *disciples* ... – Luke 12:1 NIV



... about *hypocrisy*. Prime example: **trampling on others to get to a selfless Savior**. He's *partnering up* His *apprentice servers* and *preparing to send* 'em out, without a *wallet*, a *lunchbox*, a *suitcase*, or a change of *clothes*! Saying:



"Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are *waiting* for their master [**eagerly and expectantly**] to *come home* from the *marriage feast*, so that they may open to him at once when he comes [**home**] and knocks." – Luke 12:35-36 RSV

Know how to gird your loins? Wrap yourself in a sheet, and reach down to the hem, and take it up and tuck it tightly into your waist belt. And *voila!* You're *ready to serve!* This is how **good waiters prepare to serve** and **good servers prepare to wait**. And in the *same way*, *believers* must ...

Take up the full armor of God ... having girded your loins with truth ... and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; – Ephesians 6:13-15 NAS

But you can't gird your *waist* and *thighs* with truth.

Therefore *gird up the loins of your mind* ... as obedient *children*, – 1 Peter 1:13-15 NKJ

Wrap yourself in *Scripture*, and reach down to your *heart*, and take it back up and tuck it tightly into your *think tank*. And *voila!* You're *ready to serve!* Cuz **we gird with His Word**. Which *requires* "having *shod* your feet with the *preparation* of the *Gospel*". What's the *preparation* of the *Gospel*?



The Old Testament! *Jesus' Bible*, about which Psalm 119:105 says, "Your Word is a Lamp to my feet and a Light to my path." Which is why our Head Waiter says to "let your *loins* be *girded* and your *lamps burning*", *eagerly* "waiting"! Ever have a *great server anticipate your needs*? **Ever give a ridiculous tip because the server was just so good?** The guy in the photo just got \$1,200! Whenever a waiter makes you wait, you know they're not paying *attention*, cuz they're *distracted*. Ever been the table with the unlit candle? And you have to *ask* to have it lit. And *then* they *can't* find a *lighter*? Don't be *that*. Wouldn't you rather receive a *ridiculous tip*? Well then:

"Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning ... [like men] **eagerly** waiting for their master [lit. Lord] to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes **home** and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; **home** truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them." – Luke 12:35-37 RSV

Why? Serve them *what*? The food from the feast. Why do you think it's in the story? Why eat that late? No refrigeration. It won't keep much longer. **Share his joy immediately or miss the opportunity.** In Revelation, Jesus urges all His sleepy servers, saying:

Behold, I stand at the door **of My own home** and knock. If anyone **awake and waiting** hears My voice and opens the door, **eagerly and immediately** I will come in to him **cuz our heart is Christ's home** and dine with him, and he with Me. – Revelation 3:20 NKJ

We've been posted, "as obedient children" **to brightly shine by girding our mind with the 'Him' of our heart**, so we'll throw ourselves open when He comes *knockin'*. Why does their lord "gird himself and have them sit at the table" "and serve them"? It's been a *long day*. Why not *bless 'em* with the *leftovers* and hit the *hay*? *Obviously*, **they're not merely His servants ... they're his friends**. At the Last Supper, Jesus asks the boys He calls His "little children" (Mt 10:42, 11:25) an *intriguing question*.

"Who is greater, he who sits at the table, or He who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves." **Ponder that, boys** – Luke 22:27 NKJ

And ^{13:4} [Jesus] laid aside His garments, **["What's He doing?!"]** took a towel and girded Himself ... ^{13:5} and began to wash the *disciples' feet*, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. **[Leave it to Jesus to take humble love to a whole new level!]** ... **And** [He said to them] "I have given you an *example*, that you should do as I have done to you. **[But don't misinterpret His friendship]** ^{13:16} Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant **[who is served by his master]** is not greater than his Master;" **[just as children sitting at the table aren't greater than the parents who serve]** ... ^{15:12} "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **[As a parent]** ... ^{15:14} You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ^{15:15} No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends," – John 13:4-16; 15:12-15 NKJ

We also know the servants are the master's friends, cuz they knew what he was coming to do.

And, at the Last Supper, right in the middle of what we just read, Jesus said:

Let not *your* heart be troubled ... I *am* going away *and* coming *back* to you. – John 14:27-28 NKJ

In the story, the master's servants aren't eagerly waiting simply for the incredible midnight meal he'll be bringing, but because **he's caring and loving and weirdly wonderful**, and makes his *servants* sit at *his* table, and girds *himself* as *their* servant, and serves *them* with *incredible joy!*

Ever wait up for your mom or dad to return from a trip, motivated by the *reunion*, which was only *heightened* by any *gifts* they might be *bringing*? Well, it's not enough to just be waiting; **we must be eagerly anticipating our Father and Friend**. Could you imagine that kid saying, "Yeah-yeah, you came home – now *give* me that *bear!*"

And if [their lord] should *come* in the *second* watch, [9^{PM}–12^{AM}] or *come* in the *third* watch, [12^{AM}–3^{AM}] and find them so, [awake and alert] blessed are *those* servants. – Luke 12:38 NKJ



Why? Only a few will *stay* up, *girded* up. Thus, **the good waiters get the lion's share!** So how do we stay *awake* and *alert* and *girded* up? **Rest up. Gear up. Freshen up. And partner up.** Cuz Jesus gets *dark*:



But know *this*, that if the [sleepy head] master of the [master's] house had known what hour the *thief* would come, he *would* have [stayed awake and] watched and not allowed his [master's] house to be broken into. [So why won't he make the same effort for his master?] Therefore you *also* be *ready*, for the Son of Man is coming [to give and take] at an hour you do not expect." – Luke 12:39-40 NKJ

"I *come* [unexpectedly] like a *thief!* [to faithful-server and self-server alike] Blessed is he who *stays awake* and keeps his clothes *with* him," [loins girded] – Revelation 16:15 NIV

[Because] The Lord *gives*, and the Lord *takes away*. – Job 1:21 CSB

When someone *dies unexpectedly*, we even say that their *life* was *taken* from them. So **are you prepared to meet your Maker?** On average, someone's life flashes before their eyes, and they die, every time that *light* flashes. *Two deaths per second* down here. And with that in mind, listen how Jesus pleads with those who aren't prepared to *meet* and *greet* Him when He *comes*.

"Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to *die*, for ... if you do not wake up, I *will* come like a *thief*, and you *will not* know at what time I will come to you. ... [But] They [who are ready and waiting] will walk with Me, *dressed* in *white*," – Revelation 3:2-5 NIV

Minds girded, hearts guarded, and footlights burning – and *all* by the light of God's Word.

Therefore thus says the Lord God: [through Isaiah] "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you [self-servers] shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you [self-servers] shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you [self-servers] shall be ashamed; behold, My servants shall sing for *joy* of heart, but you [self-servers] shall cry for *sorrow* of heart" ... [for the Lord God will] call His servants by another name; – Isaiah 65:13-15 NKJ

And in Revelation, Jesus gives us clues to solve Isaiah's riddle of our new name; saying He'll give us a new name, *and* record *His* new name on us; (Rev 2:17, 3:12) and it seems we'll all *share* the *same new name*. Which is *His* name. *And* ours. Curious? *Well ... why?* We just read it.

Jesus said: "No longer do I *call* you *servants*" ... "I have called you *friends*". Get it? It's *His* name, *and* *our* name, and we all have the *same* name. And **His true friends don't misinterpret His friendship**. They *treasure* it. Jesus said that many will basically say, on that *final day*, "Did we not *serve* you?" (Mt 7:22) Yet, He'll reply, "**I never knew you**" (Mt 7:23) ... *as friend*. When a negligent *waiter* arrives with the *bill*, expecting a *tip*, don't *you* want to say, "I never *knew* you." So:

If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... As for *me* and *my* household, *we* will *serve* the *Lord*. – Joshua 24:15 NIV

Because, **our best blessings won't come from being served**. That's a *lie* of the *self-serving*. **Deep joy comes from seeing a need and seizing the moment**. And yet, we miss out on *so* many *golden, God-given, door-knocking opportunities* to *bless* and be *blessed*, because our *minds* aren't *girded*, our *hearts* aren't *guarded*, our *lamps* aren't *burning*, and we're sleeping on the job. But *why?*



You *know* very *well* that the *Day* of the Lord will come like a *thief* in the *night*. ... [You] are not in *darkness* so that this *Day* should surprise you like a *thief*. ... So then, let us not be like *others*, who are *asleep*, but let us be *alert* – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-8 NIV



We choose *this* day to prepare for *that* day by **daily practicing eagerly opening our heart when our Lord comes knocking**. I used to run five miles from my house, to the cross on Burlington Hill and back. It took *forever* to build up to doing it without stopping. But when I finally could, I decided to *time* myself. I ran my *heart out*. And it was like the Lord was giving me *breath* and *stamina* I'd never had. And I knew I'd never have a run this good again; and I *haven't*. Two miles *to* the hill! *Up* the hill! *Down* the hill!



Half a mile from home, I could *feel* how *good* I was *going* to *feel* about *myself*, when a girl on my path, along Hwy 20, waved me to stop, and asked me to walk with this oddly elegantly dressed, elderly woman. So I *stopped* and *walked* with the woman ... with the *worst heart ever!*

But, my heart softened as it became clear that she had dementia – especially when I had to physically restrain her from running into traffic, when a truck sped past with a big dog barking in the back. She assured me it was her husband John, and he would stop to pick her up. Trying to distract her, I asked if they had a dog. She said, "*Nope!* But it's *just* like *John* to pick up a *stray*."

When I finally got home, I realized I'd set *two* records: **worst time ever**, and **best run ever**. But *only* the *second* one had *eternal* value; and *no one* can rob me of *that*. And yet, **all I did was put a brief pause on serving me as the center of my universe**. Jesus *doesn't* demand *much*. He's our *Friend*. He *only* wants us to *do* what we'll *wish* we had *done* on the *last* day He *comes*.

Unexpectedly. Any second now.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.