

## YOUNG CHUCK MIZE

*April 3, 2011*

I am Chuck Mize, and today is April 3rd, 1981. I don't know why I'm here. I hate cold weather. I also hate football. Baseball is a real man's sport.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I grew up an only child in a small oil refinery town called Wood River, in Illinois. My father was an electrician so, naturally, I was destined to be an electrician. I used to build radios out of the small kits I ordered and got in the mail. But my true calling was to be a minister, which I got from a family that moved down the street from our house. There was a UCC church in Wood River, and I got to know the pastor's family through his son.

I was on my bike talking to him and I go: *I love to build radios.* And he goes: *Really? My dad built a color TV. A color TV? I have to see it.* So I went over and since then I was very close friends with the family. After talking to him, I found out that my true calling was to be a minister. My parents didn't like that. I had to be an engineer or an electrician.

So, I decided what I wanted to do with my life, and I went to college. College was really fun for me. I made a lot of really good friends, including a very nice girl named Jeanie. I like her. I graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in history and theology. Then I moved on to Eden Seminary, after which I was then ordained in 1980. I then moved northeast of St. Louis, listening to the radio – Go, Cardinals! – and I started preaching at two small churches right there.

What I wanted to do as a pastor was to make people remember who they were living their lives for. As Christians, we cannot forget about God, but we do that from time to time. But usually, one of the only times we do remember God is when we need something or something very wonderful happens to us and we don't know whom to thank. We have cycles in our life: we eat, sleep, we go to work. We make time for friends. We had business meetings. And we watch the Cardinals win. Yeah.

Jesus talked about service, washing people's feet. As a minister, I had a goal in my life: to serve people and share God's word with them. I have a question for you. How can I be of service? How can you be a servant in your life? How can you serve others? Jesus also talked about love...a bond God has kept with us since our creation...a bond which we should all have with one another. As a minister, I will strive to make it known that we must love one another, forgive each other for our sins and our mistakes, and care for one another as if we were caring for ourselves. Jesus' whole life was one of service and love. All His teachings taught us to do the same. He had us put aside our lives and remember what it means to be a child of God.

My job as a minister is to make this known. I must serve to spread Jesus' teachings and service of love. I want to do the best to be the best minister I can, because there's nothing better than serving others. I want you to do the same: serve others to the best of your ability because there's nothing else in the eyes of God. So I stand before you, a 25-year-old, newly minted minister from Wood River, Illinois, an electrician and electronics maven by avocation, starting on a journey to help people realize to embrace God, His teachings into their lives and those who do will live much more meaningful lives and help others.

Just thinking about God's teachings...thinking about how to live our lives right isn't the end product, though. We have to do it. Jesus wasn't bashful. He was a teacher, a model, a provocateur. He said we can't just stand around and watch. We have to do it. Think about Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. They impacted the world.

But let's bring it closer to home base. Each of us has people we look up to and admire, people who have stepped out in front and made good things happen who understand people's needs and help them fulfill them. Think about servant leadership. Indeed, once you start thinking about this, you will constantly see people doing work that God intends. You will see the needs of others and figure out how to solve them. Just go and do it.

It's 1981. We have to deal with great partisanship to do with mismanagement of our leaders and the leaders who have killed their people, and covet power and misuse it. Cicero talked about this in the ancient Roman Empire. We still don't get it. So think about it. How do we take the teachings of God through Jesus to speak the gospel and live a life of love and service doing God's will and impact – truly impact – those who totally ignore the principles and create misery for others throughout the world. Think about it. It's 1981. Don't you think it should stop? That's why I became a minister. Go Cardinals!

Young Charles E. Mize (Patrick Corish)  
Union Congregational United Church of Christ  
Green Bay, Wisconsin  
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