

**Week 21 – Follow The Needle**

**Rev. Dr. Palmer Wold**

*You will guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory. – Psalm 73:24*

A young African convert prayed, “O Lord, You are the needle and I am the thread!” Why did he pray such a prayer?

One day while visiting a school, he had watched some girls sewing. He noticed that wherever the needle went, the thread was sure to follow. In that simple domestic task, he saw a great spiritual truth. He knew that if he were to stay close to the Lord and depend upon Him completely, the Holy Spirit would have to lead him at all times.

Relying totally on the Lord give a person more freedom with less frustration. A man once asked his friend, “How can you look so pleasant all the time? Just this afternoon, you had all kinds of setbacks and difficulties. I know that you wanted to get more work done than you did.” “Well,” replied the other, “every morning I give my day to Christ; then simply take what He sends. Why should I complain about the service that He has appointed me to do?”

Some people say that they want to be led by the Lord but then are unsure of what to do. E.C. Baird has given a brief but thought-provoking response to that comment.

*You ask, what is the will of God?  
Well, here is the answer true;  
The nearest thing, that should be done,  
That He can do – through you!*

Just as the thread follows the needle, so let us follow where the Savior leads.

*Question: What opportunities has God led you to today? Are you following-through?*

**Week 22 – From the Inside Out**

**Pastor Jim Bjorge  
(Edited by Pastor Darrin Vick)**

*Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’” – John 3:5-7*

I read of an actress once who decided to make a pet of a pig. She provided a silk lounge for him to sleep on at night; she shampooed his hide, manicured his hoofs, penciled his eyebrows, and even curled his tail. However, one day when the door to his pen had been accidentally left open, the pig slipped out and

wandered away. And you guessed it, he found a mud puddle and in he plunged. He was born with a love for mud and nothing had ever happened to change that desire.

But people are something like that. We always seem to think that things will be different after a new dress, a new house, a new community, maybe even a new mate. It does not take long to discover that we are the same old persons, and the external changes have no power to make us new.

The Bible tells us that we are sinful by nature...that is, we are rebels against God. Thus we are outside his family, and in the story of Nicodemus, Jesus tell us we need a second birth in order to become sons of God. True, it is a spiritual birth of faith. It is letting God invade the very center of our lives with his forgiveness and love. Then there is a new start, and it begins at the dead center of our beings.

*Question: How are you being born again each day as a follower of Jesus?*

### **Week 23 – No Fear!**

**Pastor Darrin Vick**

*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you not forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. – Deuteronomy 31:8*

It may come as a surprise to some people, but I am not a naturally courageous person. I battle with fear. I struggle with worry. I second-guess myself and get discouraged. Being a pastor is not a cure for any of these very human conditions. If you are in any kind of leadership – business, community, congregation, or family – you know that there are times when you wonder if you are doing things right and doing the right things. That is why I have Deuteronomy 31:8 memorized and taped to the top of my laptop keyboard.

I'm convinced that Joshua must have struggled with these same kinds of feelings. Why else would the Bible record the Lord giving encouragement to Joshua **nine times!**?! He was following after Moses and had some big shoes to fill! He had been entrusted with the whole nation of Israel to lead them into the promised land. There would be many battles to fight and obstacles to overcome in this land of promise – giant warriors, fortified cities, and powerful armies. But there were also battles to be fought within his people – unfaithful generals and foolish treaties. Joshua needed constant encouragement to be “strong and courageous” in the face of inner weakness and fear. And he received it from God’s word and from those around him.

Being afraid or being discouraged is not a sin but it can lead us down some pretty dark paths if we don’t listen to God’s encouragement. The greatest encouragement of all is knowing that you are not alone in your fears. God promises to be with you and to get out in front of you - just as he promised to be with Joshua. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. The Lord is with you!

*Question: What is your greatest fear? Do you believe God is greater?*

### **Week 24 – What’s the Password?**

**Pastor Palmer Wold**

*Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. – Ecclesiastes 11:1*

During the Civil War, a sentry demanded from a man on horseback a password in order to proceed. The man's response was the word "Lincoln."

A deadly silence followed because it was not the right word. Then the sentry said, "If I hadn't recognized you, I would have shot you because of your mistake. At the risk of my own life, I am sparing yours. Go back and get the right password."

Thanking the soldier warmly, the man rode away. When he returned he gave the correct password "Massachusetts." The sentry let him advance.

The man then said, "I will not pass until I have given you a message. At the risk of your own life, I must ask you if you have the right password for heaven?"

"Yes, I do," answered the sentry. "It is Jesus Christ. And, Sir, I know that because you told me. Although you don't recognize me, I was in your Sunday school class long ago. You planted a seed when I was just little and now it's grown to bear fruit." The sentry went on to say, "I recognized you when you were here the first time and I knew you were an honest man. That is why I gave you a second chance."

Question: Does God give second chances?