

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekly Devotions – June

Week 17 – Time to Recharge

By Pastor Palmer Wold

*And he said to them, come aside into a desert place and rest a while. – Mark 6:31*

Christians want to serve the Lord but there are times when they find themselves totally exhausted. It's not unusual for good Sunday School teachers to feel "down" periodically. Even choir directors can find themselves tired of calling and recalling people for practice if it happens too frequently.

Our Lord is aware of our human frailties. He knows that we need time to relax and recharge our spiritual batteries. When He was on earth, teaching and healing along with His disciples, He told them, "Come aside into a desert place and rest awhile." He knew that their spirits could be revived only through quiet reflection and meditation.

A missionary to Africa told of an experience that he had when he engaged a number of villagers to serve as guides. Because he was in a hurry and needed them to cover as much ground as possible, he pushed them on relentlessly. Finally one of the guides stopped and refused to move. Asked why, the guide responded, "We have been going too fast. We must pause and wait for our souls to catch up with our bodies!"

Take time each day to rest. Choose a Bible verse and reflect on it. Let the presence of Christ saturate you thinking and then relax in His love.

Question: Are you in the habit of regular rest or constant restlessness?

Week 18 – Harvest Now!

By Pastor Darrin Vick

*Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. – John 4:35*

I do not pretend to know anything, first-hand, about farming. Having grown up in the suburbs of the Twin Cities, the closest I came to farm life was an occasional trip to the Farmer's Market or picking up a dozen ears of corn at a roadside stand. But since coming to Siouxland, my curiosity and appreciation of farming (and farmers) has grown immensely.

One of the things I have learned from the farmers in our congregation is that timing is critical when it comes to planting and harvesting a good crop. Plant too early and the ground will be too cold. Harvest too late and the soybeans will pop. But when the time is right, you've got to start harvesting NOW and you can't stop until it's all in from the fields.

Harvesting as a metaphor for evangelism is every bit as important today as it was when Jesus told those first disciples to, "look at the fields!" There is an urgency from the Holy Spirit that is central to our lives as followers of Jesus. The critical work of planting "seeds" into people's lives is not for somebody else to do. The urgent call to "harvest" people into a relationship with Jesus is not only for those who are "called" to vocational ministry. Each of us must be actively "sowing" the love of Jesus into people every

day and each of us must be looking at the mission “fields” around us for people who are ready to experience new life as new followers of Jesus. And the time to start...is today!

Question: “Who helped you become a follower of Jesus? How are you helping someone else?”

Week 19 – Now Where’s That Handle?

By Pastor Palmer Wold

*If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

– Colossians 3:13

The Hebrew and the Greek words for forgiveness mean: to cover, to lift away, to send away, to loose and be gracious to. This is what God does to our sins on the basis of Christ’s atoning work.

Forgiveness is not limited to our relationship with God. He wants us to extend that same grace to those who offend us! That’s a tall order but God wants us to “put away and loose” from our minds any injury or wrong that we have felt.

God forgives our sins and then forgets them; according to Micah 7:19, He “casts all our sins into the depths of the sea.” In order for us to remain healthy, we must also forgive. However, it’s not easy for us to forgive and forget. One writer has said, “To forgive and not forget is simply burying the hatchet with the handle sticking out.”

Do you know where the handle is? Ask God to help you dig the hole deeper so that when you bury the hatchet, you will also be free of those hurtful memories.

Question: “Why is it so hard to forgive and forget something that has really hurt us?”

Week 20 – There’s always More!

By Pastor Darrin Vick

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. – Ephesians 3:20-21*

There is a scene in the movie, “Oliver” where the main character has just finished his evening meal in the orphanage where he lives. In a moment of cruelty, the other orphans encourage Oliver to go ask for more food, all the while knowing that he will face terrible consequences for daring to make such a request. As Oliver approaches the Headmaster with this simple request, “Please, sir. May I have some more?” his worst fears are realized. He is shamed, mocked, and ultimately sent to the dungeon.

Some of us have the same fear in approaching our Heavenly Father. We feel sheepish, awkward, or even guilty in presenting our requests before God. But the Apostle Paul teaches us that this perception of God as a miserly tyrant is a gross distortion of the God who reveals himself to us through Jesus and empowers us through the Holy Spirit. God always has more to show us and more to give us – immeasurably more. He is generous and kind. We can trust him not to just meet our needs, but to surpass them with his abundant grace. So ask, boldly!