

while in China, I asked students in groups of three to lay out a plan for the ministry that they look forward to. Some got the message and told us they would baptize babies. Tomorrow we will consider what this means for parents.

### **Saturday — The Called Life**

The apostles in their writings always address church members as called, elect, chosen by God. This makes some people nervous. Can this really be true? Well, would they mislead us? Just look at the passage from yesterday's devotion in 1 Peter 2:9-10 from the Apostle Peter. Then, can you conceive of the fact that your life has a purpose? In Psalm 139:16 we are informed that our days were foreseen by God. In Ephesians 2:10 we saw that God has prepared the circumstances in which we make our life, and also a purpose. I like this! I like to think about this these days. For people seem everywhere to live aimless lives. This brings on anxiety, for one wants a purposeful life. This causes wasted lives. This leads some to end a pointless existence. This drives people with empty lives, or rebellious thinking, to abuse of alcohol and drugs, or over-eating, or other addictions that trap far too many people. Parents, you must teach your children the Christian life. Teach them that God has given them personal gifts. Teach them to know it, love it and train them for use in the world they will grow up in. To the glory of God!

At worship in the morning, please look for this. Hear what the Word of God tells you about God's expectations and encouragement. As you participate in the Lord's Supper, that other sacrament that recalls the shed blood of Jesus, ask for insight and knowledge of God's plan for you. Jesus died for our sins. He was resurrected that we might live a new and purposeful life. Pray for the Spirit's guidance and empowerment. Then think of your callings: as dutiful parents, as respectful children, as good neighbors and citizens, and as working in your jobs serving the good of others honestly and with good will.

This week's *Bring It Home* devotions were written by Pastor Al Schroeder  
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*Devotions for  
the week of  
January 14, 2018*

### **What Now?**

Write these words on Post-It notes and place them in various places around your home and work to remind you of Jesus' powerful promise to you: "You are my child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased!"

If you or your child or children have not been baptized but would like to be or would like to talk more about it, contact Pastor Glen at [gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org](mailto:gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org) or call the church office (970-667-4506) to set up a time to visit with him.

*If you would like to receive daily *Bring It Home* devotions by email, please contact the church office: [churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org](mailto:churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org)*

## **Monday — Reflect on Baptism**

Have you thought about your baptism lately? On Sunday we set our attention on Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan and the events around it. Do you see your own baptism to be like that of Jesus? I want you to think about it, that is, if you were baptized. If you have not been baptized, then give some thought to getting baptized, would you? This week's meditations can give you some positive reasons why.

I (Pastor Al) must reflect on my own baptism. It was March 12. I was thirteen days old. I know, because my father wrote it in his Bible, in the family records. He was proud, I can tell. I must say we did not talk about it much as I was growing up. This is how it was in most families. Too bad! Is it that way in your family? Do you talk about it and reflect on your own baptism? If you are a parent, do you talk about it with your children? I have had to learn to value my baptism, mostly in the years of my ministry. I am asking you to think about the day you were baptized, if you can pinpoint it. If you have pictures or video, consider pulling those out and taking a look. Was it like Jesus' baptism? What if I told you Jesus received the first Christian baptism? Check out Mark 1:4-11, the Gospel reading for yesterday. We'll reflect more in the next days.

## **Tuesday — Think of Your Heavenly Father**

Are you thinking about your baptism? Or, if you have not been baptized, think about what it can mean for you. Check Mark 1:11. What did the voice from heaven say? Could that be true for you, too? This is exactly what your baptism means. Jesus, of course, was God's Son in His own way. That was different from us. Yet, God created you (see Psalm 139:13-14) to be his own and to give you a special life. That's what baptism means for any one of us.

What do you have to do today? Is there a difficult task? Some sadness? Does it help to think of yourself as son or daughter of your heavenly Father? You have His love to go with you throughout the day. Is there anything you regret? Think of your heavenly Father smiling on you. He encourages you to live in His love today. Does sin or shame nag at your thoughts? Think of your Father's forgiving love that is fully certain. There is more, and we will look at that tomorrow.

## **Wednesday — The Holy Spirit as Your Life Coach**

Look again at Mark 1:10. Can you picture the scene? Was it like that at your baptism? There's not usually a dove in your church (though doves crept in when a church where I was pastor had a roof being repaired after a tornado lifted part of it off!). For the first Christian baptism it had to be spectacular to make a point. Jesus later told His disciples, and through the story to the whole church (John 14:15-17), that God would give us His Spirit. And what does the Spirit do? We heard Sunday that the Spirit worked at creating this world. The Spirit began with water and created a world. The Spirit comes at the water of your baptism and begins to create a life for you. Have you ever thought that God has a plan for your life? That you are a player in God's large plan to change this corrupted world?

That you are not alone and living your life all to yourself only? What may be your part in God's plan? Do you know? Check out Ephesians 2:10. Think about this. Meditate on it today! Pray and ask God's guidance. Trust the Spirit to be your life coach.

## **Thursday — "By Water and Blood"**

At his baptism, Jesus joined us in our sinful state. The Son of God came out of His holy and perfect state to join us in our place of anxiety over many things, temptations to do things that come to hurt us, a life where illness and accidents happen to us, where we have frustrations and we fail over and over again, and then we die. This is what Jesus chose to do for us. Because He loves you! The Spirit was His life coach. First the Spirit "drove him" into the wastelands to face the arch enemy Satan. Jesus successfully faced Satan down. Jesus does that for you. He sends the Spirit to be your life coach through this messy life. Our spiritual hero Martin Luther often faced fierce temptations, and he learned to say, "I am baptized! I am baptized!" That recalls all of what the Sacrament of Holy Baptism means for us. God calls you His daughter or son. God sends the Holy Spirit to guide you through life and empower you to face what you must deal with. This is what the Spirit did for the human Jesus. Is this not Good News?

The Apostle John wrote to a troubled church, likely Ephesus. Read 1 John 5:5-8. This is powerful! Jesus came through water – that was His baptism. He died for us – He shed much blood. And then He rose again to a new life that goes on forever. Through faith in Jesus our Savior and Champion, we will rise from the grave too and live forever. Between Jesus' experience of water and blood, He taught us, His own, how to live. And He has given the Spirit to empower us for it. Think about that today, will you?

## **Friday — Baptizing Babies**

We must consider this question that troubles many. When Pastor Ed and I traveled to China last May to teach pastors and seminary students, we were told that "in China we do not baptize babies." That is not true everywhere, but they knew this where they lived. Pastor Ed made the comparison of Christian baptism with the order to circumcise boy babies at eight days in Israel of the Old Testament. This sacrament identified them - from infancy on! – as members of God's chosen people. The Apostle Peter applies this to baptized Christians. Check out 1 Peter 2:9-10. Ancient church leaders have recorded that the church has always baptized babies, from the beginning. Faithful parents will bring their infants to the baptismal font for this sacrament. They want the sign and assurance of all the blessings that our Father has for us with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now you (i.e., the Christian church) are the body of Christ, and each of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:27. As an identified Christian, you will show what Christ is like. "So then, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause any offense!" 1 Corinthians 10:31-32. We parents must teach this to our children from the beginning of their life on. In one of my class sessions