

again that yes, because of Jesus, we are free and belong to no one else. That is a gift that no one can take away from us! However, because of the Gospel, that light of Jesus which has shined into my heart, I voluntarily (freely...) make myself a slave to everyone. And why in the world would I do that? Look at 1 Corinthians 9:19 again. As Paul says – to win as many as possible! In other words, to let His light shine into the darkness of others' lives so they can have hope and know the love that we know in Jesus. We'll go into more specifics of that tomorrow, but for today I'm inviting you to start considering what could be a seismic shift in your thinking. Yes you are free. But what would that look like to make yourself a slave to someone you know, someone who does not know Jesus and who you want desperately to come to know Him? Can you imagine that? I'm not going to give you any answers to that statement but I am encouraging you to seriously think about that, keeping in mind some very specific people who are in your life. Pray for them. Pray for yourself. How can His love and His light shine through you?

Saturday — All Things to All People

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Yesterday we talked about freedom. Today we look at the specific examples Paul gives to us of what that could look like. Look again at those examples that Paul gave. Did you notice that some of those examples fly right in the face of Jesus and His Good News? To live like a Jew, one without Jesus. To live under the law, even though we've been freed from the law in Jesus. To live without the law, like people who've never read the Bible or who have questionable morals and values, certainly morals and values contrary to what I have based on the Gospel. Whew, that's drastic. Do you think Paul was nervous when he wrote this or when he was living it out? I think he was, only because of all the caveats he continued to give throughout these few verses. It seems like he was constantly assuring his readers and himself that he's not going over to "the dark side" but that he's staying firmly grounded in Christ. God's grace is powerful and it is a base or foundation on which we can stand and must stand. But there's also a lot of stepping off that base in order to get into the lives of the people around us. There are some fine lines here and understand that we're not called to do anything illegal or things that would violate our morals or values or conscience. But at the same time, we need to differentiate between those morals and values and our comfort. They can be very different. Continue thinking about what I proposed to you in yesterday's devotion. What does this look like for you? Who might be some of the "all people" in your life? And what might the "all things" mean that you might have to sacrifice or give of yourself for the sake of other? Again, I urge you to continue praying about that and be ready to step into opportunities that will be there for you as we each and together preach it, and speak that Good News of Jesus loud and clear!

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This week's *Bring it Home* devotions were written by Pastor Glen Schlecht
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*Devotions for
the week of
February 4, 2018*

What Now?

What are some of the unique ways and opportunities that the Lord is giving to you to preach His message of love, hope, and life to the people in your life? Pray for the courage to share that great Good News of Jesus with at least one person this week.

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

Monday — Preach It!

Yesterday in worship, I used two different Scripture passages to have us think about this idea of how we preach the Good News of Jesus. In Mark 1 we heard Jesus say that one of the main purposes of His coming was to preach – preach the Good News of the Kingdom and of Himself. And we used 1 Corinthians 9 to dig a little deeper into some of the specifics, details and possibilities. I'd like to start out our week giving you the opportunity to simply reflect a little more on a personal level on the reading in 1 Corinthians. So for today, read through this passage and ask yourself what the Lord is saying to you here. What stands out for you? What convicts you? What excites you? What challenges you? Read 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 and reflect on those questions. If you're so inclined, I'd love to hear some of your ponderings and thoughts! Email me at gschlecht@immanuelloveland.org.

Tuesday — Preach It- to All People!

The key points in the message from Sunday and the Scripture passage from 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 are captured in the person and the work of Jesus – He is Light – pure light, holy light, grace personified. And we are here to preach Him, to let the message of Him, His love, and His work on our behalf to known to all people – with His light in our hearts, we are called to glow, to shine, to let others see who Jesus is through our daily lives. And this message is for all people – there is no one in the world, no one the Lord does not love, no one He does not want to hear of Him, no one He does not want to believe in Him, no one He does not want to forgive, no one who is beyond His reach and His desire to come and follow Him through this life into heaven. The challenge for us comes in making that desire of our Lord personal. You and I cannot reach “the whole world.” You and I are not called to step into every possible situation, every different culture and subculture even within our own Loveland community. We can't. But what *can* we do and who *can* we reach out to and share with? You can think your circle of friends and acquaintances. But there will be times that you're pushed beyond your comfortable circles and out into some of those cultures and subcultures where you feel like a fish out of water. And both are OK. The question is, are you ready to let His light shine through you? Are you ready and willing to be “all things to all people” if the situation calls for it? We'll continue to explore this theme and these ideas throughout the week but for now, let His Word percolate around in your head and heart. Pray for those all around you, those you know and those you don't, that Jesus' light would shine brightly throughout our community and beyond.

Wednesday — Compelled to Preach

Read 1 Corinthians 9:16. Let me say right off the bat that what Paul's talking about here in this verse isn't just a message for pastors! Yes, he's talking about preaching but preaching doesn't take place only from a pulpit in a worship service. Preaching the Gospel is about telling others the Good News of Jesus – *that's* the preaching Paul is talking about here. With that in mind, go back and read this verse one more time. What do you

hear in those words? I hear a couple things. First, preaching is not about me. There's no boasting allowed and no room for it. It's not about the clever way you came up with the words or shared the Good News. It's about the fact that you did it, you shared it, and you preached it. No boasting allowed. Second, I'm compelled to preach. With Jesus' light shining in my heart, I know the amazing grace He's shown to me and what hope and energy and strength and life that brings to my life. And it's not something I can keep to myself. I'm compelled to help others hear it and know it, too, that they can experience what I experience. Third, woe to me if I keep it to myself. It's a sad day for me, for those who lose out because of my reluctance, and for the Lord who hurts with anyone and everyone who hurts in this world – and He knows that they are missing a key element in helping them through it when we don't preach the Good News. Feel the fire in your belly. Let it drive you, even beyond your hesitation and fears of letting His light shine in your words and actions. You're not alone in this. We are all together and the Lord is most certainly with us. Let His love drive you, motivate you, and inspire you (yes, even compel you!) to preach it! Pray for yourself today that you would do just that in the day and the week ahead.

Thursday — All Things to All People

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. These are just plain challenging verses – there's no two ways about it! The Lord, through St. Paul, is challenging us to step out of our comfort zones in order to reach out to other people. How do these verses challenge you personally? What thoughts come to mind as you read these verses and apply them to yourself? I think we often consider these verses as speaking to how we are to act toward people outside of the faith but let me throw in a curve and suggest that perhaps these are words we need to apply inwardly to ourselves as believers, too. There are times within the church that we need to put down our pride, our personal expectations and needs, and look to those around us (I think we can find some biblical standard for this somewhere...). All in all, I believe that the Lord's message in this is to the way we approach life. Over and over we are called to servanthood, to put others ahead of ourselves, to look out for one another. And those principles always apply in every situation, whether it's in regard to people who are believers or to those who may not yet be believers. What is the Lord challenging you to rethink in your life and in your walk with Him? Is He asking you to step out of some comfort zone for the sake of another person's salvation? Pray about this today and look for the opening the He may offer you to put these challenging and exciting verse into practice.

Friday — Freedom

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19. What does it mean to be “free”? Does it mean that as followers of Jesus we can do whatever we want to do? Well, sort of... Of course there are guidelines to the freedom we have in the Gospel, including the main point of our concern over the people around us and the message we are giving to them by our words and actions through the exercise of this freedom. Today we take another angle on this. Paul admits