

PRAYER: *Lord of every chance, work in me the will to take every opportunity to serve my neighbor.. Amen.*

### **Saturday – Passersby**

Read “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37, focusing on the key verse, Luke 10:32. *“So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”* A homiletics professor at a seminary staged the scene. He told his students they would need to walk to the other side of campus where they would present their sermons on the Good Samaritan story before their peers in the chapel. He told them to hurry because they only had so much time in the chapel. Here’s the catch: The professor had asked a student actor to place himself on the path to the chapel, lying on the sidewalk, coughing and writhing in pain. “Good Samaritan” sermons in hand, 90% of the seminary students passed by, ignoring the needs of the needy man on their way to the chapel. Disconnects abound between speech and action, between values and performance. Both priest and Levite had a mind full of laws and principles. They both “saw” the man in need, but neither stopped to help. They had their destination, and he was not it. Am I a passerby? Whose need right now goes unattended because I am so focused, so unwilling to handle interruptions? Have I passed by the wounded Christ? PRAYER: *Lord, teach me that the interruptions are often the ministry of my life in You. Amen.*

### **Sunday – Compassion**

Read “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37, focusing on the key verse, Luke 10:33 , *“But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.”* What made the Good Samaritan different from the priest and the Levite? All three saw the wounded man, but only one acted on what he saw. It runs deeper, though, than the difference between action and inaction. It can be a long way from the eye to the hands and feet. Jesus says that the Samaritan “had compassion” on him. The word Jesus uses here for compassion places the motivation for loving our neighbor at the center of our being, where we feel most deeply and make strong commitments. It is much more than “there but for the grace of God...” That would be self-serving. And it is much more than the anticipated guilt which says, “I’ll feel bad if I don’t ” or “What will others think?” It is not instinctive either. It is not our bent to enter another’s pain. The difference is a matter of the heart. It is what drove Jesus to touch a leper and heal him, what sent Him to the cross. It is an intentional, passionate desire that makes another’s world of hurt our own. PRAYER: *Lord, in compassion, make my neighbor’s need my own. Amen.*

#### **IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

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*Devotions for  
the week of  
March 12, 2017*

### **WHAT NOW?**

1. Wake up each morning this week remembering who you are to Jesus. You are precious, you are loved, and you are His special treasure! Embrace that promise for yourself. Then look for others in your life who need to hear it this week and tell them how precious, loved and special they are!
2. Continue with the “Love Assignment” of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This is week 4 of 16, so use the week to practice love as it’s expressed in “not boasting,” the fourth characteristic of love. What can you do with this? As in week’s past, have fun with it, be creative, and let Love Work through you as you “work” it with the people in your life.

*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 – Precious Lord

Read “The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Priceless Pearl” in Matthew 13:44-46, “*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*” Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer’s best-known painting gives us the haunting image of a turbaned girl looking over her shoulder, deep in thought and gazing into the eyes of the viewer. Completed in 1665, the painting was originally titled *The Girl with the Turban*. By the 20th century, however, the reflective pearl earring hanging from the girl’s ear had become such a focal point of the painting that it became known as *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*. With only two strokes of his brush, Vermeer gave us a pearl which defines his painting. Like that pearl, Jesus Christ has become the focal point of our lives. The light of His presence against the dark canvas of our soul has caught our attention. He has redefined our values. More than any priceless painting, this pearl of great price, this priceless treasure, is worth everything to us. If He asks us to forsake all and follow Him, we will. If following Him costs us dearly, so be it. If He expects us to sell all, consider us sold out. He is worthy of all glory, honor and praise. No wonder we call Him precious! PRAYER: *Help us, Lord, to make You the focal point of our lives and make Your cross our pearl of great price. Amen.*

## Tuesday - Precious Me

Read “The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Priceless Pearl” in Matthew 13:44-46, “*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*” In the 1999 film *Fight Club*, the character Tyler Durden offers this engaging observation to his peers: “Listen up, maggots. You are not special. You are not a beautiful or unique snowflake. You’re the same decaying organic matter as everything else.” Thank you, Tyler, for those encouraging words! Actually, some days we may feel that low. We now live far below our status in Eden as the crown of God’s creation. Sin pulls us down. Death is at work within us. Then Jesus finds us. He seeks us out, the way one looks for a lost treasure or the perfect pearl. He sells all for us. As He lays down His life for us, He confirms our worth. We are worth everything to Him. It may be a different way to read the parable—seeing ourselves as the treasure and the pearl of great price. This is no delusion of grandeur, though. It comes rather by grace from the heart of One who has found us and sold everything to pay the price of our salvation. PRAYER: *Lord, for raising my value far beyond my wildest dreams I give You thanks. Amen.*

## Wednesday – Neighbors

Read “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37 focusing on the key verse Luke 10:29, “*But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’*” Lawyers parse words for a living. This lawyer asks,

“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus asks him what the Scriptures teach. The lawyer quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 on loving God and loving neighbor. Jesus likes the answer and tells the lawyer to do just that and truly live. The word-parser, though, can’t let it rest. He asks, Luke says, in order to justify himself, “And who is my neighbor?” Behind the lawyer’s question is the idea that some people may be our neighbors and some may not. Some people are worthy of our love, and some are not. Echoing one of Robert Frost’s poems, it is as if he says, “Good fences make good neighbors.” In other words, “Show me the boundaries. Narrow the field.” The One who tells the Good Samaritan parable will do more than tell this story. He will embody universal neighborliness. He will become a friend of sinners with unconditional love for everyone. He will lay down His life for the whole world. He will tear the fences down. PRAYER: *Lord, teach me to love as You have loved all—without boundaries. Amen.*

## Thursday – Violence

Read “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37, focusing on the key verse, Luke 10:30, “*Jesus replied. ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.’*” One traveled at risk on the road to Jericho. It was not surprising, therefore, that another victim should go down. Today it would be a passing report on the local news worthy of not more than a glance. After all, people get mugged all the time. If the priest and the Levite walked on by, we do the same by our casual attitude toward violence. It surrounds us. We have become immune to it. ‘Violence,’ says a director of gory films, ‘is fun to watch.’ Jesus makes the violence of the scene explicit: “The muggers stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.” They took the clothes off his back and beat him to a pulp. With his graphic depiction, Jesus reminds us that violence is not fun and that victims of violence are not statistics. They are our neighbors, worthy of our compassion and mercy. There is a Gospel irony to Jesus’ words. Stripped and beaten Himself, the best of neighbors, He would take our sins of violence to the cross. PRAYER: *Forgive us, O Lord, our passing glance at the violence of our lives. Amen*

## Friday – Chance

Read “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37, focusing on the key verse, Luke 10:31, “*Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.*”. Was it just chance that put the Samaritan and the beaten man on the same road at the same time? Think of all the variables that might have kept the two apart—stopping to rest or being distracted, for example. Yet here are two people brought together by desperate need at just the right time. Some call it providence or divine appointment. Others call it chance. The ancient Greeks had two words for time. One was *chronos*, referring to everyday, ordinary time. The other was *kairos*, meaning a special time, rich with opportunity. In Ephesians 5:16 the apostle Paul encourages us “to make the best use of the time {*kairos*} because the days are evil.” We can debate to what degree God orchestrates the events of our lives. Not debatable, though, is the truth that when an opportunity comes to show compassion, we are meant to take it.