

## Holy Saturday – Extravagance

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32, focusing on the key verses, Luke 15:22-23. *But the father said to his servants, “Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.”* We’ve seen extravagance before in Jesus’ parables. Here the father’s welcome is extravagant. He gives his returning son not just an embrace but a robe, a ring and sandals. Together these gifts mark the son as a true son, not a servant. Servants wore neither robes nor sandals. The ring, likely a signet ring, restored the son’s authority. Then there was the fatted calf. Meat was only eaten on special occasions, and the killing of a fatted calf meant that the whole village was invited to the celebration. Today we’d say the father pulled out all the stops. Nothing was too good or too much for his returning son, once dead but now alive. Sons and daughters of the kingdom have come under the extravagant reign of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. There is no holding back here. Our relationship with God and with each other is likened to a banquet and a feast. The day before the Feast of the Resurrection is a good day to remember the riches we celebrate tomorrow, life in the kingdom without end, extravagant beyond anything we deserve or can even imagine. PRAYER: *Thank You for Your extravagant love for me, Lord, revealed in Your Son. Amen*

## Easter Sunday – Home

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32, focusing on the key verse, Luke 15:24, *“For this my son was dead; and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” And they began to celebrate.* The words of the father to the older son are unforgettably rich with love: “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.” Though this family was as dysfunctional as many families in the Bible, these words capture the beauty of strong families. “All that is mine is yours.” If home means anything, it means that. A country song titled *Home* by Phillip Phillips has the lyric: *“The trouble it might drag you down/ If you get lost, you can always be found / Just know you’re not alone / ‘Cause I’m going to make this place your home”.* Today, this Easter Day, we walk into the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection and ours. There will be no staying outside. He has made this place our home. All are welcome here. The trouble might have dragged us down, but if we’ve been lost, we can be found. We are not alone. All that is Christ’s to give is ours—forgiveness, life and salvation. Hear God say it, “My son who was dead is alive!” Come into the feast. You are home. PRAYER: *Risen Lord, once dead but now alive, come make this place my home. Amen*

### IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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*This week’s Bring It Home devotions are from “The Parables of Lent” Daily Devotions on the Stories of Jesus for Lent”, written by Pastor Dean Nadasdy and used by permission of Creative Communications for the Parish.*



*Devotions for  
the week of  
April 9, 2017  
Holy Week*

## WHAT NOW?

1. Taking on Jesus’ Shepherd heart as He is always looking for lost sheep, extend an invitation to someone you know to join you for any or all of the upcoming worship services this Holy Week – Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. Pray for the people in your life who may not know the Lord and who may not be connected to a church family and consider ways you can reach out in love to them.
2. Continue with the “Love Assignment” of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This is week 8 of 16, love as it’s expressed in “not being easily angered.” How can you practice love in this way throughout this week? Let Jesus’ Love Work in you and through you in amazing ways!

*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 of Holy Week — Bottom**

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32, focusing on the key verse Luke 15:14 “*And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.*” Everybody seems to be recovering from something. Most would agree that “before you can recover, you may have to hit rock bottom first.” At the bottom, we often discover what we couldn’t see on the way down: a better way to live. In the case of the lost son, almost starving, the bottom comes as he feeds pigs (unclean by Jewish tradition) and eats their leftovers. As Jesus puts it, there with the pigs, “he came to himself” (v.17). At the bottom, the son’s thoughts turn to his father’s servants, particularly how much they have to eat. His motive here may be pure survival. He will go home and confess how he has sinned against God and his father, and perhaps his father will take him back as a servant. His plan asks much of the father but not nearly enough. Survival as his father’s servant will be good enough, He wants to live. So in repentance and recovery, we ask much of God, but not nearly as much as God is willing to give. PRAYER: *At the bottoms of my life, Lord, turn me heavenward to Your amazing grace. Amen*

### **Tuesday of Holy Week— Trust**

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32, focusing on the key verse, Luke 15:20 “*And he arose and came to his father.*” Motivating the runaway son’s walk home was something far deeper than his own good sense. He traveled home to his father because he trusted something in his father. His years of growing up were not wasted or forgotten. He had plenty of time to second-guess his plan, but he kept walking. Why? His father was approachable. How many times has a disobedient child said, “If my parents ever hear what I did, they’ll kill me!” This son’s parent knew what he had done, but like a magnet, the parent’s goodness drew him home. God is approachable, even with our worst sins. No sinner is so bad that God cannot be trusted to receive him home. What does it take for us to believe that? Does God have to put His one and only Son on a cross in our place for our sins? That is what God has done. Let His cross be the magnet that draws us home. PRAYER: *Approachable and merciful God, no matter the gravity of my sin, draw me home by the cross of Your Son. Amen*

### **Wednesday of Holy Week — The Run**

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32 focusing on the key verse Luke 15:20, “*But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran...*” The father runs to meet his son before the son reaches the village. Author Kenneth Bailey, in *A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*, sets the father’s spontaneous run into its cultural context. For Bailey the father’s exuberant run bears witness to his willingness to be publicly humiliated. Older men did not run in public lest they appear to be out of control. What’s more, in lifting his robe to run, the father bared his ankles, an act beneath his dignity. Or was he running to protect his son from the village? They had a right to punish the son for insulting his father and losing his wealth to foreigners. What stands out

most as the father runs to his son is his willingness to make the first move, to exert himself in love, even if it meant humiliation. Humiliation is something Jesus knew. Insulted, shamed, giving up His dignity, He willingly bared His body on the cross that we might come home in repentance again and again. PRAYER: *Lord, Jesus, for Your humiliation on the cross I give You thanks, Amen*

### **Maundy Thursday — Embrace**

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32., focusing on the key verse 15:20. “*...and embraced him and kissed him.*” Hands are an amazing creation of God. With the same hands we can strike another in anger or wash their feet in humble service. In Rembrandt’s painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son (1669)*, art historians have noticed something about the hands of the father embracing his returning son. The father’s left hand on the son’s shoulder appears to be more masculine, pulling the son close. The father’s right hand, slender and receptive, seems more feminine. Some think Rembrandt used two models for the hands, one male and one female. The hands reveal both the strength and the gentleness of the father, as he draws the son back into the family, but with sweet compassion. This is the Christ of the gospels, powerfully quieting a storm but also gently touching a leper’s infected skin. His are the hands active in carpentry, yet passive as they are nailed to a cross. I have a friend who shakes my hand so hard it hurts. Another friend extends his hands for a gentle hug. Both are Christians. PRAYER: *Lord, use our hands for strength and beauty and always to welcome home the estranged. Amen*

### **Good Friday — Ending**

Read “The Parable of the Lost Son” in Luke 15:11-32, focusing on the key verses, Luke 15:31-32, “*And he said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.*” It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.” The prodigal son story, some think, could have a better ending. As if the younger son’s opening insult to his father was not enough, the father is further insulted at the close of the parable as the older son simply refuses to join the homecoming celebration. That is how the story ends. Clearly this father has more work to do with his dysfunctional family. Writing instructors have sometimes used this story as an exercise, asking students to write their own, perhaps better ending. Few qualify. One suggestion, though, offered more than once, ends the story with the older brother going into the party and murdering his father in cold blood. It’s an ugly suggestion, but close to history. Those who hurled insults at Jesus also shouted, “Crucify him!” On Good Friday we watch the “ending” unfold as righteous and jealous sons and daughters angrily walk into the banquet of God’s grace and crucify the host. We are among them. It would be an ugly ending if Good Friday were the end. PRAYER: *Lord, death is no ending for You nor for all who trust in You. Amen*