

### Friday — A Royal Priesthood

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. The implications of who we now are because of Jesus and His resurrection are completely staggering. Look at the words Peter uses to in verse nine to describe us! We now are a "chosen people," a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," and "God's special possession." As God chose Abraham we are now chosen by Him too! A "royal priesthood" indicates that this priesthood is something altogether different and above the priesthood of the Old Testament. "A holy nation" is a nation that consists of a people that are wholly separated from the unholy, and completely dedicated to God. We are "God's special possession" as we have been bought with a price. (1 Corinthians 6:20) This world we live in is engulfed in darkness and despair. There is no hope, there is blindness, despair, and misery. The prince of darkness reigns through death and chaos. But in the midst of this dead planet we are drawn by the power of the Gospel into "His wonderful light." We certainly should declare the praises of Him who called us out of this darkness! He was rejected by the leaders of the day because He wasn't going to be their political messiah. Instead look at what He has done for us and who we now are because of Him. To paraphrase Paul, "no eye has seen, ear heard, or mind has conceived the wonders He has prepared for us that love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9) It is simply amazing to consider that what Peter describes here is only a foretaste of what is to come. Meditate on Peter's words and consider the honors that have been bestowed upon us because of Jesus. Regardless of how things may feel or look, our foundation is laid upon the only true cornerstone, the one who has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Take a moment and declare His praises!

### Saturday – The People of God

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. Today we are going to focus primarily on verse 10. This brings our reading for the week to a thundering close. "Once you were not a people, **but now you are the people of God**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Throughout this week, it has been all about who we are because of what Jesus has done for us by the power of His resurrection. It has not been a result of our worthiness or merit. It has not been the result of our efforts or moral excellence. It has not even been the result of our spiritual prowess or incredible faith. Instead it has been completely a result of what Jesus has done for us. "Once you were not a people, **but now you are the people of God**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Meditate on Peter's words. Your life may be a mess right now. You may be discouraged or working through incredible hardship – financial pressure, relational strife, health issues...the list goes on. It is so easy to turn our thoughts upon ourselves and our problems. Dealing with pressure and problems is precisely what this letter is about as Peter writes, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 4:12; 5:6-7,10) Didn't Jesus Himself say "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Whatever you may be facing today remember who we are. **We are the people of God!**

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# Bring It Home

*Devotions for  
the week of  
May 14, 2017*

## WHAT NOW?

1. Think of someone within your sphere of influence – a family member, co-worker, friend or acquaintance – into whose life you could speak some positive encouragement with regard to how valuable they are in God's sight and in yours. Then tell them – in person, by phone, with a text or email. And don't limit yourself to just one person...
2. Continue with the "Love Assignment" of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. We're now at week 13 of 16 – "love always trusts." How can trust play into how you practice love this week? Let Jesus' Love strengthen your faith as you love with trust this week!

*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 — Craving the Only Thing That Will Satisfy

Read 1 Peter 2:2-10. The resurrection of Jesus changed everything. As Peter says so powerfully, “Once you were not a people, **but now you are the people of God.**” We are not the same people as before - His great mercy has made us forever different. This week we explore the nature and extent of these changes. Today let’s consider particularly verses 2-3. Here Peter directs us “like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk.” Unlike Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:2, he is not making a contrast between milk and solid food indicating at some point we will outgrow our need for milk. This pure spiritual milk is the only thing that will satisfy us from our new birth until we take our last breath. We are directed to crave this milk as it is the only thing that will nourish our souls. Didn’t Peter say himself to Jesus, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68) We will not find answers or sustenance elsewhere, but by the word and the word alone we will grow in our salvation. Just as David mentions of the Old Testament Yahweh, “Taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 34.9), Peter echoes this statement regarding Jesus and the grace and mercy He has shown us in His Word. What about you? Do you crave spending time with Jesus, in His Word, in prayer, or in worship, or have other things taken His place? Do you find your heart often turned away from Him in the pressure and anxieties of your daily activities? Jesus is the only one that has the power to give genuine hope and life itself. It has changed us, and because of Jesus’ resurrection it has made us “the people of God.” Good...yes, it doesn’t get much better than this.

## Tuesday — Living Stones and Spiritual Houses

Read 1 Peter 2:4-5. Peter packs so much into these two verses. We know of course who the living Stone is, but this is an interesting choice of words. What is a living stone? Stones are usually associated with something that is dead, such as in Ezekiel 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Who gives us the heart of flesh? Jesus, the stone that lives and gives life to others. Doesn’t Jesus call Himself the life (John 14:6) and states that He has life in Himself just as the Father has? (John 5:25) We are referred to also as living stones. We are alive because of our connection to Him. Because of this connection, we are being built into a spiritual house. It is interesting that Peter doesn’t say “be built” or “let yourselves be built” or “build yourselves.” According to Lutheran scholar and commentator Richard Lenski, “this whole paragraph states what God is doing for us and what we now are in contrast with what we once were.” In other words, because of Jesus we too have life in us – His life. Because of “his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3) We try so hard to live the Christian life. We want to be more like Jesus. How comforting is it that He is the one building us into something special instead of us trying to build ourselves? Who we are is because of what He has done. Let that thought sink in for a moment. Try as we might our plans rarely go as we thought they would. We can’t see how things come together. But according to Peter, God is the builder. He chose us, He gives us life, He is the architect with the building plan. Doesn’t this thought take the pressure off? It should.

## Wednesday — A Holy Priesthood and Spiritual Sacrifices

Read 1 Peter 2:4-5. Today we are going to revisit the two verses we covered on Tuesday. We will focus on what it means to be a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. What does this mean? As believers, we are both being built into a spiritual house and are also a holy priesthood. What did priests do in the Old Testament? They were mediators between God and man. They also offered sacrifices on behalf of the people. On Good Friday, the temple veil was torn in two as Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice as our great High Priest and He is

now the only mediator between God and man. He has made us His priests and we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him. Paul affirms Peter’s words when he writes, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice well pleasing to God.” (Romans 12:1) According to Lenski, “Peter’s words suggest an implied contrast with the Old Testament people of God: they had a house of God, but we ourselves are now the house; their temple was built of dead stones, we are living stones; they approached God through a priesthood; we ourselves are the priesthood; they offer up material sacrifices, ours are purely spiritual.” Consider again how Jesus’ resurrection has changed everything in God’s relationship to us. As Jesus told the religious leaders of the day, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.” (John 5:39) The Old Testament foreshadowed what was to be completed by Jesus’ death and resurrection. On Easter morning Jesus’ own followers didn’t understand the implications of what He had done. This confusion continues to this present day. We can’t fathom the magnitude of what His death and resurrection accomplished. What does He want from us today? Does He want us to be more faithful, holy, righteous, productive, focused, loving or virtuous? Sure, but if we could be all those things consistently then His sacrifice wouldn’t have been necessary. Read Hebrews 13:15-16. Notice that what God wants first is our praise not our perfection. While He doesn’t want us to forget about doing good works what He wants first is for us to acknowledge our thankfulness for what He has done. This is a sacrifice that isn’t too much to make, is it? We simply are asked to give credit for where it is rightfully due. I think we can do that, don’t you?

## Thursday — A Chosen and Precious Cornerstone

Read 1 Peter 2:6-8. Peter shares with us that it is God who lays a stone in Zion, both a chosen and precious cornerstone. What does Peter mean here? We know that He is speaking of Jesus. According to Lenski, “The cornerstone is the significant stone of the entire structure. It governs all the angles and all the lines of both the foundation and the building and is thus placed at the head of the corner.” This verbiage speaks to the foundational nature of the person and work of Jesus. He is central – all else is built squarely upon Him and His work. He is the only foundation that our hope as believers rests upon. We are told that the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. The builders referred to in verse seven that reject the cornerstone are the Jewish Sanhedrin. They rejected Jesus because “they wanted a political house in which they could continue their secular domination of Israel and extend their power over the Gentiles.” We know that Jesus was reconciling the entire world unto Himself for time and eternity, not just trying to win a temporal political battle. The implications were enormous then and now and as a result there is no middle ground with Jesus as He is described in today’s reading. He is either the only foundation our lives can be built upon, or a rock that destroys those that oppose Him. He will be everything for all us one way or the other. This is a sobering thought. Because of His resurrection we have hope. Sadly this is a hope that is not shared by many with whom we interact each day – those that we know, care for, and love. We know that Jesus “wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4) Yet unbelievably, we see in the end of the Gospel of Matthew **that even after seeing the risen Christ in person** that, “When they saw him...**some doubted.**” (Matthew 28:17) We see in today’s reading the awesome blessing that comes from who we are in Jesus, yet we also see emphatic warning against the sin of unbelief as well. Let us take comfort in the promise that God is in charge and His plans will not be thwarted. Let’s be thankful for what He has done for us and be encouraged that He will even use imperfect people like us in His disciple-making process for His kingdom.