

Friday — Be On the Lookout

Read 1 Peter 5:7. Today's devotion is going to be short and sweet. Take a moment to think about what is bothering you today. What are the things swirling around in your head that are causing you to be anxious, to worry and fret, maybe even to lose sleep? These don't have to be huge, life-altering kinds of things. The reality is that there are so many little things that creep into our heads and hearts that unsettle us. Today, take some time to just be still, close your eyes, and pray. As Peter encourages us, cast those anxieties – ALL of them – on the Lord. Throw them at the foot of the cross and ask for His help. We can do that because we are loved and because Jesus cares about us. He cares about the big things in your life as well as the million little things that are causing you to be anxious. So take time now to put those matters, as well as yourself, into the Lord's hands and as you do, let His precious promises of love and care fill your head and your heart.

Saturday – All Glory to God!

Read the entire section of 1 Peter that we have been focusing on this week 1 Peter 5:6-11. Can you see how it all leads to this beautiful and powerful crescendo of praise in verses 10-11. Think about this. Peter is not dismissing the realities of our suffering, or our anxieties and worry, or any of the problems and challenges caused by sin and Satan in this sin-filled and broken world. Instead, he's acknowledging those difficulties of our lives as well as the source, and pointing us in the direction of Jesus – the One who is here to see us through all of it to a much more powerful reality: the reality of life as His resurrection people. Our Lord gives us the promise that through everything we might face in this life, He Himself will restore us and make us strong and steadfast. He will give us exactly what we need to face the ugly realities of this world and to not simply endure it all but to shine through it all, pointing people back again to Jesus, the reason for our hope. This all takes us back to what we were thinking about the week before and 1 Peter 3:15 and how we need to be ready to share with one another and even those who oppose us and cause us hardship, the reason for our hope, to talk about and share how we can be different in the face of difficulties in life. Our lives as resurrection people are intended to be lives lived in praise and honor and glory to God because of all that He has done. So end your devotion by putting yourself once again firmly into the hands of our God who loves you dearly and give Him your thanks and praise, honor and glory!

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Bring It Home

*Devotions for
the week of
May 28, 2017*

What Now?

1. Consider one person in your life who may be going through a difficult time right now that you can reach out to love, support, and encourage. We are here to be the embodiment of Jesus to share His love and grace, to oppose the attacks of the devil and the discouragement so prevalent all around us. Let Jesus' love show through you this week into the life of at least one person!
2. Continue with the "Love Assignment" of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. We're now at week 15 of 16 – "love always perseveres." In light of Satan's attacks and temptations, how can you show love through perseverance this week?

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

Monday — Memorial Day

Today is Memorial Day and this long weekend that has come to signify the start of summer is actually far more than that. For today's devotion, let's pause to remember what this Memorial Day is about in light of our Christian faith. Read Romans 13:1-7 and hear what St. Paul was inspired to write with regard to our governing authorities, under which all our military personnel serve. Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. While we are not to worship our military and those who have served and given their lives in service to our country, as Christians we can observe this day in several appropriate ways. Jesus speaks regularly of serving, of honor and respect we are to show to one another, of freedom, particularly of the freedom He came to bring us, and then, in the ultimate act of love, laid down His life for all of us in order to give us life, forgiveness, and hope for this life and for all eternity through faith in Him. Today it is appropriate to give thanks to God and to the families of those in our military whose loved ones died while fighting for the preservation of our freedom. We can honor them for their sacrifice, sacrifices which always point us back to Jesus. So on this Memorial Day I respectfully ask that all of you reflect on this event and the sacrifices many of our nation's men and women have made to ensure our freedom and safety in these United States of America. At such a time as this, the words of Jesus are amazingly powerful:

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Tuesday — Resurrection Realities

This is the final week of our *Resurrection Realities* series and we wrap up this amazing series with a powerful text near the end of Peter's letter to the persecuted and suffering believers. In these verses Peter speaks to the realities behind the suffering we endure, some very specific direction and guidance as to what we are to do and how we are to conduct our lives, and he offers once again a great word of encouragement. Today I want you to read through the section of 1 Peter that we considered yesterday in worship and spend some time reflecting on it within your own context and life. Read Peter's words as words that are directed right to you! What is God saying to you and the life you are leading right now. How does the Lord encourage you in these verses? Where are you challenged? What's helpful? What's comforting? What's hard? What insights stand out for you? As always I would love to hear some of those reflections and if you're open to it, please email me at gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org. With that, read and reflect on 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Wednesday — Humility

Read 1 Peter 5:5-6. We didn't include verse 5 in the reading for Sunday but it really serves as an appropriate precursor to what Peter has to say about humility in verse 6, which is the "therefore" of verse 5. Generally speaking, what is so significant about humility? Peter quotes a Proverb here and we also know that Jesus told several stories about humility – don't sit at the best place at a banquet when you first come in but instead sit in the back; Jesus said that He didn't come to be served but to serve and to give His life; He washed His disciples' feet, just to name a few examples. I had a personal challenge with humbling myself over the past couple of years. There was a lot I was dealing with and a person whom I respect greatly told me, when I asked her for some advice on how to handle the situation, told me, "One word – humility. You have to humble yourself and let God take care of it." So I continued to pray about that and to pray that I could humble myself. It wasn't easy because I would have much rather just jumped in and dealt with this situation in a way that I wanted to – which was directly, and honestly, somewhat harshly. But I prayed constantly over this, asking for His help in humbling myself and trusting Him, and praying for Him to do what would be best. Interestingly (and why is it surprising to me?!) God did work things out in a way that maintained peace, it didn't put me in a bad position, and it was what really was the best resolution. Yes, it took a long time (from my perspective), but it was another reminder for me at how important it is to listen – to Jesus and not to myself and my wants. It was truly a humbling reminder of who really is in charge and the amazing love the Lord has for me that He would take care of me and the people around me. How might you need to humble yourself and allow God to do some work in resolving some difficult matters in your life? He does want to lift you up, and He will, in due time. His hand is a mighty hand and He is a mighty God who is powerful to save. He loves you – and don't forget it!

Thursday — Cast It All On Him!

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