

Christian song, "Come as you Are," by David Crowder:
<https://youtu.be/r2zhf2mqEMI>. Pray today about your place in this ministry of reconciliation. Keep your eyes open for ways to share this good news.

"There's hope for the hopeless And all those who've strayed
Come sit at the table. Come taste the grace
There's rest for the weary, Rest that endures
Earth has no sorrow That heaven can't cure."

Friday — Live Forgiven

Read Psalm 32. Now read it again! You just can't get enough of this. The life of forgiveness is blessed life! You are forgiven by our Father in Heaven because of His great love for you. Psalm 103:11-12 tells us, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." This is where God places our sin. He has decided to forgive and has sent Jesus to make it happen! Read Ephesians 2:4-5 and Romans 8:1. We were brought back from the death that comes from sin and now we live fully forgiven! As a treasured hymn puts it, "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace. He breaks the power of canceled sin; He sets the pris'ner free. His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood avails for me."

Saturday -- Live Rejoicing in Hope

Read Revelation 7:9-17. This passage gives us a wonderful picture of those forgiven ones before the throne of God. They are robed in white, made clean by the Blood of the Lamb. This is the reality for us here right now and also for eternity. Sing praises and rejoice today. Lift your voice with the hymn writer, "I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless lamb of God. He bears them all and frees us from the accursed load. I bring my guilt to Jesus To wash my crimson stains Clean in His blood most precious till not a spot remains."

Acknowledgements:

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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

4650 Sunview Drive, Loveland, Colorado 80538
970-667-4506 ~ www.immanuelloveland.org

This week's *Bring It Home* devotions were written by Immanuel member Gail Hein. This publication may be reproduced and shared.



*Devotions for
the week of
August 6, 2017*

What Now?

1. This week make a commitment to pray regularly, "Lord, let YOUR will be done in my life and in this situation."
2. Consider memorizing (or re-memorizing) the 3rd Petition of the Lord's Prayer and Martin Luther's Explanation of it: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *What does this mean?* The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also. *How is God's will done?* God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which does not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

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

Monday — Live Honestly

Our culture idolizes feeling good about ourselves. Generally we try to conceal any of our failings, compare ourselves to others and find that we're not as bad as they are, or perhaps we try to compensate for our failings by doing good things. Just imagine dropping a jug of milk on the carpet. Would it really help to cover the spot with a rug or to decide that you had seen dirtier rugs, or perhaps bring in air fresheners and potted plants to distract from the problem. Wouldn't it just be easier to get the rug cleaned? Read John 8:1-11, 31-36. When the woman caught in adultery is brought to Jesus, she has no defense for the accusers and Jesus does not excuse her sin. He does however give her freedom. He does not condemn her sin but sends her away to leave her life of sin. Read Psalm 51:1-3. David, who once concealed his sin, acknowledges it before the Lord and appeals to God's loving kindness. We see and know God's loving kindness in Christ Jesus the Savior who died for us. When we are burdened by the guilt of our sin, we may try to conceal or compare or compensate. But none of those options are really options when it comes to dealing with our sin. Instead, we are called to look honestly at our sin while also looking at our Savior. Let us say with Paul in Romans 7, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Tuesday — Live Forgiving

Read Luke 23:32-43. In this account of Jesus' crucifixion, we are able to see what it looks like when Jesus forgives. The ones who have beat Him and nailed Him to the cross are the very ones for whom Jesus prays. He has every right in the world to call down curses from heaven upon these men, however, he deliberately chooses forgiveness. Some might say, "Of course He can forgive. He's God." However, the same man who bled and suffered, offered forgiveness with His own human breath. He did not wait for the soldiers to repent, but of His own accord, He forgave. Must I forgive? Read Matthew 18: 15-35 and Hebrews 12:14-15. When a person refuses to forgive, resentment and bitterness have place to take root. Holding a grudge may seem sweet, but it's a lie and will actually punish the grudge-holder more than the offender. Rely on God to take action and release the offender from your right to take vengeance. Consider today the people or situations which you feel justified in having hurt, resentment, and anger toward. As hard as it is, we are called to release our claim of punishing them. This is very tricky and must often be a process of daily relinquishing our hurt and trusting God to heal our wounded hearts. Isaiah 53:3-5 can be prayed in this way. "Jesus, You were despised and rejected by mankind, You were a man of suffering and I believe that You are familiar with my pain as well. In my hurt I feel despised, injured and betrayed. Thank You that You took up this pain of mine as You suffered on the cross. You bore the betrayals I feel and You were crushed as I feel crushed by my hurt. Bring

me peace by Your suffering. I give You my wounded-ness and the anger I feel and I ask for Your healing in its place. I give You my enemies, my tormentors, my betrayers and release them to You. Work healing forgiveness and faith in my heart, O God my Savior."

Wednesday — Live Repentant

What many point to as the start of the Reformation happened on October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses (or debate points) to the church door. The first of those 95 theses says "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance." Our complete forgiveness was won at the cross. Yet Luther reminds God's people of our need for daily repentance. In his explanation of the 5th petition of the Lord's Prayer ("...and forgive us our trespasses/sins as we forgive those who trespass/sin against us...," he writes, "We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us." We possess great forgiveness by God's grace, but we must honestly own our sin and daily walk in this gracious gift of salvation. Pride would have me say, "I'm doing quite well. God forgives me so it really doesn't matter how I behave." Honest reflection, however, must lead me to confession and repentance—daily. Read 1 John 1:8-9 and Psalm 51. Today pray with the Psalmist that God would renew our heart and give us a renewed spirit—so that we may declare the praises of the One who daily forgives our sin and makes us new! If you can, rest in the assurances of forgiveness heard in the song, "O Come to the Altar" – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfFdQofPyfU>. "Are you hurting and broken within? Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin? Jesus is calling. Have you come to the end of yourself Do you thirst for a drink from the well? Jesus is calling. O come to the altar The Father's arms are open wide Forgiveness was bought with The precious blood of Jesus Christ."

Thursday — Living the Ministry of Reconciliation

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. God has entrusted to us, a ministry of reconciliation. We witness to the great and gracious mercy God has shown us and remind those around us that the same mercy and grace is available to them. Read Luke 24:44-48. The commission to the disciples is also our commission – we are the ones who get to share this message of good news. Sometimes, our opportunity is to share the message of Jesus with a person who has never heard of God's grace. Sometimes it is the opportunity to remind a forgetful child of God that they have a loving and gracious Father who does not harbor ill will toward them. We are the ones God uses to bring hope to a hurting world. Consider these words of the