

one to run the race – and finish it. And because He finished – and won – the race, we can be bold and fearless as we run it today. We're not running it alone. Some other words associated with this element of our mission and vision include: service-oriented, joyful, God-honoring, relational, and abundant. As you think about some of these adjectives, in addition to "fearless," what does fearless living in Jesus mean to you? How could that play out in your life? What boundaries is the Lord inviting you to push as you persevere in this life with eyes on Him? As children of God, we have nothing to fear – not even death itself. We're victorious and conquerors and what is left for us to run this race, to let Jesus shine as we live this life, and to be bold in our sharing of His life and His love with others. Take some time to pray and ask the Lord what He has in mind for you. How can you be fearless in your living life for and in Jesus, in big ways and in small, to honor and give glory to Him?

Saturday – In Christ Alone

All that we have been talking about throughout the week with regard to Immanuel's Mission and Vision must find its grounding in Jesus – that's it. What we are about is Jesus, which can be lost too easily as we try so hard to live out our lives in ways that are pleasing to Him, following His mission, doing what He's asked of us. But this is about the gratitude we have of being called, by grace, children of God. I invite you to reflect on a powerful song by the Gettys that we have used regularly at Immanuel, "In Christ Alone." It is a beautiful reminder that it is always about Christ alone. Here's a link to use for a powerful visual rendering of this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8weIVgkX8Qo> Also, here are the words for you to sing or meditate on: 1) In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song This cornerstone, this solid ground Firm through the fiercest drought and storm What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are stilled, when strivings cease My comforter, my all in all Here, in the love of Christ, I stand. 2) In Christ alone, who took on flesh Fullness of God in helpless babe This gift of love and righteousness Scorned by the ones he came to save 'Til on that cross, as Jesus died The wrath of God was satisfied For every sin, on him, was laid Here, in the death of Christ, I live. 3) There in the ground, his body lay Light of the world, by darkness, slain Then bursting forth in glorious day Up from the grave, he rose again And as he stands in victory Sin's curse has lost its grip on me For I am his and he is mine Bought with the precious blood of Christ. 4) No guilt in life, no fear in death This is the power of Christ in me From life's first cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of hell, no scheme of man Could ever pluck me from his hand 'Til he returns or calls me home Here, in the power of Christ, I stand.

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*Devotions for
the week of
September 10,
2017*

What Now?

Look for ways to practice some radical hospitality throughout this coming week.

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

This week's Bring it Home devotions were written by Pastor Glen Schlecht. This publication may be reproduced and shared.

Monday — The Lord's Mission and Vision

Yesterday we rolled out Immanuel's new Mission and Vision and had the opportunity to put some of them right to work as we practiced some radical hospitality, enjoyed some good food, and, I pray, had some great conversations. The question is, though, is all of this necessary? Can't we just keep doing what we're doing? Yes, we could keep doing what we're doing – which has included lots and lots of good and excellent ministry! It's not to say that we've been doing anything wrong. But the Lord is constantly urging us to give Him our best and use the gifts, abilities, and resources with which He has blessed us to be about His work. As we have put new words to our particular Mission and Vision, the Lord has in His Word lots of clarity when it comes to exactly what He wants of us and desires for us. Check out these (many familiar) scripture passages and hear what the Lord has to say about His Mission and Vision: Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:7-8; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 12:1-3; Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 12:1-2. Our Lord's mission is clear – He wants all people to come to know Him, to believe in Him, and live our lives for Him. As God's people, reading this devotion today, you know that the Lord has called you to be His own through the waters of baptism and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in your heart and life. Rest in His grace and in His love and at the same time, pray that He can use each of us to be about that life-giving mission of helping others to see Jesus in and through us.

Tuesday — Radical Hospitality

On Sunday we had the opportunity to practice some radical hospitality by enjoying a free lunch with many others here at Immanuel, with our neighbors from Orchard Place, and with our school families. In practicing radical hospitality, we are aiming only to do what Jesus has already done for us, just on a smaller scale. Read the Gospel from Sunday and think about how radical Jesus' hospitality was from Luke 7:36-50. The "sinful woman's" actions were actually a response to who she knew Jesus to be. And Jesus' actions toward this woman was truly radical hospitality and radical love. She had a reputation, presumably a prostitute, and yet Jesus, even knowing who she was, received her gift and extended to her His love, grace, and forgiveness. Is this woman a "worse" sinner than you or I? Think about it... Nope! When it comes to our standing before the Lord, we are all in the same place – sinners, deserving of God's wrath and punishment, even death. There is no "better" or "worse" sinner – ever! It's our own human judgment that gets us messed up in our thinking. We tend to feel like we're better than other people for whatever reasons, but the reality is that we're not. We, too, are sinful, broken, messed up people in desperate need of Jesus and His radical love and radical hospitality that welcomes us back into His grace. May our response to Jesus' love and hospitality be as rich and heartfelt as this woman as we continue to live our lives and let our love show.

Wednesday — Love We Show

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and Matthew 22:37-40. The grace and love that our Lord shows to us, day in and day out, is something that many of us take for granted. Those words and promises in Ephesians 2 are powerful and what a gift! That love and grace form a basis from which we can live our lives with a sense of contentment, joy, and gratitude. When you really, really think about it, it is absolutely radical! And when we take this radical love to heart,

honestly, we can't help but respond to that with the way we live our lives, with how we treat each other, and with how we share from all that the Lord has given to us. As Jesus talked about in Matthew 22, our love first goes back to our Lord – with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength! What does that look like and how can you show the love you have for the Lord back to Him? Think about that for a moment. What comes to mind for me is to come in worship of Him in an ongoing way. What also comes to mind is by giving away what He has poured into me and touching the lives of others. That's part of the cool way our Lord works – what we offer to Him almost automatically is going to touch and impact the lives of others! That's the "loving your neighbor as yourself" part of the radical hospitality and love we show. Take another moment to consider that – how can you show your love for your neighbor, friends, family members, classmates, gym and workout buddies, coworkers, etc.? What are things you can do, big and small, to be hospitable – radically as well as in small ways? What a privilege we have as loved children of God to share that love in all sorts of ways, big and small! Practice it a bit in the days to come and experience the joy that comes as you do.

Thursday — Transformational Learning

Through God's work in us, we're here to transform lives by learning in Jesus – and what does "Transformational Learning" look like? Read Romans 12:1-2. As we're discovering throughout this week, Transformational Learning actually begins with us. According to what Paul wrote in Romans 12, **we** need to be transformed, by the renewing of our minds. That happens as we spend time in His Word, listening, learning, growing, and understanding more of God's heart, what He is up to, and how powerful He can be in shaping and transforming our hearts, our minds, and our lives to be more and more aligned with Him. And here's the thing – when we talk about transformational learning, it doesn't have to be this dry, sit-in-a-classroom-taking-notes kind of learning. I don't think that's what our Lord had in mind at all. I believe (and totally my opinion!) that God intended our learning to be fun, getting together with other people, investing in each others lives, growing in relationship with each other and getting to know one another as together we get to know our Lord and Savior, gathering in the comforts of our homes, and eating and drinking and enjoying our time together. Sometimes it may be in a classroom setting here at church, at times (and perhaps even many times) there may be a specific, written curriculum and study guide that we use to help facilitate our learning, but that's not the only way. Learning can also happen through life experiences and the giving away of ourselves as we live for others. Learning can happen online. And on and on it can go. So are you ready to be transformed? Let the Lord soften and prepare your heart and ask Him to make you the man, woman, or child that He wants you to be.

Friday — Fearless Living in Jesus

Read Hebrews 12:1-3. The third element of our Mission and Vision is "Transforming lives by... living in Jesus," and "Fearless Living." The writer to the Hebrews offers the encouragement to keep on running this race of life that has been marked out for us – it's going to take perseverance because of all the challenges that we're going to face. But don't let those challenges, troubles, sin-related matters, bog you down! Keep your eyes on Jesus, especially in those difficult times, because He's been there and was the first