

## Friday – What’s Real (Again!)?

These are times that test us. A crisis such as we are living in today forces us to think about what is real and worthwhile in our life and what may not be. We have to think, what am I doing today that is really necessary? Am I tending to all that is really necessary for my good health and for healthy living? Am I tending to my work and doing my best for the good of all who are concerned? Am I tending to the good of my family? Am I doing what it takes to be a proper citizen of my community and of my country? Am I participating in my church, worshiping and serving and giving my support? A deeper question: do I understand what God put me on this earth for? That’s a heavy one, for sure, but in times like these we have to look deeply and reflect.

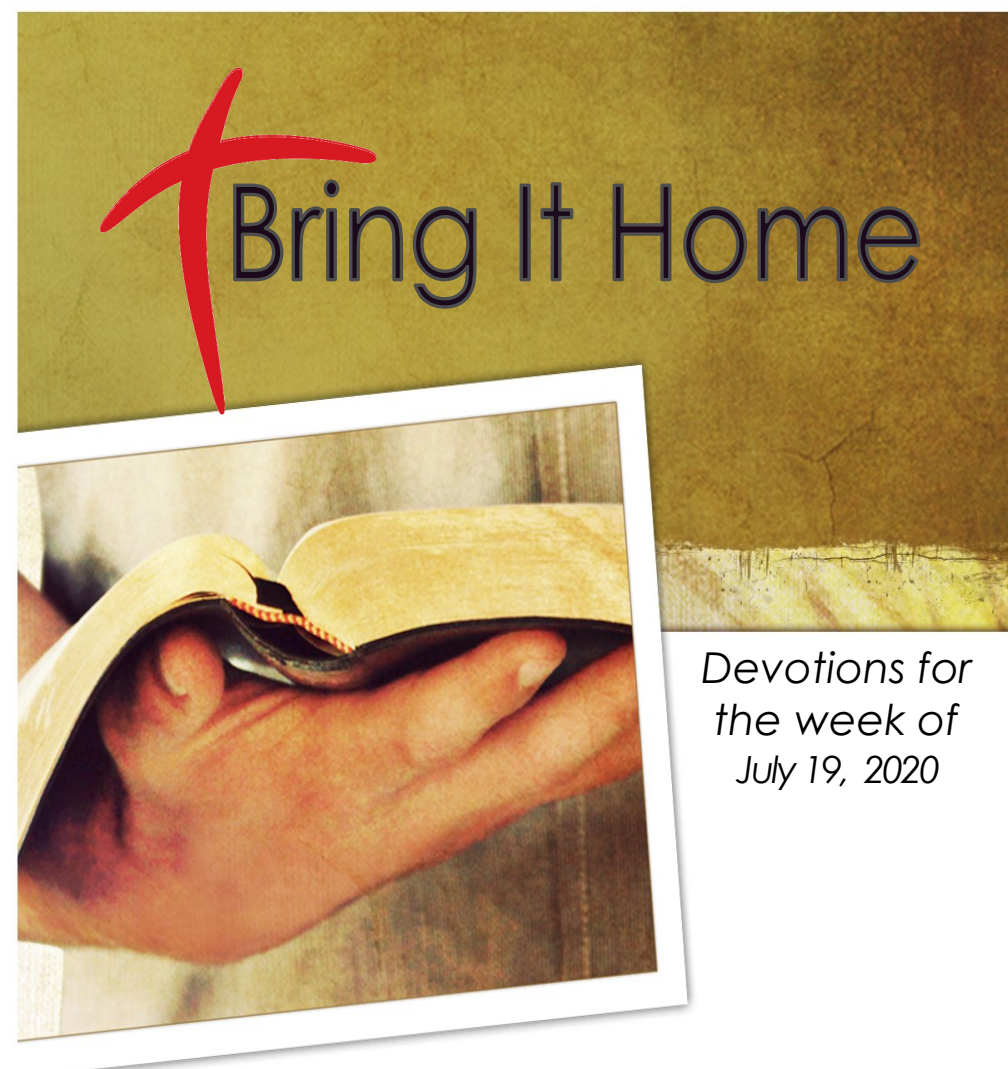
God chose Abraham and promised him a flow of descendants through the ages through whom blessing could come to all nations. It came true, because Abraham believed God, according to Hebrews 11. God elected Israel to be his own people among the nations of the world, and told them at Mount Sinai that they are to be a blessing to all people. “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5-6) Jesus ascended to heaven after Good Friday and Easter, and he told the first Christians, his disciples, “Make disciples of all nations...” In time of crisis, we Christians must reflect on our achievement for the Lord and on our failures through not believing. We repent each day and commit afresh each morning, “Lord, make me your servant today!”

## Saturday – Prepare To Meet Your God!

Well, yes, prepare to meet your God – at Immanuel, or wherever you commune with your Lord and your sisters and brothers in Christ. We worship our gracious God, and we come to receive the Word of Life. Encouraging words for disturbing times. A smile and greetings from friends with whom we face the times together. We are not alone! Prepare for worship by checking once more those amazing words from the Apostle Paul in Romans 5. Do you notice that there is no failure in his words? Do you notice that it’s not just about endurance, about hanging on? Do you see that we will grow strong, more resourceful, wiser as we deal with life by faith? Let us then enjoy the “peace we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” for these times. Let us live the example of Abraham, who was faithful. Avoid the foolishness and blindness of Lot, his wife, and their daughters. Seek the truth!

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This week’s *Bring it Home* devotions were written by Pastor Al Schroeder.  
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# Bring It Home

*Devotions for  
the week of  
July 19, 2020*

## What Now?

Take time every day this week (and beyond!) to pray for our community, our state, our country, and our world. Pray for Jesus’ message of forgiveness, healing, life, and hope to be received and embraced by more and more people. And with Jesus’ help, seek to live a life that is grace-filled and points people to Him.

## **Monday – Sin Brings Corruption and God Responds**

At worship on Sunday we heard the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. God destroyed those cities because of gross human sinfulness. We heard that Abraham had pleaded with God not to destroy the good people along with the terrible sinners. How do you suppose he felt, when he rose early in the morning and saw the eastern sky all lit up with the blaze? His nephew Lot and his wife and the granddaughters lived there! Were they dead too?

Today we see gross immorality all around us. It disgusts a person of faith. Temptations get people in trouble – even Christians give in to those bad behaviors. What is the hope in all of this? First we must see the truth. Sexual sinning is corrupt. This is not how God wants people to use this gift of his creation in humans. Look at the sexually transmitted diseases that follow. Look at the broken and painful relationships. Will God bring his judgment on our society for this, as he did on Sodom? This gift of sexuality is one of God’s wonderful creation gifts to us. It brings much pleasure to a man and a woman who are fully committed to each other in a marriage relationship. Let us praise and thank our Maker for this beautiful thing that he has given us.

## **Tuesday – God Blesses His Faithful Ones**

God sent two angels, his messengers, to bring good news to Abraham and Sarah. They would have a son. Yes, they were old – too old by human experience to have children. They had laughed at the words of God’s messengers. They *would*, in time, have a son, Isaac (Isaac literally means, “laughing boy”). His descendants would occupy the Promised Land in times to come. God has it in his heart to make good things happen. God meant for Lot and his family to live out their life in blessing. God sent those same two messengers to Lot’s home at Sodom. These messengers saved Lot from the corrupt men of Sodom. They saved Lot’s daughters from getting molested. They told Lot to get the sons-in-law-to-be out of harm’s way. They dragged Lot and his family out of the way before the fire and explosions. All to no avail. It all ended badly.

Today we Christians have the call from our Lord to live faithful and godly lives. We must guard ourselves from sinful pleasures, even when our desires and physical appetites pull us toward forbidden pleasures. We must be prayerful and rely on God’s faithfulness toward us. We must meditate on God’s good word, as Psalm 1 advises. Then we will “be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever (the faithful person) does prospers.” We are to give testimony to those around us by our godly behavior and our faith-filled words. We must remember that God does punish sin and

the sinners. And in his mercy, God’s blessing comes to his children in forgiveness and grace.

## **Wednesday – God Directs the Course of Human Events**

The Sodom story shows God’s response to human sin. What can we learn from this? I hear in many conversations a sense of despair about our times. Have we ever seen politics so corrupt, so divisive?! Have we ever seen our country, and in fact the world, so divided? Have we ever seen so much anger directed at “the other side”? What will it come to? Some of us who have lived long have seen nicer times. However, not to despair! We must know that God is engaged in all of this. We have heard again in our worship that Jesus is Lord! We belong to the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. We recite every Sunday, “I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...” God is still running things.

Sometimes God works humanity’s corruptions out over a long time. This naturally tries human patience. From God’s promise of a son to aged Abraham and Sarah, it was about 25 years before Isaac was born. From Isaac’s birth, many centuries passed before Israel settled in the Promised Land. There were more troubled times in their history. However, when we study history, we can see that God always fulfills what he has promised. Let us pray today for the faith, for reliance on our Father in heaven and the lordship of Jesus, and guidance and encouragement by the Holy Spirit, as we make our life through this time. “In all things God works for the good...,” helpful words from Romans 8. The Apostle Paul writes that if we hold true to our faith, we will be “more than conquerors” over the present troubles. Trust those promises!

## **Thursday – What’s Real?**

It seems to me that the mindset of many people at this time has them blind to what is real. You may not go along with me about this but this is what I see. If truth is what anyone wants it to be, or believes it to be, then what is truth? Who sees what is really true? In our story from Sunday, Lot could evidently not see the truth about Sodom. His daughters could not see the truth that they were not the only people left on earth after the dreadful catastrophe they had seen. Even Abraham and Sarah could not see that God meant it when he promised them a son. Can we see the truth? Can we see that God means salvation for us here and now, and God will not let us down? There may be discomfort, even suffering for a time, maybe even a long time. But God will bring good out of seeming chaos. Please take the time to read what the Apostle Paul taught about living in times of testing and suffering. Read Romans 5:1-5. This is a vital text for our meditation in these times.