

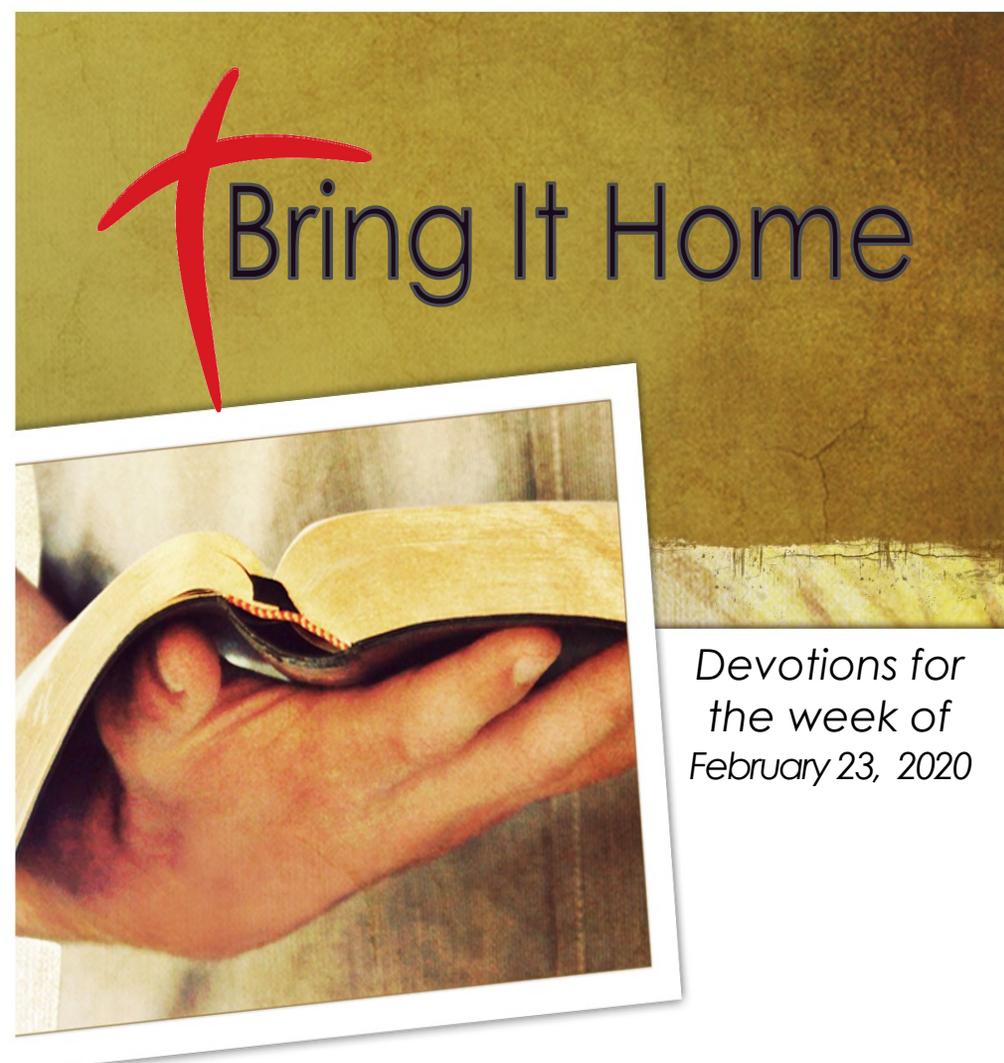
us, and pronounces death. The Gospel shows us a Savior and gives us life! Have you ever been driving and looked in your rear-view mirror and seen a police officer right behind you? Plus, you are going 20 mph over the speed limit. You know that feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when he lights you up and gives you a ticket? And you are thinking, “Oh no, my insurance is going to go up, I’ll have to take time off to go to court, and the fine!!” That gut-wrenching feeling is the effect of the Law! Now, when you get to court and they call you to the judge, and all of a sudden, when you least expected it, someone gets up and stands right in front of you telling the judge, “This person behind me did nothing wrong, I did it all and will take the full punishment. Let this person go free,” and the judge agrees; that feeling of relief that you felt when you were acquitted, even though you didn’t deserve it...that is the effect of the GOSPEL!! While a scenario like that probably is not going to happen in traffic court, that is the reality of what goes on before our Father in heaven. Jesus intervenes, stepping in to speak His word of grace for us. Say a prayer today thanking God for sending a Savior to take our sins from us and give us that freedom and relief.

#### Saturday – It’s All About Jesus

**“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.” (Revelation 19:11-13)** Every story needs a hero, a knight in shining armor to ride in and defeat the villain. The hero in this Story, our hero, has the name Jesus. Jesus, our Lord and Savior is the heart and center of all scripture. Every word is written so that we recognize, know, and believe in Him. God loved us so much that He became human, just like us (see John 1:14). He lived like us, felt pain and grief like us, was tempted like us, with one major exception. Our hero was perfect in every way. Where we are tempted and fall to sin, He prevails and does not fall to any temptation. Where we fail at keeping all of God’s commandments, He fulfills each one perfectly. And where we lack compassion, Jesus pours it out by taking all of our sin on Himself, suffering horribly at the hands of men, and ultimately dies, crucified on a cross. A sad story if it ended there. But it does not. By the power of God, He conquers death, crushes the evil villain Satan’s head, and bridges the chasm that separated us from the love and presence of God. He then takes His rightful place at the right hand of the Father as King of kings, Lord of lords, and Savior of all the world. And by His power, we receive the best ending of the story we could ever imagine...the salvation of our souls. Amen, Amen, Amen!

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This week’s *Bring it Home* devotions were written by Mike Zsolczai



Devotions for  
the week of  
February 23, 2020

### What Now?

Spend time in the Word regularly. Some suggestions as we prepare to begin the season of Lent:

- Read one Psalm every day and then read one section from the Gospel of Matthew
- Use our *Bring It Home* devotions or the devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries ([www.LHM.org](http://www.LHM.org))
- Ask the Lord to let your time in His Word reveal Himself to you

## Monday – The Greatest Story Ever Told

As we wrap up our Epiphany series, *Revealed*, we heard yesterday as we celebrated Jesus' Transfiguration, the profound way that the Father revealed Jesus to the three disciples as well as to us. Peter was one of those three – read some of his first-hand account in 2 Peter 1:16-21. Have you ever picked up a book by a world class author and just got lost in it. The words jump off the pages, the characters are compelling, the plots and sub-plots, the intrigue and mystery...the next thing you know, its 3 AM and you have no idea how it got so late. Then comes the ending. You thought you had it all figured out and then the twist... “Huh, I didn't see that coming at all!” Today, we have in our possession the best book inspired by the best author ever...The Bible! The Bible has similar compelling characters, the plots and sub-plots, the intrigue and mystery but the ending, well, not to spoil it, but it is the happiest endings you could imagine; and the entire book was written just for you. This is the one book that it is okay to read the ending first without spoiling the rest of the book. Today, pick up the best book ever and thumb through it. And if you want to peek and see how it all turns out, it's ok 😊.

## Tuesday – About The Author(s)

**“For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)** The Bible is not a book, but 66 books written over 1600 years and put together in a way that it imparts to the reader exactly what God wants us to know about Him, His creation, and His plan for us. The Bible is not a mystery, although there is mystery in it; it's not a history book, yet it does contain history; and not a romance novel, but it is the most amazing love story ever told. And God Himself did not write the Bible, but chose the most unlikely authors to put His words to paper. For example, He chose Moses, a murderer in self-imposed exile, who told God that he was not eloquent in speech to write the core message for the chosen people of Israel. He chose David (also a murderer) to write some the most beautiful prose and poetry. He chose Saul (a persecutor of Christians...can you see a trend here?) to be the most prolific author in the New Testament. God chose failed sinners just like you and me to pen the most important book in the world. God the Holy Spirit gave to His chosen writers the thoughts that they expressed and the words that they wrote. Because of this, we can have total confidence that all of the Bible is true and that the Bible is God's own word without error.

## Wednesday – Got Grace?

**“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.” (Titus 2:11)** The thread that unites all the books of the Bible is God's grace. While God is holy, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, ruler of all the universe, from Genesis to Revelation the Bible reveals and emphasizes God's grace. Although easy to see in the New Testament, which records the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, God's grace is an underlying theme in the Old Testament as well. Repeatedly we see the cycle of Israel's sin and failure, then judgement, but always culminating in God's grace. Following the fall of Adam and Eve and their banishment from Eden, God immediately shows His grace by promising to put “enmity between you (Satan) and the woman,” the first mention and prophecy of a hero (Jesus) in our story. Throughout the entire Bible, God's grace follows sin and judgement, including our own, but then culminating in God's grace. Take some time today and look for and recognize those moments that God has shown you his Amazing Grace.

## Thursday – The Gift That Keeps On Giving

**“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8)** My wife Jeanne and I attended a presentation by a missionary who was serving villagers on a remote island in the Pacific, and he described a problem that he had while there. Every time he shared the Gospel message with them and explained that they could receive this free gift of faith, they wanted to give him something back. No, no he'd say...it's free. But you see, their language had no word or concept for “gift,” and if someone gave you something, you were required to give them something in return. Isn't that true of us too to some extent? Don't we want to take some of the credit? Give something back so that we can have some control over it? But God doesn't want us to have to earn this gift of faith so that we can enjoy the benefit from His grace. He wants us to have it because He loves us. And He accomplishes this in the most amazing way – by hearing the Good News of Jesus in His holy Word (see Romans 10:17). Through the power of His Word and sacraments, He transforms us into a new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17), one that marks us as redeemed by Christ the crucified. And it's completely free!

## Friday – Not Just Speeding

**“The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)** Law and Gospel are the two great messages of the Bible. The Law is the holy will of God in which He tells us how to be, holy, and what are to do and not to do. In the Law, the activity is on the part of the person. But in the Gospel, the activity is on the part of God. It is the Good News that Jesus is our Savior. The Law shows us our sins, condemns