

PREPARING AT HOME

July 9-15, 2018

Focus reading: Ephesians 1:3–14 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=389853894>)

Other lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 6:1–5, 12b–19; Psalm 24; Mark 6:14–29

Theme: Who Does God Say We Are?

While the letter to the Ephesians is attributed to Paul in the letter's opening verse, contemporary scholars think that it was most likely written by someone other than Paul, most likely one of Paul's co-workers and students. It was a common practice to write under the name of one's teacher, and clearly this letter and this particular passage echo major themes of Pauline theology. Those who first heard the words of this letter would have understood them as coming from the community of people who were related to Paul. In our society, where egos are large, such an approach to teaching may be difficult to comprehend. Indeed, charges of fraud would occur! Rather than coming from an individual to an individual, this letter comes from the Pauline community of those who devoted themselves to the gospel and is directed to another community. Its message is a statement about unity – not only in the Pauline community but with all of creation. The all-encompassing presence of Christ and grace of God envelopes us as well as everything in the cosmos! No one is excluded. All are children of God. Gentiles were part of the Ephesian audience. Since they were not God's chosen people, where did they belong? According to Paul and these words from Ephesians, all people are included in God's redemptive plan. All are welcomed as adopted children of God.

WE ARE FAMILY

Who is part of your family? Are there members of your extended family who live far away? Are there family members your child has never met? Who is in our church family? This letter says that we are adopted children of God. Talk about all of God's children who live far away and those who we have never met. How can we show that we are family with people we have never met?

LETTER WRITING

Letter writing is becoming a lost art, if it is not already! Encourage your child to write a brief letter to someone who lives far away and needs to know that they are part of a family bound together by love.

PRAYER

Loving God,
We give thanks that we are your children.
We give thanks for your children all over the world
and pray that we would remember that we are one family,
brought together through the love of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

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