



Mid-Week Checkpoint

Week of June 13, 2021

The book of Ephesians is the apostle Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus. It is a letter of encouragement to a young church.

- Many established churches are more like young churches as they regroup from the COVID-19 pandemic. Who will show up each week? How will God open the eyes of our hearts so we can see what God has done, is doing, and will do? What is our purpose? Do you agree or disagree with these sentiments? Why or why not?
- Paul wanted the people of Ephesus to know the church does not belong to its members. It is to be God's church, filled with praise and thanksgiving; focused on God; and built on Christ. In your own words, describe what it looks like to be God's church.

In Ephesians 1:4-6, Paul says we are chosen for adoption as God's children.

- Adoption was commonly practiced in the ancient world. Among the Greeks and Romans (Paul's typical audience), an adopted son was granted all the privileges of a biological son, including inheritance rights.
- When Paul uses "adoption" to describe our relationship to God, it means God as the Father has authority over us and we belong to God. What does that mean to you? How does it apply to churches?
- Like a loving father, God hears us and cares for us. God offers love, reconciliation, and new life. Paul wanted the Christians in Ephesus to know that a loving God had formed an adoptive family.

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. (Ephesians 1:11-12, MSG)

- In her book *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor explains the choices we make in our human interactions. The principles are easily applied to churches. She says, "Every human interaction offers you the chance to make things better or to make things worse. To decide to make things better can cost you bundles of self-interest. To decide to make things worse generally feels a lot more powerful."
- How can churches be self-serving rather than focusing on God and on our neighbors? What might happen when a church (or its members) seeks power instead of servanthood?

When Eugene Peterson described the Church, he said, "We can't put off being the people God has called us to be, hoping that some ship will come in making our lives different. The ship already *has* come in."

- What are some steps First Farragut might take to be the people God has called us to be now?

Questions for All Ages –

The next time you are in the church building, look around and thank God for everyone you see. Who has encouraged you in the past? Who can you encourage in the future? What is God doing in you and at First Farragut?

Prayer – Lord, help us remember that belief and behavior go hand in hand. Work Your plan in our lives and help us live it out in all we say and do. We belong to You! Amen.