



WELCOME  
TO THIS CONGREGATION,  
A COMMUNITY OF FAITH IN  
MIAMI, FLORIDA SINCE 1949.

AN EPISCOPAL PARISH IN THE  
DIOCESE OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

## **The Church of the Incarnation**

An Episcopal Parish In The Diocese of Southeast Florida.

The Right Reverend Peter Eaton, Bishop of Southeast Florida  
The Reverend Roberta (Bobbie) Knowles, Rector  
The Reverend Canon J. Kenneth Major, D.D., Rector Emeritus  
Reverend James Bell, Parish Musician

### **Parish Staff:**

Ms. RoShawn Harris, Office Manager  
Mrs. Euphemia Ferguson, Parish Registrar  
Mr. Alfred Barnes, Bookkeeper  
Mr. Bertram Roberts, Sexton

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### **BIBLE STUDY & COMPLINE – BY PHONE**

The call-in telephone number is: **1-605-313-5614**  
Then when requested put in the **Access ID 383678#**

**SIX WEEK BIBLE STUDY**  
**Beginning on Wednesday, April 22, 2020**  
**@ 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**  
**7:30 p.m. – Compline – Book of Common Prayer – Pg. 127**

**Wednesday: April 22, 2020**

Thanks to all who are participating in the Bible Study by phone, I've never thought about having a Bible Study like this before until we had to stay at home for these many weeks. After videotaping our Sunday services and having parishioners call in by phone, I decided that I'd like to try a Bible Study by phone.

I pray that these sessions would challenge each of you to a deeper level of sharing your faith and help each person to become a more devoted follower of Christ.



For the next six weeks we will study the topic:  
**Discovering Your Identity In Christ.**

**Suggestions before each session:**

1. Pray for our time together, asking the Lord to give us all discernment.
2. Have your Bible with you.
3. Read the work that was assigned and come prepared, remember that preparation will greatly enrich your time in the group discussion. If you did not have the time to prepare before the class, do not let this keep you away from the class, call in and participate as much as you are able.
4. Be willing to join in the discussion. The idea is for me to encourage each person discuss what they have learned from the passage. Plan to share what God has taught you in your individual study.
5. Try to stick with the passage being studied and base your answers on the verses being discussed.
6. Try to be sensitive to the other members of the group and what each person is saying.

7. Listen attentively when others speak and be affirming whenever you can; this will encourage other members of the group to participate.
8. Let's try to be quiet when another person is speaking and allow others to have equal time.
9. Please feel free to ask questions.
10. Finally, let's not be too serious that we aren't having fun as we learn from each other. Bible Study is a serious things, but sharing with each other can also be fun.



**Discovering Your Identity In Christ**  
**Read Ephesians 2:1-22**  
**Introduction**

Picture yourself at a wedding ceremony. Remember hearing the priest say those famous words, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." If you were the bride or groom you probably had an instant identity crisis. The priest said you were now married, but you did not really feel any different. As hard as you may have tried, it seemed like you were the same person you were before you said "I do."

It's important when two people are united in marriage to begin to think and feel and act in accordance with their new legal identity. But it does take time; sometimes weeks, months, and sometimes even years before they are living, acting, and feeling married. Identities don't just change overnight, even when the husband says, "she's my wife" or the wife says, "he's my husband."

Another example is to think of an eighteen-year-old recruit who shows up for his/her first day at boot camp. He/she is issued a uniform, some boots, a mess kit, a rifle, and he/she takes an oath. Right away the drill sergeant starts to call him/her "Soldier!" But they do not think, feel or act like a soldier, yet. But after basic training and a year of combat duty, that recruit thinks, feels and acts like the soldier he/she is. They would have appropriated their new identity and it has now become a part of them.

I've given those two examples because I want you to understand that what happens to newlyweds and new recruits also happens when a person decides to become a follower of Christ. When we repent of our personal sins and trust God as our Savior, the Bible makes it clear that we are now a whole new creation.

You may not feel very different at first, it may even take a while, but over time, you learn how to be more like Christ and understand better how God sees you as his son or daughter. As the months and years pass and you continue to read your Bible and pray for God's guidance and direction, you'll begin to understand this new identity that you are growing into and soon you'll begin to think, feel and act accordingly.

In Ephesians 2:4-5 the apostle Paul writes, **"But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved."** (Look it up). According to this passage, we were once dead in our trespasses and sin, but now we have been made alive with Christ. You were once unresponsive to the things of God. You were bored with church, estranged from God. You had a little agreement: He would mind His business, and you would mind yours. Once, we were all spiritually dead, lost and confused, but now, because of Christ, we are alive.

In Ephesians 2:13 Paul also says, **"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."**

Before you accepted Christ as your Savior, God may have seemed a stranger and he may have felt distant, but once you accepted Christ into your life, he is no longer a stranger or feel distant. Now you probably feel closer to the God who paid your debt of sin with the blood of His Son, Jesus the Christ. When Christ is in our lives our whole position and attitude changes.

In Ephesians 2:19 we read, **"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household."** At one time your identity was that of a stranger and alien to God and His Kingdom, but when you allow God into your life you become fellow citizens, and part of God's own household. And that is your new identity, God has declared these things to us, and in these six sessions we will engage our minds and hearts with God's truth.

I hope this introduction has made you excited about your new identity. The Bible is filled with descriptions of who you are in Christ. As a follower of Christ, you are his workmanship, you are his ambassador, you have a special mission, you are Christ's friend and it does not stop there. God also sees you as a soldier fighting against the forces of evil and to top it off, you are his child and an inheritor to his God's kingdom.

Friends get ready to receive the new identification card God has issued you. What a difference it will make in your life! As we journey together over the next six weeks, may you discover, appreciate and walk in your new identity found only in and through Jesus the Christ.



**Wednesday, April 22, 2020**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**Session One: Sons and Daughters**

**The Big Picture – Read the Story**

I attended a worship gathering where individuals were being encouraged, as the Spirit of God led them, to stand and describe the activity of God in their lives. A young woman stood and said, "I grew up in a home where I really can say, sadly, that I never knew or found out what it was like to be the daughter of a loving father." She said, "I thought I was just destined to live that way, fatherless. But then at a certain age I received Christ and I found out that I have a loving trustworthy, tender, understanding, always faithful, heavenly father."

The others who were listening could tell by the sincerity and the tone of her voice that she was referring abstractly to a cold theological doctrine called adoption. She was thinking and feeling and acting in accordance with the identity God had given her. She had learned from the Word of God that she had a Father in heaven who loved her more than words could describe. She knew that God said to her through his Spirit, "*You are my daughter, you have a Father now.*" She not only believed it, she felt it, she was moved by it, and it changed her life forever.

**A WIDE ANGLE VIEW**

**Questions for discussion:**

**Come prepared to discuss, feel free to write your answers down.**

- 1a. What images and impressions come to mind when you think of your earthly father?
- 1b. What was one way you experienced the love of your heavenly Father through your earthly father?

- 1c. Complete this sentence: "One way I would have liked to receive love from my dad was....."

**READ – A BIBLICAL PORTRAIT – The Scripture passages below:**

**John 1:12** - <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

**Galatians 4:4-7** - <sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

**1 John 3:1** - <sup>1</sup>See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

**Questions for discussion:**

**Come prepared to discuss these questions,  
feel free to write your answers down.**

- 2a. What do these passages teach you about your relationship to the Father?
- 2b. What were we given power to do?
- 2c. According to the above passages, why did God send His Son into the world?

**READ: SHARPENING THE FOCUS – THE FATHER'S ADOPTION**

The understanding of God as a seeking, intimate, and loving Father is unique only to the Christian faith. I am not aware of any other major world religion that seeks an intimate and loving relationship with God as Christians do. It seems in most world religions a person learns doctrines, obeys rules, jumps through the required hoops, serves in a certain way, and then is promised a joyous existence in some far away place.

In Biblical Christianity, things are different. God doesn't just save us. He doesn't just justify us and regenerate us by His Holy Spirit and then assign us a home somewhere in heaven when we die. God saves us, cleanses us, and justifies us through the death and sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. Then because of who He is, He claims us and adopts us as His own. He says, "I'm going to make you My son or daughter. You're going to be Mine forever." And then God treats us like His sons and daughters: Respectfully, tenderly, faithfully, and lovingly. What an amazing God we serve!

### **Questions for discussion:**

**Come prepared to discuss these questions,  
feel free to write your answers down.**

- 3a. Since we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God, how should we view our relationship with Him and with other followers of Christ?
- 3b. How do you respond to God saying, "You are Mine forever?"
- 4a. Do you sometimes feel like an outcast and unworthy of God's love. What causes us to feel this way?
- 4b. When do we hear these words: "You are marked as Christ own forever? What significant meaning do they have for you?"

### **READ: SNAPSHOT – THE FATHER'S AFFECTION**

In John 5:20, Jesus very casually says, "**The Father loves the Son.**" Jesus doesn't have to embellish these words. He lived in the awareness that His Father had a great, great affection for Him, so He knew, without a doubt that He was loved by His Father, and so He felt loved, protected, watched over, nurtured, and provided for. He was full of worship for His Father. He felt free to pray to the Father because all good fathers have a listening ear to their sons and daughters.

Putting it simply, because Jesus felt the Father's love, He thought and behaved and felt like a beloved son. When Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, He said, "You know how I want all of you to start your prayers?" "**Our Father.**" And because we too are God's sons and daughters, we should Call Him "**Father.**"

- + Is God your Father?
- + Do you understand that you have been accepted by Him?
- + Do you know, without a doubt, that you are His beloved child?

Psalm 103:13 says, **“As the Father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.”**

- + Do you realize how safe and secure you are because you are God’s child?

### **Questions for discussion:**

**Come prepared to discuss these questions,  
feel free to write your answers down.**

- 5a. How have you felt God’s Fatherly love?
- 5b. Do you feel you are ready to share or express your feelings with someone?
- 6a. Who do you think is the one person that you know who needs to experience the Father’s love right now?
- 6b. What can you do in the coming week to share the Father’s love with that person?

### **READ: SNAPSHOT – “THE FATHER’S AUTHORITY**

Not only did Jesus live in constant awareness of the Father’s affection for Him, but He lived under the Father’s authority. Jesus was not worried about the Father’s authority being destructive or manipulative or negative.

When you are absolutely convinced of the Father’s love for you, you have no fear whatsoever of the Father’s authority. Because you know He always has your best interests in mind, you can be assured that His wisdom, His counsel, and His guidance can be trusted. You find yourself wanting to cooperate and enthusiastically seek ways to bring your life under God’s authority.



## **Questions for discussion:**

**Come prepared to discuss these questions,  
feel free to write your answers down.**

- 7a. When you hear the word "authority," what images come to mind?
- 7b. What specific things can the members of your group do to help you grow in submission to the Father's will in your life?
- 8a. What is one specific area in which you struggle to keep under the authority of your heavenly Father?
- 8b. Describe a situation in which someone exercised loving, caring, constructive authority in your life?
- 9. Since we are sons and daughters of God, then that must make us also brothers and sisters in Christ. What can you do to express genuine family love to other followers of Christ:
  - a. In your Bible Study group?
  - b. In your home?
  - c. In your church?
  - d. In your work place?
  - e. In your community?
  - f. In the nation and around the world?

## **PUTTING YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE**

- A. In the coming week, call someone who has made a profound impact on your growth as a follower of Christ. Maybe it was your Mom, Dad, a grandparent, a teacher, a friend, a partner, a coworker or even a minister/priest. If they helped you understand better the love and care of your heavenly Father, express your appreciation and love. Thank them for giving you a life-giving understanding of God as your heavenly Father.
- B. During the week, write a letter to your heavenly Father, telling Him three things:

1. Thank Him for choosing to adopt you as His son or daughter.
2. Express your gratitude for the depth of His tender affection for you.
3. Tell Him you will submit to His authority in your life because you know He has your best interest in mind.



## **An Order for Compline – Page 127 BCP**

*To be said at the close of every day or just before bed time.*

*The Officiant begins*

Officiant: The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end.

**People: Amen.**

Officiant: Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

**People: The maker of heaven and earth.**

*The Officiant then say*

Officiant: Let us confess our sins to God.

*Officiant and People*

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father: We have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us all our offenses; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Officiant: May the Almighty God grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Officiant: O God, make speed to save us.

**People: O Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Officiant and People*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen**

*Let us say Psalm 31 together*

**Psalm 31: 1-5**

**1. In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame: deliver me in your righteousness. 2. Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me. 3. Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me. 4. Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength. 5. Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O LORD, O God of truth.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen**

**Psalm 91:1-16 – Page 129 BCP**

*Would eight persons read each block of Psalm 91*

1. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High abides under the shadow of the Almighty. 2. He shall say to the LORD, "You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I put my trust."

3. He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter \* and from the deadly pestilence. 4. He shall cover you with his pinions, and you shall find refuge under his wings; his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.

5. You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day; 6. Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.

7. A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you. 8. Your eyes only have to behold to see the reward of the wicked.

9. Because you have made the LORD your refuge, and the Most High your habitation, 10. There shall no evil happen to you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.

11. For he shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

12. They shall bear you in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13. You shall tread upon the lion and the adder; you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet. 14. Because he is bound to me in love, therefore will I deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my Name.

15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; \* I am with him in trouble; I will rescue him and bring him to honor. 16. With long life will I satisfy him, \* and show him my salvation.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

*The following passage of Scripture is read.*

Officiant: Lord, you are in the midst of us, and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God. *Jeremiah 14:9,22*

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Officiant: Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith. *1 Peter 5:8-9a*

**People: Thanks be to God.**

*Then follows*

Officiant: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;

**People: For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.**

Officiant: Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;

**People: Hide us under the shadow of your wings.**

Officiant: Lord, have mercy.

**People: Christ, have mercy.**

Officiant: Lord, have mercy.

*Officiant and People*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Officiant : Lord, hear our prayer;

**People: And let our cry come to you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

*The Officiant then says the following Collects, beginning with the Collect of the Day.*

### **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Officiant: Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**People: Amen.**

*Other persons are invited to say one of the prayers:*

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **People: Amen.**

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **People: Amen.**

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, and illumine this night with your celestial brightness; that by night as by day your people may glorify your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **People: Amen.**

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **People: Amen.**

*The following prayers may be added*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **People: Amen.**

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **People: Amen.**

*Silence is kept, and your intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.*

*The service concludes with the Song of Simeon with this Antiphon, which is sung or said by all*

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

### **Song of Simeon**

**Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A Light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

*All repeat the Antiphon*

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

*The Officiant concludes*

Officiant: The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless us and keep us.

**People: Amen.**

Thank you for sharing in our first Wednesday evening Bible Study by phone. I appreciate your participation. Continue to draw near to God through prayers and the reading of Holy Scripture. Be blessed; hope you will join us again next week – Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Warmly in our Lord,

Rev. Bobbie Knowles+



**NOTES**

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