



## **Trail Guide – June 14, 2020:**

### **Ordinary Time**

We have entered a period in the Christian year known as “Ordinary Time”. The name does not mean that this time is somehow ordinary. Rather, the word “ordinary” is derived from the word “ordinal” or “order”. It signifies a time in which we intentionally focus on “ordering” our lives as disciples; a time in which we pattern our living on the example of Christ.

Part of ordering our lives after the example of Christ this summer involves turning our attention to the social issues of racial injustice, in all its forms. The recent death of George Floyd has captured the conscience of many Americans and has called forth a renewed resolve to end all racism, including systemic racism. As followers of Christ, we understand that this requires more than simply ending the sin – it means the establishing of what is just. It means bringing about reconciliation. For us, true and lasting reconciliation happens when we humble ourselves before Christ, the Reconciler.

For the next several weeks, we’ll be reading and reflecting on Paul’s letter to the church of Ephesus. The primary theme of Ephesians is God’s reconciling work in Christ. This 6-chapter book has theological and ethical instruction for Christians today, just as in the first century. We’ll have to wrestle with several troubling and troublesome passages, but in this Ordinary Time, if we put in the time, God will bring forth the fruit. Read on.

Check out these two introductory videos on the book of Ephesians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONyfvZG-U0> – Background to the Book of Ephesians

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q> – Overview of Ephesians

Mon, 6/15 – [Ephesians 1:3-6](#) – What word or words stand out to you? What do you think it means that God “chose us in him before the creation of the world”? What does it mean to be “holy and blameless” before God?

Tues, 6/16 – [Ephesians 1:7-10](#) – What has God accomplished for us in Christ? What still remains as unfinished work?

Wed, 6/17 – [Ephesians 1:8-14](#) – That word, “chosen”, again. What does it feel like to know that you/we are chosen by God? Since Jesus died for all humanity, what does it mean to look at others – in our church, in our community, those who do not claim Christ, those who look/act differently - and see that they are chosen as well?

Thur, 6/18 – [Ephesians 1:15-16](#) – What motivates Paul to pray and give thanks? What motivates you to pray and give thanks to God? How do your/our expressions of what we are typically grateful for compare with Paul’s? How might God lead you to pray differently; shift the focus of your gratitude?

Fri, 6/19 – [Ephesians 1:17-19a](#) – Note carefully what Paul prays for these fellow Christians. Write down each phrase of intercession and try praying each for those you know and love.

Sat, 6/20 – [Ephesians 1:19b-23](#) – How does Paul refer to the church? What comes to your mind when you think of the church as “the body of Christ”? Suppose we truly saw one another as an expression of “the fulness of him who fills everything” and everyone?

Pray for God to “breakthrough” in our worship and in our lives, to bring new life, new hope, new opportunities to witness, welcome, grow and serve!