

ADVENT WEEK FOUR

December 22, 2019

Guests

Romans 1:1-7

...Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith... Romans 1:4b-5

I remember being invited to other kids' birthday parties. We kids did not actually send the invitations, the moms did. The invitations were very flowery. A mom choice.

I remember my ninth birthday party. I had received a toy metal submarine. This submarine had a propeller at the end which would spin if you turned a little crank. For some reason, I chose to crank the propeller and place the submarine in my hair. My hair was immediately tangled in the propeller. Resisting any help to remove the submarine, I walked around my birthday party with a submarine attached to my head. Eventually, I allowed my mom to cut the submarine out of my hair. Only a mom could love such a child.

As I read the different translations and paraphrases of this passage, I am most interested in those involving an invitation. *The Message*: "You are who you are through this gift and call of Jesus Christ!"

And the *Cotton Patch* version: "Through him I got the favor of an appointment to approach, on his behalf, other races, including you all, about faithful obedience on all matters. So you too, are Jesus Christ's guests."

Invite, from the Latin *invitare*, means "to summon or to challenge." *Invitation* is defined as, "An action that causes or encourages something to happen or makes something more likely to happen."

Yes, we are *called out*, but we are also *called into* belonging. We are those people who are included, who are invited, who belong, despite our confused and crazy actions. We are guests. We have been summoned and challenged to accept this invitation to belong. A belonging that will open doors to something happening. You are invited.

Only God, through Christ Jesus, could love such children.

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