



## **Saint James AME Church**

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Rev. Dr. Ronald L. Slaughter, Senior Pastor

## **Women's Bible Study**

Rev. Theresa Andrews, Minister to Women

First Lady Kyla Slaughter, Women's Ministry Advisor

Tuesdays at 6:15 PM

June 9, 2020

Rev. Dr. Katherine J. Myers, Facilitator

**Subject:** Are You (We) A Mature Christian(s)?

**Book:** Ephesians Chapter 4

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### **Ephesians 4 (NIV)**

#### **Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ**

**4** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

<sup>8</sup> This is why it<sup>[a]</sup> says:

“When he ascended on high,  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions<sup>[c]</sup>? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) <sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all

reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup>From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

### **Instructions for Christian Living**

<sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

<sup>20</sup>That, however, is not the way of life you learned <sup>21</sup>when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to

your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

<sup>25</sup>Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. <sup>26</sup>“In your anger do not sin”<sup>[d]</sup>: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup>and do not give the devil a foothold. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

<sup>29</sup>Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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### **Subject of Consideration:**

Around AD 49, a council convened in Jerusalem to decide the matter of whether Gentile converts to Christianity needed to undergo circumcision in order to be accepted into full fellowship. The decision was a difficult one to make, and early Church leaders found themselves at the crossroads of Jewish culture and Christian doctrine.

Today we are faced with yet another crossroad in the body of Christ. Do we return to the 'normal' after Covid-19 or do we utilize the spiritual gifts and God's grace to move the church forward?

### **Questions:**

1. What would it look like if the universal church concentrated on making Disciples of Jesus Christ and less on membership?
2. What would the Body of Christ on Earth look like if the universal church was on one accord as described in Acts 2?
3. How has the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church categorization of leadership (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, Pastors and /or teachers) helped or hindered the gospel mandate to go further and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Homework:**

For many the world seems to be in a chaotic state, we are living during Covid-19 and are constantly reminded of the oppression and subjugation of Black and Brown bodies. Issues of food insecurities, poverty, joblessness, xenophobia, homophobia, classism, ageism and ableism are at the forefront. I challenge you during your time of journaling, self-reflection, prayer and meditation to think on these things:

- How have you utilized your gifts for the uplifting of Gods Kingdom on Earth?
- What revelation has God given unto you doing your time of quarantine and isolation?

- How has your worship changed your Christian practice and your understanding of Gods authority in your life?
- What takes precedence in your life, Church doctrine or the word of God? Which has more authority in your life: traditions and customs or allowing God to speak a prophetic word in your life for such a time as this?

