



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

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Tuesdays at 6:15 PM

June 23, 2020

Rev. Janelle Greene Smith, Facilitator

Subject: The Parents and Children/Slaves and Masters

Book: Ephesians Chapter 6:1-9

Ephesians 6:1-9 (NIV)

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”^[a]

⁴Fathers,^[b] do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from

your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

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The Children and Parents: Ephesians 6: 1-4 NIV

I thought about Yolanda Adams song entitled What About the Children while reading the lesson for this week. Here is the Chorus:

“What about the children
To ignore is so easy
So many innocent children will choose the wrong way
So what about the children
Remember when we were children
And if not for those who loved us and who cared enough to show us
Where would we be today.”

Subject of Consideration:

Ephesians 6 This passage about the Kingdom Family is a timely passage in light of many of the issues that our communities are facing before the pandemic, during and what will come in the future. The mindset requires some shifts in our thinking to align with how God may lead which at times may appear to be paradoxical. Like, having to lose in order to gain, for the poor to say their rich and for the last to be first and the first becoming last. Whenever God is in the midst of us we have to yield to the divine’s way being not like ours nor our thoughts like the divine’s way. Yet we strive to become more like Christ in what we do. We continue our lesson in Ephesians with final chapter and will cover two subtopics. Relationships require giving and receiving. And so, it is with the dynamics of being a parent and child; an employer and an employee; or a teacher and student. In the Kingdom of God, layered/leveraged power plays and dynamics ought not to be the primary elements of relationships; but rather fairness, nourishing, preferring the other and working as unto the Lord; that is to please God.

Children and Parents:

Questions

1. In what ways do you personally invest your time and resources into spiritual nourishment of your children?
2. How do you nurture your children? How do you nourish your children? Is there a difference?

Slaves and Masters - Ephesians 6:5-9 NIV

The Bible is not referring to the westernized Chattel Slavery that America and the western hemisphere used on Africans across the Diaspora. Although many scholars may believe that slavery in the text it is referencing form indenture servanthood. Nevertheless, one cannot be comfortable with this today. Paul advises slaves to return to their masters rather than denounce the institutionalization of slavery. The Bible has various instances where there is tension exists where one's human and sacred worth was abused. In those instances, God responded to the enslaved persons and heard their cries. As the late Rev. Dr. James Cone appropriately stated, God is the God of the oppressed.

Slavery remains a horrible desecration of human liberty and sacredness. Today we may not see the chattel slavery that the transatlantic slave trade was known but we see human trafficking, militarized sexual trafficking, organ stealing, the caging of children in our soil and the industrial prison complex. In looking for the overall kernel of truth, we can surmise that the overarching story in this passage of Ephesians 6:5-9 Paul shifts and does not address the over-turning of the institutionalized slavery that was massive in Rome as part of their economic structure, Paul sought to focus on God's will and working through the difficult moments as unto the Lord, meaning to serve Christ in your work, your job, or in the text the "master". Yet Paul underpins his viewpoint in Ephesians by stating that the enslaved and the one who has positional authority of them have the same "Master" in heaven who is God. In some ways, Paul seeks to make their faith one of mutuality although their places in society were mostly opposed to it.

Questions:

1. In what ways is slavery that Paul mentioned in the text can be compared to the economic hardships that some in our society are facing? The very low income, the working poor, the under employed the
2. In what ways are you submitting a hardship in your work or a situation in life unto Christ?
3. Do you think that this passage is a call to be docile? Or do you think that the passage calls for an elevation of one's spiritual and mental positioning in faith in God to trust that things will work out or discern the will of God even if certain actions are taken to support it?
 - a. How do we close the gap between this opinion of docility and engaging in kingdom-minded assertiveness?
4. His focus to the Ephesian church was to consider the freedom that comes in Christ that transcends the physical hardships. So today, are there any hardships keep you bound? Can you talk to God about it and ask him to show you how to let it go and transform your thinking?

Homework: Reflect on the questions and journal for the week. Read Ephesians 6:10-24 NIV for June 30th.

Note: July and August Summer Book Reading Battlefield of the Mind by Joyce Meyer