

**THE DEEPEST YEARNING SESSION 4**  
**“TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS...”**

**OPENING PRAYER:** O Lord our God, we thank you that you have called us into unity with you through your Son Jesus. By your loving grace, we are your children of the Light. Help us Lord to be deeply aware of our calling and sensitive to the needs, desires and aspirations of our sisters and brothers. Help us to create a fellowship of service and love in this sacred place. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer, Friend and Brother. Amen.

**1. Read GALATIANS 3:26-29 (A,B) and GALATIANS 4: 4-9, 15, 28 (C,D)**

**A. What is it that forms our fellowship in the Lord Jesus?**

**B. What distinctions are there between brothers and sisters in Christ? Why?**

**- see also 2 CORINTHIANS 4: 14-15**

**C. What does it mean to be called a child of God?**

**D. What promises have we been given and by whom? For what purpose?**

**2. Read GALATIANS 5:1, 25, 13-26**

**A. What is Christian freedom?**

**B. What are Christians supposed to do with the gift of freedom?**

**C. What warning does Paul share with the community in Galatia?**

**D. What are the fruits of the Spirit? Why are they called “fruits”?**

**E. What does it mean to “live by the Spirit” for myself? For me as a member of the community of the Spirit?**

**3. Read GALATIANS 6: 1-10**

**A. How should the community react if and when a brother or sister falls from grace? (see also ROMANS 15:1-2 and 2 CORINTHIANS 2:7-8)**

**B. Why must we be engaged at all times as members of the household of faith?**

**4. Summarize what you have learned from GALATIANS**

**5. Read EPHESIANS 1: 4-6, 11-12 (A,B) and EPHESIANS 2: 4-6, 13-22 (C,D)**

**A. Paul makes it very clear that Christians are chosen by God. Do you believe this? What problems, if any, are there for you in this idea of *predestination*?**

**B. How are we a redeemed people?**

**C. EPHESIANS 2: 13-18 is very reminiscent of GALATIANS 3: 26-28. What does it mean for us to be in community?**

**D. What is the foundation of Christian community?**

**6. Read EPHESIANS 3: 2-19 (A,B,C) and EPHESIANS 4: 11-17, 25-32(D), and EPHESIANS 5: 1-2 (D)**

**A. What was the “mystery” given to Paul to share with the fellowship? What is GRACE?**

**B. How should members of the Body of Christ live and interact? What is the aim of living in such a community?**

**C. What is Paul's prayer for the Church?**

**D. Why are 4:15-16 and 4: 32-5:2 so vitally important to those who are called together in the name of Jesus?**

**7. Read EPHESIANS 5:8-11, 18-21**

**A. What, as followers of Christ are we to seek?**

**B. What should the "mood" of the fellowship be?**

**C. What is it often so difficult to be faithful to verse 21**

**8. Read EPHESIANS 6: 10-11, 13-18**

**A. What is the "full armour of God" which we should wear?**

**B. What should be the continual activity of the community?**

**9. Summarize what you have learned from EPHESIANS. Try to put Paul's thoughts from GALATIANS and EPHESIANS together into a coherent message to the Church and particularly to your congregation or parish.**

**10. For next week please read Paul's letter to the people of PHILIPPI and both of his to the people of THESSALONICA**

#### **NOTES FOR THE DEEPEST YEARNING SESSION 4**

##### **GALATIANS 3:26-29 and GALATIANS 4:4-9, 15, 28**

**1. Our membership in the Body of Christ comes through our Baptism into that fellowship. We are incorporated into the life of Christ and made a child of God. through Baptism, we enter through the doorway into the community of faith as full members, requiring no other ritual or sacrament to complete the process.**

**2. There should be distinctions made between sisters and brothers in the community, distinctions based on race, gender, colour, status, economic standing. All are valuable and capable of contributing to what the needs of the community are (this is not necessarily financial in nature). Each in the Church has been given their share and portion of the Spirit to build up both the Body and those it serves in the wider world.**

**3. To be a child of God mans to be engaged in a loving relationship with the Father through his Son Jesus. As brothers and sisters in the Lord, we are therefore sisters and brothers to one another. Part of the struggle is the realization that human siblings are not always as loving and forgiving of each other as God would want them to be. So it often is in our spiritual family of the Church! We are also heirs of all the promises which God has made through Jesus- we "heirs through hope of God's everlasting Kingdom" (the post-Communion prayer in the Book of Common Prayer) BUT this does not mean that we are to seek a future kingdom but rather to work for the building of that on this good earth.**

**4. The promise of the Father is eternal life IF we maintain our faithfulness to the Lord and strive to always be about God's business. This we do knowing that we will probably fail from time to time but when that happens, we are assured of God's forgiveness, presence and love.**

#### **GALATIANS 5:1, 5, 13-26**

**1. Christian freedom is (ironically) to be imprisoned by the Lord Jesus! John Donne, the mystic poet and Dean of St. Paul's London wrote, "Emprison me so that I may be free". Christian freedom is the opposite of being a prisoner of the world with all its restrictions and chances. To be truly free, Christians submit themselves freely to the will of God.**

**2. When we are free in Christ, then we can become servants for/to others.**

**3. Paul warns the community that it must be united in both purpose and action. Where there are divisions, the power of God at work in the fellowship is diminished.**

**4. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control. Jesus said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches" and it is by being faithful to the desires of God shared through the gospel of Jesus and the living servanthood of the community that our faithfulness is demonstrated and God's light shines.**

#### **GALATIANS 6: 1-10**

**1. Christians are called to correct one another within the limitlessness of love and gentleness without recrimination or the seeking of revenge. We are called to bear one another's burdens in the name of Jesus Christ.**

**2. Our work must always be undertaken with the intention and expectation of building up the Body of Christ and making it more and more to be the fellowship which God desires.**

#### **EPHESIANS 1:4-6, 11-12 and EPHESIANS: 2:4-6, 13-22**

**1. Predestination is the concept that we have been set apart by the Father and that there is nothing we can do to change God's mind as to our end place! If we are disobedient, then we will lose our favoured status and the destiny which has been preordained for us.**

**2. We are a redeemed people only through the grace of God and by our faithfulness to the Risen Lord.**

**3. Both the Ephesian and Galatian passages refer to the ministry of reconciliation. Paul is reminding us that we must strive to be a fellowship in which the work and struggle for reconciliation is a top priority.**

**4. The foundation of the Christian community is Jesus Christ. Christ the Head and Cornerstone of the faith and if we do not accept Him as the head and the heart of our faith family, we are not being faithful to God.**

**EPHESIANS 3: 2-9 and EPHESIANS 4:11-17, 25-32 and EPHESIANS 5: 1-2**

**1. The mystery which Paul shares with the community is that the Church has been called into creation and is maintained only by the grace of God. Remember what Bonhoeffer wrote about the essence of life together (see the Invitation to this Lenten Study). Paul reminds the Ephesians what grace is: the free, undeserved, unrelenting love which God has for all who call on his name.**

**2. All of our ministries should be acted out in the spirit of love, humility, peace and joy under the headship of and in the name of Jesus Christ.**

**3. We are interdependent creatures – we need one another and we need God. We need to imitate the life of Christ in our relationships with one another and with the world.**

**EPHESIANS 5: 8-11, 18-21**

**1. As imitators of God, we are to strive to live lives of love and service. Paul calls us to be children of the Light in the darkness of the world.**

**2. One of our major undertakings is to find out what the will of God is for our fellowship and then get on with making that expectation a reality**

**3. As a faith community, we should be “Spirit – led” and our gatherings should be ones of praise and thanksgiving.**

**4. Submitting to another person is most difficult because it involves the loss of everything that the world deems as “strong” in the human condition: control, the ability to manipulate for one’s own elevation etc.... Paul is calling us from that to being persons who free themselves of “egoism” for the ultimate good of others.**

**EPHESIANS 6:10-11, 13-18**

**1. Paul speaks of the full armour of God as the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the readiness of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.**

**2. For Paul, the mark of the Christian community which separates it from all other groups is its commitment to prayer and support for all members of the fellowship and the recognition that even work is prayer when enacted in the name of the Lord**

**3. All that we say or do should be under the power of prayer and in the name of the Holy Trinity.**

### **READINGS FOR SESSION FOUR**

#### **GALATIANS 3: 26-29 and GALATIANS 4: 4-9, 15, 28**

**You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Jesus Christ, then you are Abraham's (and Sarah's) seed and heirs according to the promise...When the time had fully come, God sent his Son born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law that we might receive the full rights of children. Because you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son, the spirit who calls out *ABBA*, Father. So, you are no longer a slave, but a child of God and since you are a child of God, God has made you also an heir. Formerly, when you did not know God you were slaves to those who by nature were not gods. But now that you know God – or rather that you are known by God – how is it that are now turning back to those weak and miserable principles?...What has happened to all your joy? I could have testified that if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes for me... Now, brothers and sisters, like Isaac are children of promise.**

#### **GALATIANS 5: 1, 5, 13-26**

**It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery...By faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope...You, sisters and brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "love your neighbour as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, "Live by the Spirit" and you will not satisfy the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who love like this will never inherit the kingdom of heaven. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against these things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

### **GALATIANS 6: 1-10**

**Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, for you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are nothing, they deceive themselves. Each such test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves without comparing themselves to anyone else, for each one should carry their own load. Anyone who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please their sinful nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of Jesus.**

### **EPHESIANS 1: 4-6, 11-12 and EPHESIANS 2: 4-6, 13-22**

**God chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One whom he loves....In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.... But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace that you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and has seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...Now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new person out of the two, thus making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the Cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by the one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole body is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**

### **EPHESIANS 3: 2-19 and EPHESIANS 4:11-17, 25-32 and EPHESIANS 5:1-2**

**Surely you have heard of the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation as I have already written briefly. In reading this then, you will be able to understand my insight in as it has now been revealed by the Spirit the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together in one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the least of all God's people, this grace was given to me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which was for ages past kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intention was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**In him and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you therefore not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you in power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints to grasp how wide and high and long and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled with the measure of all the fullness of God... Be imitators of God therefore, as dearly beloved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

#### **EPHESIANS 5: 8-11 , 18-21**

**You were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ( for the fruit of light consists of all goodness righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of the darkness but rather expose them....Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**