

Notes on Ephesians 1 : 15 – 23 and 6 : 18 – 20
‘Praying in the teeth of battle’ 5th October 2025

No doubt you're wondering why I've chosen to skip over chapters 2 to 5 and started at verses 10 – 20 in chapter 6 as we explore Ephesians. I could say it's all because Margaret Batley and Tricia Gough asked if they could have a 24/7 prayer room over the Easter weekend. But it would be more exact to say that this jump is because I read the book by Pete Grieg called 'Red Moon Rising' which I picked up when praying in the early hours of Easter morning. The verses we're looking at today, verses 18 – 20, are about prayer, but their importance lies through their linking prayer to the theme of Spiritual Warfare. The letter to the Ephesians is built on and models prayer itself. In Ephesians 1 verses 3 - 23 we're shown the 'source' of all prayer. It then goes underground, only to reappear in chapter 3 verses 14 – 21 and then it goes underground until it resurfaces here in verses 18 – 20. We must not underestimate the importance Paul gave to prayer in his following, imitating and loving Jesus as described in chapter 4 verses 1 – 6. These verses define what Practice Resurrection is and the hard work of prayer we all need if we are to live in such a way.

'Red Moon Rising' is an inspiring read of how a vision given to Pete Grieg became a reality. The vision he had was of Europe being illuminated with the light of communities, especially of young people, who had committed themselves to persistent and continuous prayer. However, it is not just an inspiring feel-good read, it is also a disturbing one. Pete Grieg reminds us that prayer is part of the battle we're in as Christians, because we have an enemy who does not want us to pray and 'it' is prepared to fight as dirty a war as possible against us to stop us praying. This is not only our experience, but it was also the experience of Jesus who fought the enemy from the cradle to the grave and it was the experience of Paul in his travels as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

In verse 18 we have prayer's battle cry. Here Paul calls the Ephesian church, and us, to constant, Spirit filled, alert and diverse prayer. When you read this verse, there is only one question that faces you, are you as constant and persevering as the Apostle commands us to be? We know this is what Jesus modelled in his life in the Gospels. It is how Paul imitated Jesus such that he could with no sense of embarrassment say, 'Imitate me'. It is how I try to live out my identity as your Pastor, but what of you? Is it part of your heart and soul and mind set? If your answer is No, then Paul would rightly ask you, how then are you able to stand in the heat of battle with our common foe? In chapter 5 verses 18 – 21 Paul describes the different ways in which we can feed and our hearts, our minds and our souls in following Jesus to help us stand. He speaks of our

being filled with the Spirit, of worship, mutual humility and submission and, yes you guessed it, prayer and in particular thanksgiving prayer.

In verse 19 we read of prayer's burden where Paul speaks about his dependence upon the Ephesian's prayers for him. Paul knows he is in a battle but what really matters to him is that he knows he does not stand alone. He needs the Ephesians to pray for him so that he may be able to hear Jesus' voice to him in revelation. He needs their prayers so that he may be bold in speaking of Jesus at his trial and he knows that he can always depend on his churches to pray for him. We read of this at the very beginning of his ministry in Antioch in Acts 13 verses 2 – 3 and we read it in his letters to churches and individuals who are in fellowship with him. Like Paul I need your prayers, Zania needs your prayers, Joshua needs your prayers and actually we all need your prayers. As a church we need to embrace this burden of praying for each other so that we may bless, strengthen, comfort and encourage each other in our lives and in fulfilling our ministry and calling given to us by Jesus.

Thirdly, in verse 20 we have the hope of prayer. What I mean by this is that as we pray for each other, we do so in the hope that we may see our prayers being answered and fulfilled in each of us as Paul hoped for himself. His prayer request was that he would be the man who Jesus called and set him apart to be, as Jesus' ambassador. But Paul does not write this for himself alone, his prayer is that it will be fulfilled in **YOU** in **US**, that **WE** will be the people who Jesus called and set us apart to be in chapter 1 verses 3 – 14. That **WE** will be holy, as in verse 4, sons of God, as in verse 5, that **WE** will be inspired by the breadth of the vision of God in verses 9 and 10 and that **WE** will be equipped to live for Jesus in verses 13 and 14.

Therefore, are you willing to embrace and to live out these three verses? Our life, our mission and our ministry as a church depend on it. In this battle please do not underestimate how much I, Zania, Joshua and all of us rely upon our praying for each other. Your life, your mission and your ministry depend on it but in this battle please do not underestimate how vulnerable you are if you stand alone. To stand alone is to be exposed to attack, it is to be at risk of falling and at St Philip's they are doing a three week prayer course called 'Pray for Someone'. It looks like a great resource and it starts tonight, so please do find out more about it, join up if you can for you need your church and your church needs you!!