

¹⁷ I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power (Ephesians 1)

Around the building which serves as our church hall in Holyhead are the photographs of my predecessors, serving as a reminder of those who have gone before, whose ministry I benefit from and make my own, and of the fact that one day someone might be assisted by my gaze looking down upon them. I hope my photo looks a lot less stern than some of my predecessors, although I will try not to do an inane grin.

On Holy Island in Anglesey, I am also aware of the gifts left behind by Celtic saints, Cybi, Ffraid (Bridget) and Gwenfaen who loved and hallowed the place I am privileged to minister in. We are as human beings interconnected, and as Christians we share a common bond with all those in the church universal, whether living or departed. The writer of the Ephesians prays that his recipients might know that they are part of a rich inheritance. I have to confess that at times this inheritance can sometimes seem like a shackle, as I am regaled by the stories of the saints who have lived in this edgy part of the British Isles. At other times the fact that they have been here are rich narratives of hope.

When I feel hemmed in I find myself transported to this passage, a prayer motivated by passionate pastoral love and a desire that this early Christian community understands that it is part of a great cosmic plan, and hear it prayed by an elderly Pentecostal minister in Southey Green, Sheffield, whose church I attended during my teenage years. I hear the rich cadences of the timbre of his voice.... wisdom and revelation... enlightened.... riches... immeasurable greatness of his power and so on. I have sometimes tried to read the Greek text in the same way, wondering what effect these words would have had on their hearers, whether they would have been captivated by the prose and expression as it crashed against the shores of their spirits.

This pastoral intercessor asks that we might be enlightened, beginning to see who we are in Christ Jesus, with the unlimited potential that brings. This is a tall order sometimes, as we struggle generally within church communities with our increasing age and declining numbers, limited energy and sparse finances. These need to have the hash tag

#firstworldproblems when we remember that the original hearers of the letter feared for their lives because they were part of the Christian community, and I need to hear the tones of the Elim minister once again.

Tones that had been shaped by a faith that had stood the test of time and believed, like our intercessor, that as we pray heaven and earth meet, and both are transformed. If, for us Anglicans, that language does not quite resonate, we need to recall that in the middle of our Eucharistic Prayers is the acknowledgement that earth joins in with heaven's song.

The prayer roots all this in the greatness of God's power, and it is through God that we are enveloped in the wider divine drama. Because of this reminder, I can sit, not too uncomfortably alongside Gwenfaen, Ffraid and Cybi, knowing that each one of us is embraced by the love that is Christ's.

Prayers that include the word 'power' can feel to me a little uneasy. God's power is fundamentally different. Our church hall in Holyhead is more than a hall. It is Eglyws y Bedd, which translated into English is Church of the Grave. This name causes me to smile, reflecting that all hope, riches, greatness and power stem from what happened in a Palestinian tomb. I put aside my queries about power and embrace my inheritance, hearing again the timbre of that elderly Welsh voice in a church on an estate in Sheffield. Let us pray.