

Word Notes Sunday 12/03/17
Tony Hodge – NCC United: Winning the match

Summary *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

Key Text: Ephesians 6:1--20

Our battle is never against people, but against the devil. The devil seeks to break unity because it reflects God.

When there's trouble, what does Jesus want for you? To Stand! Who are the ones still standing at the end of a battle? The victors! We've already read in Ephesians chapter 2 that we have a share in the victor's spoils – the gifts of the HS - now Paul is telling us how to continue in victory through to the end. Who is Paul writing to? The church. To "God's holy people", who are one in Christ, one people, one family, one body. It's the church which must stand in unity against the enemy.

Paul draws up the battle lines. It's not people who are the enemy, we fight a spiritual battle. Whomever you might be led to think is responsible for the ills of this world, you're wrong and you need to adjust your tactics to join the real fight. The real news is that we face an enemy who detests and despises the unity of the Body because it is a picture of the relationship between God and man – a love relationship that was bought at the cost of the blood of God's Son and which has defeated the devil utterly.

So we "*are not unaware of the devils schemes*" (2 Corinthians 2:11) or are we? If we read around the quote the context of that well-worn snippet is in preserving unity! The devil's plan is to spread disunity, to break up the church and have us sniping at each other instead of standing firm together. He can't do anything about your salvation, but he can stop you being effective. So, decide now that factions – whether secular or church – will be cast aside and wear the armour God has given in the real fight.

And Pray at all times in all ways for all things.

Application *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

- 1) Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and discuss the following questions:
 - a) What negative actions on our part can turn healthy discussion into division?
 - b) How can we avoid this, or better still kill it off when it arises?
- 2) Paul's picture of a soldier in armour is well known.
 - a) Talk through the various parts listed in Eph 6:11-16 and share what they mean to you with practical examples of their value from your life.
 - b) Is prayer (verse 17) a part of this armour or weaponry? If so do you "put it on" as diligently and how do you use it?
- 3) Leviticus 26:3, 7 & 8 says: "3 *"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, ... 7 You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. 8 Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you."* "
 - a) How can we encourage and support one another in wielding our armour?
 - b) What does standing together look like in that context and what do you do to get in line?

Witness *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

What is your witness of The Church – The Body of Christ – to not-yet-believers? Would they be encouraged to "try Jesus" based on your witness?