

Session Two - CROSSROADS: The Way of Surrender 13th March**Reflect back**

- How has our allegiance to Jesus developed this past week?
- What specific things, if any, has God said since we last met together?

Review the teaching

Today is an invitation to "pick up our crosses and follow Jesus". In other words this is the moment we move from the crossroads of Golgotha (a moment in time) to the road of the cross as a way of life. Jesus had a very clear metaphor for discipleship and that was the cross. We mustn't forget or downplay the significance of this. Jesus relinquished divine attributes by becoming human ("Kenosis") so epitomises "self-sacrifice". He wasn't just a sort of first century warm and fuzzy Instagram meme but a revolutionary and radical: perfectly happy to turn away as many as he attracted. 'Pleasure' has become an idol of the day and therefore the call of the cross is more counter-cultural than ever.

Just as Jesus endured the cross for the joy that would follow (Heb 12v2) so we are encouraged to take up our cross and follow Jesus because joy will follow. In Matt 16v24-26 Jesus calls us as disciples to take up our cross. This is not just some form of legalistic duty or self-mortification. We won't understand the call of the cross unless we have truly perceived the beauty and magnetism of Jesus. As Jackie Pullinger says "give up anything to gain everything". He is worth it (worthy) - worth the sacrifice of time and money and credibility and promotion and security etc.

In many ways the relinquishment of picking up our cross is simply the way in which we open our hands to receive so much more. In surrendering we receive. As an example, there was a World War 2 internment camp on Merrow Downs for Italian prisoners of war. Many of those soldiers were completely relieved to have surrendered! Only two ever attempted to escape and they only made it as far as Leatherhead! Many of them even stayed on in Guildford after the war and married local girls. These soldiers surrendered to "the enemy" but in fact they were relinquishing their allegiance to the dictatorial madness of Mussolini and they were becoming servants of a much freer realm. (Ed. When we surrender to Jesus, he is not the enemy - he loves us unconditionally and has our best interests within his heart).

In what specific areas do we need to pick up our crosses? Are we "ashamed of the gospel"? Have we stopped sharing our faith? Maybe we don't want to do Safar because it is an inconvenience to our diaries and it would force us to interact with people we don't know nor like. And consider hospitality. That can be a sacrifice. If you have a spare room in your house is the Lord inviting you to open it to someone who needs a place to stay in this very expensive part of the country? Or what about setting an extra place at your table on a Sunday and asking the Lord to show you someone at church who you could invite back for lunch? (This isn't a guilt trip - there are good examples of care and hospitality at times of need). But hospitality is referenced because some have spoken with the church leadership saying that in several years in this church they have never once been invited to someone's home for a meal!

Other verses to consider 1 Cor 2:2 / Rom 12:10

Realise the value

- Traditionally, Lent is a time of "giving up" something. What might God be calling you to surrender?
- A recent tradition during Lent is to start something new - engage in Random Acts of Kindness. What might God be asking you to do that is different from the past?
- Thinking specifically of hospitality - is there something God is asking us to do? Invite someone for a meal? Or offer a room to a Ukrainian refugee?
- What else might God be saying about self-sacrifice?
- Can we agree to be accountable to each other regarding our answers to these questions?