

Jesus be the centre – notes

Part 1

Special agreement between Abram and Sarai

God promises – parents of a big family, who will be God’s special people

OT – actual family

Jesus – God’s family is even bigger –
it’s everyone who loves God and wants to follow Jesus – ie us!

Abram and Sarai promise to put God first

At the centre of their lives

Most important

So everything else, even things like where they lived (tent), family, animals, food etc – all important – but God – most important. At the centre.

Gave them new names – Abraham and Sarah - and other signs to remind them, and the big family that they eventually had.

And cos we’re part of this special agreement, part of God’s family – this is for us too.

God/Jesus at the centre.

“Jesus” card at the centre of the target

So Abraham and Sarah had lots of things which were important in their lives, but which might have distracted them from God.

What’s important in our lives

Ask for examples – write on cards – add to target. Overlap and allow to obscure “Jesus” card, or move it to one side. Maybe keep moving J card back, but then allow it to be pushed away again.

Keeping Jesus at the centre is really hard.

Most of these are good things – important things.

But we have to get our priorities right.

And we’ll talk some more about that shortly.

[Paul take over for Confession etc](#)

Part 2

So we've been thinking about Abraham and Sarah and their special agreement with God

And about putting God at the centre of our lives

Which is all very well, but actually that's quite hard.

Can we get any help? Guidance? Advice?

Mark's gospel – Jesus gives us

'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'.

Really familiar saying

Dangers that

- roll off the tongue without engaging our brains -
- so far from our experience that we interpret it literally, and since (mercifully) in this country at any rate we don't do crosses any more - so what?
- Or – that we hear "we all have crosses to bear."

Prob overall effect is life draining rather than life-enhancing / life in abundance.

Deny self

Not "give up doing something I like 'because in some way it's good for me for suffer' "

Rather – focus away from "me" and back towards Jesus

Learn to see things Jesus' way, rather than "my way"

Peter needed to learn this!

We do this through healthy rhythms of life

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength"

- Heart – worship
- Soul – personal meaningful prayer (not just a shopping list of names)
- Strength – our service
- Mind – our thinking and understanding. Reading, listening, asking questions, being open to there being more to God than we currently understand. So, yes, Bible and talking to others, but not in a right/wrong school-y sort of sense, but in the sense of "how can I discover more of God?"

Deny self - learn to see things Jesus' way, rather than "my way"

Take up your cross

The Cross – opening the way back to God - was Jesus' greatest task

What he'd come to do

What only he could do

Garden of Gethsemane – see what it cost him

We all have our own tasks

Things Jesus wants us to do

Things only we can do

We will have our Gethsemane moments – when we are pushed to our limits.

And we'll come back to that in a moment

But it won't always be like that.

And follow me

“go” where Jesus takes us

- Location
- Action

But here's the bit that we really need to remember

While we are following Jesus, we are **with him**.

He is there to guide us, support us, reassure us

Yes sometimes, like with Peter, to point out that we're getting it badly wrong

But if so and always

Pick us up and point us back in the right direction

To comfort us and to enable us to do what he's asked us to do.

Jesus says, Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me

That's the way to keep him at the centre of our lives.

Finally – a challenge and a reminder

Clock Tower

Why?

Messy Church- Jesus is with us, all day, every day.

At the centre of the clock face is the pivot around which the hands turn.

It's the centre of the circle

Just like this.

Clock tower here, or any clock tower, or any clock! (except a digital one)

Quick personal check

How am I doing at keeping Jesus at the centre of my life?