

Word Notes Sunday 22/05/16
Simon Matthews: Following God's Call

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: John 10:10

In John 10:10 Jesus speaks about himself, who he is and his mission – that people might have abundant life. What does abundant life really look like? A large part of this can be found in doing the will of God, perusing the purpose of God in our lives. Sometimes we get a glimpse of what that plan is and we can clearly and constructively work towards seeing it come to pass. That might be to learn a language, get positioned geographically, be trained and so on. Sometimes though that is not the case and it may seem that a lot of Gods plans for us are a bit of a mystery that unfolds as we go. Often we seem to stumble into things even while we know that God is in control, we perhaps just don't see His hand. That's actually quite encouraging – it means we can move forward confident that we can trust in Him day by day, step by step and season by season.

In all this we need to find the right balance of following what we think is “The Plan” yet adapting to things that come our way in life, circumstances, unexpected events etc. Too flexible and you'll be all over the place, too rigid can lead to bondage to a wrong expectation. We need the Holy Spirit to help us be those who are clear and determined yet flexible and adjustable. Often success and blessing in life is found in raising our sails to catch the wind and being ready to go where it blows us, working with it not struggling to make things go our way. Walking in the Spirit and following Gods plan needs a solid level of trust and willingness to adapt.

Be assured that God has got a plan for your life. Accepting Gods plan in itself can be a challenge - the worldly expectation of “more”, of “better” and with me in the driving seat as a philosophy can be hijacked under the guise of thinking Gods promise of abundant life means no setbacks, always getting better and more. Be clear: it's not about stuff! It's about confidence and trust in The Lord, accepting that God loves you and has you where you are for a purpose. It's accepting and having peace about who and what God has called us to be rather than living a driven life. Surrendering to Gods will even has Jesus had to in order to achieve his purpose. Saying yes to the will of God is where life begins - in death to self. When we choose that path of sacrifice that is when blessing can flow to us and through us to others as well. And while there are many heroes mentioned in the bible who chose to follow the purpose of God, many more are not named, unsung heroes who never had a flash of light or dramatic encounter - probably like the majority of us, “ordinary” people. Even in that ordinariness God is in control. If we would just say yes to doing God's will He can order things in our path to his glory and for our blessing. From that comes a sense of contentment and peace which surely is a key part of an abundant life.

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

Where in scripture can we find key pointers to doing the will of God? (*If you're stuck here's some hints: Ex 20; Micah 6:8; Matt 22:37-40; James*)

OK so you've got that all sorted (!) what about a personal calling? Read Mark 10:21.

- What are the essential points in Jesus words?
- What does that mean to you and how does that fit in with your life, family, job etc?

The Bible is full of ordinary people doing extraordinary things for God, who is your favourite?

- Describe their ordinariness and what it is that enables them to be extraordinary.
- How might you move from being ordinary to extraordinary in your walk?

Life throws us many challenges – even when we are “On a mission from God”. Read Philippians 4:12-13.

- What is Paul's “secret” to living through challenge?
- What similar lessons have you learned and what effect has that had on how you follow God's call?

Pray specifically to know God's will for your life, for the strength to follow and for contentment in all things.

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

Look out for communication regarding the Queen's Birthday Fun Day on Saturday 11th June. This year we are joining forces with Studlands Residents Association. Our contribution will be to provide Music (John & the team are on this) Bouncy Castles (Booked) and a café serving tea, coffee, cakes and cold drinks. Get baking!!