

THE EASTER STORY

I grew up in a Christian tradition that took every word of the bible literally (pretty hard to do as parts are contradictory!) and to question God was deemed disrespectful. I now hold a rather different stance seeing literal truths (the love of God for all and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus) and relative truths (to the era, to the situation) within the bible. I also think God positively likes being questioned, She/ He can handle it! Just look to Jesus's Parables they positively encourage thought and challenge. And then we have Jesus questioning words on the cross to God 'Why have you forsaken me?' as he carries the sins and hurts of the world distancing him from God and it is painful literally and emotionally.

During the Lent course questions arose about Jesus's death one being 'If Jesus knew he was going to die and let it happen when he could have stopped it was this in fact a form of suicide?'

To my mind Jesus foresaw his rejection and crucifixion but also the final outcome of the hope and reality of his resurrection. Death and sin are overcome, there is hope earthly and eternal for us all. So rather like a soldier on a battlefield, or a parent who pushes a pram out of the way of a car, death might be probable, but life is given in self sacrifice. Out of purpose, out of love for others. Jesus dies so all might live.

The taking of one's own life can come from impossible pain of self and for hurts of the world which become too much to bear. An eleven year old once asked me 'What happens when those who take their own life die?' I said I believe Jesus has felt their pain, knowing that life had been hard for them and welcomes them with open arms. More simply I could have said 'I believe Jesus runs to meet them'.

It is in the vulnerable that we meet Jesus and Jesus meets us, right there at the foot of the cross. Not in power and strength but in gentle, amazing, everlasting love. That to me is the Easter story.

Easter Blessings to you all, Nikki If you have been affected by anything I have said please do speak with me, a friend, or the Samaritans who are available 24 hours a day on 116 123 or <https://www.samaritans.org>

Revd Nikki Mann The Rectory 23 Stetchworth Road Dullingham CB8 9UJ Tel: 01638 507980
nikkimann40@hotmail.co.uk; www.raddesley.com