

Friends

I wonder if you have had those conversations with non-faith friends that say something along the lines of “If God is real, why doesn’t he just do something really dramatic to prove it?” Disregard for a moment one obvious answer (he did, two thousand years ago) and think for a moment about how God generally acts. Often the stories of God and of God’s people are stories of ordinary people trying to live their lives in faith: messing up, making mistakes, but upheld by a God who loves them and is faithful to them. That love is worked out, not through miraculous intervention, but through ongoing faithfulness and events that we sometimes only recognise God’s hand in retrospectively. How many times have we said, “It wasn’t fun, but what came out of it was really amazing.” Sometimes we can see that in other’s lives before they can. Often that it because the thing that happened was too painful, but God doesn’t cause the painful thing to happen, he simply is able to work from within whatever it is to create something good in the end. When he says, in Jeremiah 29:11 “I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future,” this is not about God planning bad things that he can turn into good ones, but about trusting that whatever happens, God can create good from it.

It is amazing to me that there are people who can believe that they tripped on a paving stone and broke their arm because they smashed a mirror yesterday, but don’t see the hand of God when a whole series of events then unfolds because of who they meet at the hospital. Put simply, if we believe that there is a God who loves us, we see his hand in every part of our lives, if we don’t then everything must be down to luck.

We will probably never convince our non-believing friends through the strength of our own faith – we can only hold to it ourselves, speak of it when the opportunity arises, and pray that God will do the rest. Nevertheless, God is at work in our lives, and as we draw closer to Easter once more, my prayer is that we will learn not to just to recognise his work of new life in us, but to look for it every day.

God bless, Vicci