

TFTD L15: I cry to you, but you give me no answer



Today's TFTD from Robin is based on Job 30.20-31

“I cry to you,” says Job, *“and you do not answer me. I stand, and you merely look at me.”* In his suffering Job prays to God and receives no answer. And so the lack of an answer becomes, in itself, the thing that he prays about.

Every church has got some people praying to God about bad things that are happening that don't ever seem to get any better. People who stand before a God who merely looks back at them.

It makes life a lot easier for the priest when God does answer prayer in the way we wanted him to. Somebody gets a job after a long period of searching. Another person goes to hospital and comes home again and recovers from their illness. Thank you, God! And thank you, vicar!

But sometimes there is no happy ending, or at least there isn't a happy ending in the time frame we were envisaging. And so we, like Job, end up just standing before God and he merely looks back at us.

And maybe like Job we begin to accuse God. *“You have turned cruel to me!”* We maybe even feel that God is picking on us. *“With the might of your hand, you persecute me!”*

In his own time, in order to explain all this, God sent his Son to live among us, to die among us and to rise from the dead.

Does God inflict suffering on us? No, he does not. In fact, he sends his Son to suffer alongside us.

Does God promise to make all our suffering go away? No, he does not. Actually, his Son said that we should pick up our cross and follow him in the way of suffering.

When we get to Easter, we will celebrate the resurrection; the demonstration that victory over sin and death has been won; the demonstration of the power of God and the love of God upon which the promise of eternal life is based; and we will remember that the suffering will be finite whereas the joy will be infinite.

But for now, we are in Lent. And many of us are suffering. We stand before God and he merely looks back at us. And if we are not suffering, maybe we can find somebody who is and stand alongside them and we can look at God together.

We can stand together. And suffer together. And pray our angry prayers together. And if we do that, when we get to Easter and celebrate the resurrection, when we finally get to celebrate the love and power of God, we will truly appreciate what it means.

Robin Pye