



When things go wrong

I am writing this before I go on holiday. Before my sons' exam results come out. Before my husband's trip to India. And in the aftermath of the downing of flight MH17, and in the middle of terrible conflict in Gaza and Iraq.

Anxiety

So it is natural to be anxious; concerned for safety, and for the outcome of un-knowns. But the news is also a reminder of how small my concerns are compared with the Christians forced to leave Mosul or die, or the grieving families whose loved ones have been wiped out of their lives in a stroke.

Where is God in the pain?

I keep reminding myself that 'God is in control'. And that 'God is loving'. These are truths I find in his word, the Bible. But they do leave an obvious dilemma, which I couldn't hope to deal with fully on one page like this, though I'll try to give some pointers :



God understands

1. God knows how we are feeling, because in Jesus he has been human too, and suffered the worst the world could throw at him.

God purposes

2. God's purpose for our lives is for us to know him better and to love and trust him. Suffering can give us opportunities to grow in dependence on him, and to be like him as we serve others. And one day the pain will end.

Our responsibility

3. The world has been spoiled by human rebellion against God, and we suffer the consequences both of our own sin and the sins of others.

Our response

4. How we respond is vital. We can either turn to God or from him. Turning to him may mean stepping into the unknown, and often admitting our faults,

but with the assurance that he is there and can forgive us through Jesus. Turning from him leaves us in the same situation of pain but with no help or hope.

Our future

So whatever this September sees you having to cope with—whether it was foreseen or unexpected—there is one person you can turn to. Psalm 23 says, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me'.

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