

We don't even know we're doing it. No we *really* don't know we're doing it. We are blithely unaware, wholly insensible, utterly oblivious. Because that's the way we see the world, it's the way we always see the world, and if we are ever forced to take a different view, it's like the shock of falling through the ice into the frozen depths beneath.

It's both confirmation bias and echo chamber, and more than either. It's about our place in the world, and our effect on the world.

You see, when things go right, that's because of our talent, our skills, even perhaps, our virtue, you know those times when God is looking at us and liking what he sees. We've taken the bull by the horns, seized the day, chased our dream and won through in the end. That's what the deal is when things go right, life's a breeze and the days are one endless summer. You see this? All my own work.

And when things go wrong- which they will, sometimes they do, rain falls into all lives. When things go wrong it's an accident, it's circumstances beyond our control, it's not us, it's erm environmental factors. We were not useless, just unlucky. Stuff happens. It's not our fault.

It's just the way we are. It's branded on our brains: always take the credit, never take the blame. It's probably a good thing. Life is nasty, brutish and getting longer all the time. If taking undue credit and passing the buck makes it possible for us to get out of bed in the morning and face the world, rather than spend all day in a corner gently rocking because we can't stop seeing what the world is really like. If it takes self-delusion to do that, maybe that's not a bad thing.

But there will come a time when the ice cracks. We've spent a lifetime pushing it to the back of our minds, but we're skating on thin ice all this time and without warning, suddenly we've gone under.

There's no credit to be taken; no possible purpose served by finding a scapegoat. You have to own up, face the facts, look reality square in the face and take the blame.

Such a time is today.

Who runs away when the soldiers come?

Me

Who was it said 'I do not know him?'

Me.

Whose voice is crying 'crucify him'?

Mine

Who is washing their hands of this mans blood?

Me

Who is twisting the thorns into a crown.

Me

Who strips the powerless man of his clothes?

Me

Whose hand hammers in the nails?

Mine.

Who's mocking, laughing, scoffing, gambling at the foot of the cross?

Me

Who is to blame?

Me.

Perhaps you've listened and thought, don't be daft. That was two thousand years ago, I wasn't there, none of us were there. It couldn't possibly have been me. We are different. There is no way that would happen now.

Retrospect is a wonderful thing, it gives all of us instant wisdom, but that, that we do not possess. Yes, we have been listening to an account of events some two millennia ago. The story of Good Friday is, in a very real sense, history.

But.

Do you really think that much has changed?

Have we now forgotten how to make scapegoats? Do we always stand firm for what is right in the face of hate? Can we always resist the swell of the crowd, the mood of

the mob? Does nobody ever run away if they can when the heavy hand of oppression strikes? Do we never exult when the criminal gets his just desserts? Are you sure it wouldn't keep happening all over again, that it wouldn't happen again right here, right now?

The central message of this season of Holy Week and Easter is God's transformation of humanity's ultimate rejection; his transformation of the suffering and horror of Good Friday through the events to come on Sunday morning. It is the transformation of our ultimate 'no' into God's unsurpassable 'yes'.

But.

Easter morning is not mission accomplished.

Not while there's still the chance that those events can be replayed all over again. And the brutal truth is that there has not been a Friday since Christ walked the road to Calvary that has not been somewhere in the world, in some way, for somebody, Good Friday.

And while that is still the case, it's not all done and dusted, there are still battles to be fought, victories to be won, work to be done.

As followers of Jesus that's our job.

As followers of Jesus we must first admit our own part- as humans- in the events we recall today.

As followers of Jesus when Easter comes we must celebrate the resurrection, proclaim the good news, and live what it means.

And as followers of Jesus we must work and work and work to bring forward the day when Good Friday can never happen again.