



As long as I live I'll remember that hot afternoon. Being woken suddenly by stifled screams and sobs as our car crawled slowly along. I was the youngest of four. 'Don't let him see', my mother said. But it was too late. I'd managed to get up and look. And there, with the sun shining through the opposite window, in the back seat of the wrecked car, lying bloody and starry eyed, was the first dead person I'd ever seen.

That afternoon so shocked me. Our family never talked about it again that I can remember.

Death from old age has such a different impact to sudden death by car crash. Both are terribly painful. But the car crash is so brutal and wrenching. Long after the violent clash of metal is over grief rages on like a maelstrom. And so it was in the ancient world with crucifixion. The death of Jesus by crucifixion was devastating to His followers. Their teacher and miracle worker had been nailed to a cross and left to die.

The historian Luke tells a story in the Bible of how two of Jesus's followers struggled to cope in the days after His execution. While they walked along a road towards a town called Emmaus they talked and struggled with their grief. Not just over their dead friend and leader but for promises that seemed broken.

Jesus said he would save the world and bring in the Kingdom of God. They'd trusted that Jesus was the great King or Messiah promised by God's prophets for centuries. And now their belief was in tatters.

But Luke tells us that a stranger joined them on the road – someone they should have known. He asked the men, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" which only provoked further despair and frustration. Eventually the stranger revealed himself. It was Jesus. Jesus, risen from the dead!

The story of Christianity is the very opposite of most car crash stories. Instead of being a sad tragedy to slowly forget, Jesus's followers went throughout the world telling anyone who would listen that He was risen and that all his promises about salvation and heaven still held true. They've been talking ever since. Which is why this Easter you should drive carefully. After all, there's only one death we really want to talk about!

Verse: '... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Mark 10: 45

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for raising Jesus from the dead and bringing hope from tragedy.