

LUISA TANNER



As we continue to explore our Lent question “Why am I a Christian” as part of [#SpeakOut2016](#) with the Diocese of Truro, Luisa Tanner gives her answer.

“Why am I a Christian? It would be easy to say that I was raised in a loving, church-going family; that I committed my life to Jesus when I was 10 at a Billy Graham LiveLink, was confirmed and that I now enjoy serving in St Martin’s where I was recently married, and leave it there. But that’s more of a chronology of my faith than an answer to “Why?” Besides, it would only be half of the story, if that.

Faith journeys are rarely so simple. The more complex answer is that I got into some bad relationships that made me question my faith and compromise my beliefs, and that, when the relationships fell apart, I was left with an overwhelming sense of loss and loneliness – not just for those things and those people, but for myself. I remember driving home from work one day when it hit me how far I’d walked away from God (even though I still sang songs to him and about him from the front of the church). Looking back, I wonder how I made it home: my vision totally blurred by my tears and my gut churning with a sense of wretchedness, I just kept saying “Sorry” to God all the way home.

With hindsight I’ve learned that this was one of the greatest moments of clarity on my journey of faith. Despite years of knowing that God existed and that He sent His Son to die on my behalf, it seems that it had previously been more of a ‘head knowledge’ than ‘heart knowledge’. Those apologies weren’t misplaced guilt at breaking the rules of a system but an awakening to the realisation that I had broken the heart of Someone real and had hurt my relationship with Him. This new awareness led me to ask afresh for God’s forgiveness and invite Him to be Lord of my life... with sincerity this time.

Life has definitely not been smooth sailing since then, but how I get through bumpy times lies in the answer to why I am a Christian. It’s the knowledge I now hold in my heart – knowledge mirrored in sentiments expressed by the hymn writer J Wilbur Chapman:

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Saviour, makes me whole.

Jesus! What a Strength in weakness!
Let me hide myself in Him.
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,
He, my Strength, my victory wins.

Jesus! What a Help in sorrow!
While the billows over me roll,
Even when my heart is breaking,

He, my Comfort, helps my soul

Jesus! I do now receive Him,
More than all in Him I find.
He has granted me forgiveness,
I am His, and He is mine.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
Hallelujah! What a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.”