**Uncertainty**

When Anglican minister J John was asked why he was a Christian he replied:

*‘There are only four major world religions based on an individual, on a personality. All other religions are based on a philosophy. These four are Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. You can travel the world and you won’t find a Jewish person claiming that Father Abraham is alive and they can communicate with him. Likewise, you wouldn’t find a Buddhist saying that of Buddha, or a Muslim saying that of Muhammad. But you can go to every country in the world (except of about seven) and you’ll meet someone who says that Jesus is alive and they can communicate with him. If you are walking down the street, get to the end of the road and find that it branches into two, you may not know which way to go. There is one man lying on each road; one is dead and one is alive. Which one would you ask for directions?’*

We often feel like we are approaching crossroads in our lives don’t we? Career decisions, relationship issues, financial choices, house stuff, even healthcare. Sometimes we would like to see into the future and know how each decision will play out.

For footballers their future is of course all tied up in what happens on the pitch and in the boardroom. There are so many uncertainties during the year – form and fitness being the main ones – but come this stage of the season many players are beginning to wonder where they’ll be come June, and there are lots of conversations that are being had between players, agents, managers and others. Juggling family situations and life choices without any real certainties to build their decisions on. And this at a time when focus on the field is perhaps more important than any other time.

But players are remarkably good at dealing with what is in front of them in any given moment, and not getting too worked up about which of the many possibilities will play out at the end of the season. Maybe it is the optimism of youth that helps them to live in the present in this way. I can only speak for myself but I was more able to take risks and not dwell on the what ifs when I was younger, and with the grey hairs comes more fear and less certainty, less of a sense that it will all work out fine, and if it doesn’t I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it.

But with age and a bit more life know-how (I’m only early forties, but it’s been a long day, I got knobbled playing footy last Friday and the aches and pains are beginning to show) I can tell you this: we sometimes make too much of the major decisions in our life, but they rarely define us. It may feel like it is the crossroads decisions that create who we are and the direction life takes, but it is really the small every day decisions that create who we are and have the biggest impact. The small responses to little things in life, regularly taken, create who we are and how our lives are played out. In the long term they have the biggest impact. So it’s not what job you do, where you live or even who you marry, that defines your life. It’s what sort of a person you are in that context. How do you respond to the challenges of life? Step up or give in? say no to people needing help, or yes? Forgive or hold a grudge? Show mercy or judgement; generosity or harshness: give or take: share or withhold?

These little responses ad up over time to create much more influence than the ‘big’ single decisions we often lose sleep over. And for me the thing that helps me most is the knowledge that whatever path I take, Jesus the living saviour alive through the power of the Holy Spirit, is there to walk alongside me. A vert real presence in the good times and the bad.

‘Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.’ *Mother Teresa.*