

## Lent

The 6 weeks before Easter

This Lent (the 6 weeks before Easter) I have begun reading "*The Cross of Christ*" by John Stott, a very well known Christian writer and theologian. He points out how big the problem must have been for God to need to sort it out by allowing his Son to die on the Cross. The problem was all to do with sin, our needing to take responsibility for our sin, and to do with guilt and punishment. All of these are unpopular topics, aren't they! We prefer joy and hope and light to darker topics like sin, guilt and punishment. And yet we can't know the wonder of Good Friday or the joy of Easter unless we take seriously the problem Jesus' death came to sort out. The Bible speaks of sin not just as the odd lapse from God's standards but as our wilful rebellion against Him; we mustn't be casual about it. Yes, God is always wanting us to approach Him, but we CAN'T do that while our sin creates a barrier between us and Him. It's only when we begin to own up to our sinfulness and to realise what a big deal that is in cutting us off from a holy God that we begin to marvel at what Jesus did in taking on Himself the punishment we deserve for it. In other words, we can't experience the full joy of his forgiveness without taking seriously what we need to be forgiven FOR.

Reading Stott's book is reminding me again what a wonderful thing it is that Jesus did this for us!

Chris