Sermon: **That can’t be right**

Book of 1963 caused a storm, written by a bishop. Honest to God. Still able to disturb, though less shocking now 54 years later. Like many books/ideas/politics with which I might disagree: TEXT.

Reminds me of Matthew 16.22 **“God forbid it, Lord. That must never happen to you!”**

Why is Peter so sure? He has just declared Jesus to be **‘the Christ, the Son of the living God’** (Matthew 16.16), which for him meant a top job, God’s right hand, with power and *mana*. Not pain and death.

We are used to Jesus as a suffering servant, but not that our cherished ideas may be equally wonky. TEXT.

We make assumptions about who God is, how God operates, and what God thinks.

* God is good, but why do we think what we want for ourselves is the same as what God wants for us?
* How much does God get involved in a world created to run without his ‘interference’?
* How would we know what God thinks about, say, women in leadership in the church?

We use the Methodist Quadrilateral – Bible, Tradition, Reason and Experience to get these right, with the Bible having pre-eminence, and needing interpretation – a group exercise. Always we must be aware that we might still get it wrong, for we have no proof, and never can or will.

So MQ does not provide proof about the rights or wrongs of euthanasia, though we might have an opinion.

When Jesus talks about carrying our cross the context is opposition. Today our opposition can be from outside the church: some city councils make it hard to build a new church in a new housing area, politicians who announce their Christianity can find this has a negative impact.

It can be from inside the church too: the NZ Methodist stance on homosexuality is unpopular with other churches.

Jesus bore the burden of the cross with no proof of resurrection. So for us we carry a cross bearing a burden of uncertainty in a world that demands proof.

TEXT is OK to say (we are being honest to God), if rather than digging in, we are declaring this is what our MQ leads us too. NB we also live with this burden: we might have got it wrong (and thus God wrong).

Gospel: God does not condemn us for wrong ideas, but for unwillingness to carry the cross of uncertainty.