

## **Assembly – Terrorism – myfishbites.com**

### **Terrorism**

One of the realities of the 21st century is terrorism. Terrorism is the use of terror, violence and fear by extremists to make everyone believe what they want them to believe. They aren't people trying to set others free but they are those who want people to become slaves of their extremist beliefs.

The reality is that some of the things they do are acts of cowardice, targeting innocent people through acts like the Westminster car attacks in March 2017 or the Manchester Arena attack in May 2017, cowardly targeting young people.

Using names like 'Islamic State' or 'ISIS' or other terrorist names, the world they want to create is like going back in time to the dark ages where people aren't allowed to be free in any way or create a world where only their point of view is allowed and those not agreeing are killed. The extremists put to death those people who they consider to be different and commit evil acts that are even worse than the evil done by the Nazis during WW2.

People who have been freed from under the control of extremists like Islamic State are so happy. Once again they are allowed to be themselves and do the things they always did. The very basic freedoms that we should all enjoy are given back to them. They were once slaves but are set free with potential to become who they were made to be.

In our efforts to protect and maintain freedom, we need a balance so that we don't take away or undermine other freedoms. We cannot become like the extremists.

### **Think about the Heroes not the cowards**

One thing any act of terror seeks to do is to focus on difference and division. They want to create anger, hatred, fear and scapegoating. They want a war between their Islamist extremism and anyone who thinks differently. But to stop terror winning, we have to fight their hatred with love and a refusal to become like them. Yes, we have to fight and sometimes that means through modern warfare and through defence. But we also beat hatred by responding in love.

Our focus should be on what is good, what is right, what is true, what is trustworthy, what is noble and what builds bridges and not what divides. The Bible puts it this way in the book of Philippians chapter 4:

*Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

In the Westminster attacks in March 2017 we saw how one man could bring such destruction, murder and injury to people. But we also saw other individuals who took a stand and who acted to save life, not take life. We saw men and women who treated the terrorist – ones who responded to death by trying to bring life.

One such person was the PC who was killed, PC Keith Palmer. Another person was the Conservative MP, Tobias Ellwood (and previous army officer) who tried to save the life of PC Palmer. Both these men and many other men and women put life ahead of death.

In the Manchester Arena attack in May 2017, we saw local people offering to help people affected by the terror attack – offering rooms, drinks, shelter and even free rides home to wherever they lived.

## Video

Direct Link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2-1hz1juBI>

In the movie, Hacksaw Ridge (a true story from WW2), we find how one man brought life, help and healing to others – even those who initially rejected him. We saw how one man's life made a difference.

## Life and death. Choose life.

In the Bible, we learn about Jesus whose purpose was also to bring life and hope and healing to anyone who wanted it. Jesus mission was to help people be set free from a life of slavery and bring them into freedom. This is what the Bible says about Jesus in the book of Romans chapter 5:

*Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! One man said no to God and put many people in the wrong; one man said yes to God and put many in the right.*

Around the world today, many people are innocently being killed for things they believe by others who want rob, steal, kill and destroy. One Christian organisation is responding to this with a campaign that 'love kills hate'. What they mean is that love overcomes hate.

In the big decisions of life and in the little decisions of life, we can choose to bring life or death. Today make a choice to always choose and bring life. And don't be afraid to ask for God's help and to pray. God is always available and always wanting to help.