



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, spoke to staff at News UK's London headquarters yesterday about the "inescapable reality" of Jesus in his life.

The Archbishop addressed a packed lunchtime meeting of the Christian Fellowship of News UK – the publisher of the Times, the Sun, the Sunday Times and the TLS – on the topic of 'Why I am a Christian'.

During his talk the Archbishop said being a Christian "doesn't hide us" from life's cruelties but that Christ is "the light who draws close to us whatever life can bring to us."

Speaking on the 10th anniversary of the 7/7 London terror attacks, the Archbishop opened the meeting with a moment of silence and prayer for the victims of that atrocity and the recent attacks in Tunisia.

He then went on to speak about how, on a gap year in Kenya at the age of 18, "I first came across people who seemed to know the person of Jesus Christ" and, in his second year at university, "found the reality of what it is to become a Christian".

He said that he found being a Christian "a reasonable thing to be" because "the best answer to where was Jesus's body after the crucifixion is that he rose from the dead".

But the Archbishop spent the most time speaking about how "the person and presence of Jesus has been the inescapable reality of my life and those of the Christians I've met for almost 40 years now".

This had been true in some of the darkest times of his life, he said.

"Christian faith doesn't hide us from the cruelties of life. Jesus himself faced every aspect of the cruelty of life that is possible. It's just in it he is there in it in the middle of the mess with us."

He added: "Christ is the light who draws close to us whatever life can bring to us. All of us will experience bereavement, again and again many of us, all of us will experience death. What is the company? Who is the person that will be with us at those last moments?"

"I'm a Christian because Jesus Christ found me and called me, around 40 years ago," he continued. "I'm a Christian because it makes sense to me, because Jesus rose from the dead, he conquered death and sin and suffering. I'm a Christian because in Jesus I see the God who didn't say, 'this is how you lot have got to behave and I'm going to watch you and judge you,' but came alongside us and lived in the middle of the absolute foulest mess and himself died unjustly young in great agony and bore all that was wrong in this world on his shoulders.

"I'm a Christian because in my own experience I've run away and he's met me and yet not been angry with me; when I've failed he's picked me up and healed and strengthened me.

"That's why I'm a Christian. And that's why, whatever happens, whatever stupid mistakes, I know that even at the end of it all, even if everything else fails, God doesn't, and he will not fail even to the end of my life."

