



How to walk 3: Going Back To Church With A Wheelchair Now!

By Elizabeth Starr

The weird thing about returning to church with a big visible disability is that people assume you're not happy with who you are. I get that a lot of people secretly are not happy with themselves, but that's not true for me. I'm as God intends, no more or less. God is in control and he'll do what he wants to do, when he wants to do it.

Someone said to me on Sunday, "- but I bet you wish you were well."

I said, "Oh, I am well."

They said, "Well, it's very brave of you to say that."

That conversation challenges me to be grace-filled and humble (and not sassy and salty). I love Jesus' prayer when he says "Lord, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing." I think of it a lot. I knew this person who spoke to me was a lot older than me and hadn't seen me in years. They don't really know me and their attitude is just a product of a more patronising view of disability which doesn't separate disability from illness. I get, I was ill, but that was a long time ago and I've really not been ill since.

Kids are funny. Kids accept things being different. They don't hold onto the illusion that they know why things happen, let alone believe they can change them. Yes, sometimes they have no filter and say whatever is in their head, but there is no assumption about how the world should be behind what they say. Once a kid pointed at me in my wheelchair in the shop and yelled to their mum "What's THAT?" I just laughed. I think it's a good question to be honest.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is 'wellness'?
- Do I really believe God is in control of my body?