

SUFFERING AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

SESSION 4 – JUNE 24, 2018

JOHN PIPER VIDEO SERIES

Joni Eareckson Tada—Hope...The Best of Things.

“Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies.” Not from the Psalms. Not from Ecclesiastes. But never the less, true. When life has knocked us down, punched us in the gut, or poisoned our well of hope, we have two choices—“Get busy living or get busy dying.” Suffering seems to have no friends. These are the words and honest thoughts of Joni Eareckson Tada.

What is suffering? Why should we have hope in our suffering? You may not be a quadriplegic, but I bet you understand Joni’s heart—battling most of everyday with her flesh and her faith. Joni shares a number of observations, explanations and verses from the Bible.

VIDEO As you could see in Joni, as you can probably see in yourself, when you suffer you talk to yourself—a lot. But as a Christian, you also have God to talk to—and get answers. How? By prayer and reading your bible.

1. Suffering is the chisel God uses to chip away at our self-sufficiency.
2. Suffering is God’s sheepdog barking at our heels, driving us to Calvary.
3. Suffering is sent by God for our good and we need to meet it on God’s terms.
4. God hears our pleas for help, rescues us and delights in us (Ps 18:6-19).
5. If God can raise the dead, He can lift us up out of hopelessness (2 Cor 1:19).

“Every day we experience something of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ so that, in turn, we might experience the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours.”

“Those who are truly handicapped are the ones who jump out of bed each morning on autopilot, who don’t stop once to acknowledge and praise God, their creator, Who gives them life and strength each day.”

God wants us all to be humble, to confess our inadequacies to handle life on our own, and draw near to Him, that He may draw near to us (James 4:6-8).

We are told to “take up our cross daily and follow the Lord Jesus (Lk 9:23), but that doesn’t mean our wheelchair, walker, dead end job, irksome son-in-law...Your cross is your attitude about those things. God calls us to die to them.”

“The world can’t see Jesus endure suffering with grace because He is no longer here, but you and I are here for the world to see.”

Why should we have hope?

Joni says, “We can’t compare our present suffering,” in the faith or the flesh, “with the glory that will be revealed in us in heaven...And at the point when we have the strength to wipe away our tears, we won’t have to, because God will have already done it!”

READ Habakkuk 3:17-18; Jeremiah 29:11