

## God is More Valuable than Life & Health John 9:1-6

By Dave Urbanski

"God is more valuable than life or health," Pastor Scott told us this past Sunday.

While it's certainly a theologically sound statement, he told us that when the rubber meets the road, it can be a very hard truth to come face to face with.

Why? Because acknowledging that God is more valuable than life or health means that while we'll have the Lord now and into eternity, we have to come to terms with loss in our lives on earth. We have to come to terms with disappointments. We have to come to terms with hard marriages and divorces. We have to come to terms with diminishing physical health as we age. We have to come to terms with our own impending deaths.

With that, Pastor Scott guided us through John 9 as Jesus encounters a man born blind — and Jesus sees right into his heart and into his situation. (Just as he sees into all our hearts and situations and difficulties.)

Interestingly Jesus' disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Pastor Scott reminded us that indeed sometimes suffering is attached to sin — but other times it has nothing to do with sin at all. Sometimes, he told us, suffering is part of a sanctification process that we may never be able to understand. And while that might be endurable if the suffering has an obvious end point — a few weeks, a few months — what if the suffering lasts years ... or for the rest of our lives on earth?

My son just turned 13, and he was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2. It's indeed possible the Lord will heal him over time to the point where he can live independently some day, but with every passing year that seems less likely. I will not outlive him, and I'm beginning to wonder with more regularity what his life will be like when he's 30, 40, and 50 years old. Who will take care of him? Will he be lonely? Will others treat him well and love him? As I pondered these things recently, I experienced a heartbreaking vision: I saw him as an adult sitting outside on a bench all alone and crying because he had no loved ones around him — and then I cried. It's a sinking, helpless feeling knowing he will lose me one day ... and then what?

But as Pastor Scott also shared, God is more than capable of taking care of those we can't imagine could possibly survive without us. (Kind of like the way God takes care of each of us, no matter how capable and independent we may imagine ourselves to be!) In life, when the pain of suffering remains, God provides his grace so we can reach a point where we align our hearts to his plan for us — and then we're able to ask, "OK, Lord ... what's next?"

That's what Jesus means when he replies to his disciples, saying it was not that the man born blind sinned ... or that his parents sinned ... "but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

So ... how can the works of God be displayed in us when we come up against the "I didn't sign up for this!" suffering that the blind man no doubt had been dealing with in life? First off, Pastor Scott acknowledged that it's a hard thing. Period. Often the reaction is becoming emotionally upset and despairing of life itself. But at some point we have to let go of the vision we had for our lives and embrace something new, even if it's not what we wanted.

And one of the ways we get there is by focusing on the truth of Pastor Scott's sermon: "God is more valuable than life or health." We have to come to grips with the fact that we can't hold on to our health forever, no more than we can hold on to our lives on earth forever. Those precious things will fail. And then, once we're looking toward eternal life — not just with more comfort but with more desire — the Lord can more easily display his incredible works in us amid our suffering.

Let us hold loosely to what we eventually will lose anyway — and tightly embrace what is ours forever.

In the next few verses, Jesus tells his disciples that "we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Pastor Scott told us that Jesus refers to his death on the cross when he says "night is coming" — but even amid his suffering on the cross, Jesus does a deep healing work for us. In fact, Pastor Scott said Jesus enters our suffering with us, giving us the ability to embrace him and value him in ways we could never do otherwise.

Maybe some of us will experience suffering until our earthly lives end. Amid that difficult truth, we must let the Lord help us to embrace him in a new way, to understand him and know him in ways we never would have previously had we not gone through suffering.

Indeed, the Lord is more valuable than life or health. While it is still day, let us all ask him to help us live out that truth.