



I Will Hope in Him

Job 11-14

- 1. Hope in God (chapter 11).**
- 2. I Will Hope in God (chapters 12-13).**
- 3. Hope in the Resurrection (chapter 14).**

Joni Eareckson was an active teenager who loved all things athletic and outdoors. She loved playing lacrosse, and she was good. She was named the captain of her team during her senior year in high school. She especially loved riding horses. She was in the saddle at age two, and she rode a hundred miles on horseback with her family when she was only four years old. When she was older, she went on pack-riding trips in the wilderness, backpacking with a horse, and she competed in horse shows.

Joni grew up in church. She heard the gospel many times. She even prayed the sinner's prayer. Yet, as a teen, she didn't really have time for God. She pursued popularity and athletics, thinking that this was her path to the abundant life that Jesus offered her. Yet, with a failed relationship with a boyfriend, and a spiritual ache in her heart, she knew that something was missing.

So, after a day of riding her horse, she knew that her riding was merely an "elaborate form of escape." That night she prayed, "Lord, what am I going to do? I'm happy and content, grateful for the good things You supply. But deep down, I know something is wrong. I think I'm at that place where I need You to really work in my life. Lord, if You're really there, do something in my life that will change me and turn me around. You know how weak I am. You know how jealous I am. I'm sick of the hypocrisy! I want You to work in my life for real. I don't know how—I don't even know, at this point, if You can. But I'm begging You—please do something in my life to turn it around!"^[1]

Well, if you know the story of her life, you know what happened a few weeks later. On July 30, 1967, she was swimming in the Chesapeake Bay with some of

her friends. At one point, she dove into shallow water and broke her neck, and became a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the shoulders down. She nearly drowned that day, but her sister Kathy saw that Joni wasn't coming up and swam to rescue her from the water. She and some friends placed her on an inflatable raft and brought her up on shore.

An ambulance was called, and she was taken to the hospital, where she spent six months in a Stryker frame, a bed that allows hospital staff to turn a patient without excessive movement. After those six months in the Stryker frame, Joni spent two years in rehab to get to a wheelchair. Those years were difficult for Joni. In many ways, her suffering mirrors the suffering of Job, which we have been looking at for the past few months.

Today we find ourselves in Job, chapter 11. So I invite you to open with me in your Bibles to Job, chapter 11.

I want to quickly bring you up to speed on where we are in the book of Job. It's a book about suffering and trials. If you remember, in the very first verse of Job, we are introduced to him with these words: "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1).

Then, in chapter 1, there follows a conversation between Satan and the LORD. Satan contended that Job only served the LORD because God had blessed him so much. God said, "Not so." And to prove it, he allowed Satan to destroy Job's life. First, Satan took away his great wealth. Second, Satan killed all ten of his children. Finally, Satan took away Job's health, inflicting him with "loathsome sores" from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head (Job 2:7). Through all of this suffering, Job didn't turn his back upon the LORD, proving God's words to be true to Satan.

Anyway, his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, heard about what happened to Job. They came to visit him, "to show him sympathy and comfort him" (Job 2:11). When they saw the sorry state of their friend, "they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven" (Job 2:12). And they sat in silence for seven days. Then, in chapter 3, Job breaks his silence and cries out in his lament, wishing that he had never been born.

Then what follows is a dialogue between Job and his friends, trying to figure out his suffering, why it happened, and what Job should do. And this dialogue is very confusing, and it goes on for a long time. In many ways, this is like the suffering

we may experience in our lives. Sometimes our suffering can be very confusing. Sometimes it can go on for a very long time.

So far in the book of Job, we have heard Eliphaz give his counsel to Job in chapters 4 and 5. He said, “As for me, I would seek God,” as if Job hadn’t been seeking God. And Job replied to Eliphaz in chapters 6 and 7, saying, “I find no comfort in your words.” Then we heard Bildad give his counsel in chapter 8: “Does God pervert justice?” In other words, “Job, you are suffering for your sin. Confess your sin and seek mercy from God.” Job replies in chapters 9 and 10, “I agree with you, but I am in the right.”

And now, in chapter 11, we hear Zophar speak. He’s going to talk about hope. He is going to say, “You are a sinner. Hope in God. Hope in your repentance.”

Now, I want to go back to Joni, because she has walked through great suffering, and she has found hope in God. It hasn’t been easy for her, especially in those early days. She had a lot of support around her. She had nurses and doctors and family and friends. Yet she still struggled greatly to understand her suffering.

Early on, she had a surgery to fuse some of her vertebrae to stabilize her back. The doctor came in to tell her and her parents that the surgery was successful, but that Joni would never walk again. That night, after her parents left, she was in a dark place. She wrote, “I lay in the dim light of the room. I should have been happy—the surgery was successful, I was getting better, and I was now in my own room. But I wasn’t happy. Grief, remorse, and depression swept over me like a thick, choking blanket. For the first time since the accident, I wished and prayed I might die.”[\[2\]](#)

It sounds a lot like Job’s lament in chapter 3. It sounds like Job 10:18: “Would that I had died before any eye had seen me.” There were times when she begged her friend Jackie to help her commit suicide. She said, “I was angry because I couldn’t do it by myself.”[\[3\]](#)

But in those dark days, Joni still had glimpses of hope. She had Christian friends who came to encourage her, like her friend Diane, who would come and offer encouragement to Joni. Joni said that “Her optimism was contagious. Each time she came to visit, she’d have new encouragement from the Bible. ‘Listen,’ she exclaimed, ‘it’s from John 16:24: “I assure you that whatever you ask the Father he will give you in my name. Up to now you have asked nothing in my name; ask now, and you will receive, that your joy may be overflowing.” Isn’t that great?’”[\[4\]](#)

She gave Joni hope. At one point, Joni's church held an all-night prayer meeting to pray for Joni's healing and recovery.

Yet her despondency continued, especially during Christmas that first year. She said, "Here I was, trapped in this canvas cocoon. I couldn't move anything except my head. Physically, I was little more than a corpse. I had no hope of ever walking again. I could never lead a normal life. I had absolutely no idea of how I could find purpose or meaning in just existing day after day—waking, eating, watching TV, sleeping. Why on earth should a person be forced to live out such a dreary existence? How I prayed for some accident or miracle to kill me. The mental and spiritual anguish was as unbearable as the physical torture. But once again, there was no way for me to commit suicide. This frustration was also unbearable. I was despondent, but I was also angry because of my helplessness. How I wished for strength and control enough in my fingers to do something, anything, to end my life. Tears of rage, fear, and frustration only added to my despondency. There was an added complication to my lack of well-being. The sores, caused by my protruding bones, did not heal. In fact, the doctors insisted surgery was the only way to correct the problem. So, on June 1, 1968, I was driven back to City Hospital for bone operations, further confirmation that my injury was permanent. The doctors would not shave the bony protuberances from my hip and tailbone if there was any hope of my using my legs again."[\[5\]](#)

Joni walked through the valley of despair, not so unlike Job. She was without hope of ever walking again. She had no vision of what the rest of her life would be like.

The title of my message this morning is, "I Will Hope in Him," because this thread of finding hope runs through our passage this morning. Zophar is going to direct Job to where he thinks Job will find his hope, it's in God. Job will respond by asserting that his hope indeed is God. But yet, the suffering is so great that Job will say that he has no hope. So, once again, we will end our passage in Job with no great success story. That comes later, much later in the book of Job.

But we will end our message with the hope that Joni has found in Jesus. Because if there is anything that characterizes Joni today, nearly sixty years after her accident, it is her unwavering joy and hope in God.

OK, so let's look at what Zophar said to Job. His message is this, 1. Hope in God (chapter 11).

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Although Zophar points Job to hope, Zophar doesn't deliver his message with much grace. He speaks to Job by way of rebuke and not kindness. He begins with the common back and forth that Job and his friends have with each other.

Job 11:1-3

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

“Should a multitude of words go unanswered,
and a man full of talk be judged right?
Should your babble silence men,
and when you mock, shall no one shame you?”

Zophar says, “I have to speak and correct you.”

Job 11:4

For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure,
and I am clean in God’s eyes.’”

Job didn't exactly say that, but this is a good summary of what Job said. On three occasions in his last speech, Job said, “I am in the right” (9:15, 20; 10:15). And Zophar wanted to correct this, because as far as he was concerned, Job was not in the right. He continues,

Job 11:5-6

But oh, that God would speak
and open his lips to you,
and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom!
For he is manifold in understanding.
Know then that God exacts of you
less than your guilt deserves.

In other words, “Not only are you a sinner, Job. But God is in the right. And he has granted you mercy, in not punishing you further!”

Zophar continues by speaking of God's power.

Job 11:7-11

“Can you find out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?
It is higher than heaven—what can you do?
Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?”

Its measure is longer than the earth
and broader than the sea.
If he passes through and imprisons and summons the court,
who can turn him back?
For he knows worthless men;
when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it?

There are no limits to God and his power. No one can turn God back. When he sees iniquity, he will punish the sin. It is so obvious. But there are some who simply won't see it.

Job 11:12

But a stupid man will get understanding
when a wild donkey's colt is born a man!

When's that going to happen? When is a wild donkey going to give birth to a man? Like when hell freezes over. When pigs fly. When hens have teeth. It's just not going to happen.

In other words, "There is no hope for one who doesn't see this obvious truth. Oh, Job, see the power of God. And confess it. It's your only hope." Then, beginning in verse 13, Zophar tells Job to admit this, and repent, and turn to God.

Job 11:13-14

"If you prepare your heart,
you will stretch out your hands toward him.
If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,
and let not injustice dwell in your tents.

Job, confess your sin. Don't say, "I am in the right." Because, before God, you are surely in the wrong. So turn from your sin! Then come the promises, if he repents.

Job 11:15-18

Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish;
you will be secure and will not fear.
You will forget your misery;
you will remember it as waters that have passed away.
And your life will be brighter than the noonday;

its darkness will be like the morning.
And you will feel secure, because there is hope;
you will look around and take your rest in security.

Hope will come in your repentance.

Job 11:19

You will lie down, and none will make you afraid;
many will court your favor.

“Job, you will be restored, if you but confess your sins and find your hope in God. But if you don’t, your only hope is to die! The eyes of the wicked will fail; all way of escape will be lost to them, and their hope is to breathe their last.” Zophar puts the clear choice before Job. Turn from your sins and hope in God (verse 18). Lest your only hope be “to breathe your last” (verse 20). You want to have hope in God? Be secure in the forgiveness of sins that he is offering. Confess your sins. He will forgive you. Turn from your sin. Confess it. Trust in Christ, who has come to die on the cross for our sins. But if you don’t confess your sins to the Lord, your only hope, as it says in verse 20, is to breathe your last.

And to this, Job is in essential agreement. He says in chapters 12 and 13, 2. I Will Hope in God (chapters 12-13).

2. I Will Hope in God (chapters 12-13).

This is my second point: “I Will Hope in God.” Before Job gets to his point, he begins with the usual jab.

Job 12:1-2

Then Job answered and said:
“No doubt you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you.

I love the sarcasm of Job. You think that you are so smart, that when you die, all wisdom will leave the earth.

Job 12:3

But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.
Who does not know such things as these?

In other words, I agree with you. Yet, my circumstances are hard.

Job 12:4

I am a laughingstock to my friends;
I, who called to God and he answered me,
a just and blameless man,
am a laughingstock.

This takes us back to the first two chapters of the book of Job. Job was a faithful man, who prayed to God, and God answered him with much blessing. But now that Satan has ruined his life, he is called a “laughingstock.” “Job, this is what you get for following God?” “Ha. Ha. Ha. It’s not worth it, buddy.”

Job then speaks of his friends. They are at ease. It is easy for them to mock Job.

Job 12:5

In the thought of one who is at ease there is contempt for misfortune;
it is ready for those whose feet slip.

This is a rebuke to all of us who would counsel those who are suffering. It’s easy for those at ease to look down upon those who have trouble, to have little compassion for what they are going through.

Job then speaks of the wicked.

Job 12:6

The tents of robbers are at peace,
and those who provoke God are secure,
who bring their god in their hand.

And then Job speaks of the greatness of God, beginning by telling his friends how obvious it is.

Job 12:7-10

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;
or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?

In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of all mankind.

It is as clear as day to Job and his friends that the LORD is the one who afflicted him. He is the one who gives to all life and breath and all things. He is the one who takes it away. Everyone knows this, even the beasts of the earth.

Job continues to speak about the greatness of God, not merely in the creation of the world, but also in affairs of men. God is powerful. And God crushes people. Let it sink in.

Job 12:11-25

Does not the ear test words
as the palate tastes food?
Wisdom is with the aged,
and understanding in length of days.
“With God are wisdom and might;
he has counsel and understanding.
If he tears down, none can rebuild;
if he shuts a man in, none can open.
If he withholds the waters, they dry up;
if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land.
With him are strength and sound wisdom;
the deceived and the deceiver are his.
He leads counselors away stripped,
and judges he makes fools.
He looses the bonds of kings
and binds a waistcloth on their hips.
He leads priests away stripped
and overthrows the mighty.
He deprives of speech those who are trusted
and takes away the discernment of the elders.
He pours contempt on princes
and loosens the belt of the strong.
He uncovers the deeps out of darkness
and brings deep darkness to light.
He makes nations great, and he destroys them;
he enlarges nations, and leads them away.
He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth
and makes them wander in a trackless waste.

They grope in the dark without light,
and he makes them stagger like a drunken man.

Such is the greatness of God! Indeed “the LORD has done this [to me]” (verse 9). Oh, to be sure, it was God allowing Satan to afflict Job. But nevertheless, nothing of the affliction of Job was out of God’s control.

And for Joni Eareckson, this has come as a source of hope for her, that God is not off the throne and somehow lost control. Shortly after she came home from the rehab center, she had a friend who would come over and talk with her about the Bible. His name was Steve Estes. One evening he “leaned across the family table, and said, ‘God put you in that chair, Joni. I don’t know why, but if you will trust him instead of fighting him, you will find out why—if not in this life, then in the next. He let you break your neck, and perhaps I’m here to help you discover at least a few reasons why.’”^[6]

Steve paused and then summed it up with ten words that would change her life: “God permits what he hates to accomplish what he loves.”^[7]

One passage of Scripture that helped her was Lamentations, chapter 3. If you remember, before we began the book of Job, we looked at the book of Lamentations, when Jeremiah was lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem, and the destruction of many lives.

Lamentations 3:32-33 (NIV)

Though he brings grief, he will show compassion,
so great is his unfailing love.
For he does not willingly bring affliction
or grief to the children of men.

Joni writes, “In the span of a verse, the Bible asserts that God ‘brings grief,’ yet ‘he does not willingly bring . . . grief.’ With that, Steve was able to reassure me from the top that although God allowed my accident to happen, he didn’t get a kick out of it—it gave him no pleasure in permitting such awful suffering. It meant a lot to hear that. But what about my question of who was in charge of my accident? When it comes to who is responsible for tragedy—either God or the devil—Lamentations 3 makes it clear that God brings it; he’s behind it. God is the stowaway on Satan’s bus, erecting invisible fences around the devil’s fury and bringing ultimate good out of Satan’s wickedness.”^[8]

Joni wrote these things more than fifty years after the accident. These are the words that sustained her through her trial for decades: “God permits what he hates to accomplish what he loves.”

Job knew well that God was behind his suffering. I do find it interesting that there is very little said of the love of God in the book of Job. That’s an argument from silence, to be sure, but perhaps that is where Job missed it a bit. He knew the sovereignty of God well, but he missed the love and the grace and the kindness of God, which would come into his understanding of his suffering.

Anyway, Job indeed affirms God’s sovereignty in chapter 13.

Job 13:1-2

“Behold, my eye has seen all this,
my ear has heard and understood it.
What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.

In other words, Job says, “We all know of the greatness of God. We all know that God has done this to me. But you say it’s because of my sin. I will still maintain my innocence.”

Job 13:3

But I would speak to the Almighty,
and I desire to argue my case with God.

Job says, “I think I have a good case before God, because I’m innocent, and God has wronged me.” And you all are no help.

Job 13:4-5

As for you, you whitewash with lies;
worthless physicians are you all.
Oh that you would keep silent,
and it would be your wisdom!

“It would be better for you all to be quiet.”

Job 13:6-7

Hear now my argument
and listen to the pleadings of my lips.

Will you speak falsely for God
and speak deceitfully for him?

Job's friends were saying that God is just and that Job's suffering came because of his sin. Job held on that he was innocent. He then confronts his friends with a series of questions, challenging them to justify what they said about God's justice.

Job 13:8-12

Will you show partiality toward him?
Will you plead the case for God?
Will it be well with you when he searches you out?
Or can you deceive him, as one deceives a man?
He will surely rebuke you
if in secret you show partiality.
Will not his majesty terrify you,
and the dread of him fall upon you?
Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;
your defenses are defenses of clay.

Then comes Job's hope.

Job 13:13-15

"Let me have silence, and I will speak,
and let come on me what may.
Why should I take my flesh in my teeth
and put my life in my hand?
Though he slay me, I will hope in him;
yet I will argue my ways to his face.

This is really the heart of the book of Job. The LORD has afflicted Job, no doubt about it. Yet, he is still alive. He is suffering intensely. He is trying to make sense of it all. And Job says, even if it gets to the point of death, I will hope in him.

Despite the great questions that Job has, despite his lament and complaints against God, he never lost faith. He never lost his hope in God. Even if God would take his life, Job would still trust in him.

This is really the heart of my message this morning. Can you say this? "Though he slay me, I will hope in him"? This is the only way that you will ever get through trials, hoping in God.

Remember again the book of Lamentations.

Lamentations 3:21-24

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

When you realize that God is sovereign over all things, your only choice is to hope in him, realizing that God has been faithful throughout the generations. Now, it's interesting that Job was written in the days of the patriarchs, before the people of God had generations of that faithfulness behind them to look back on. Maybe that's part of why this hope is a bit thin in the book of Job. But even hope against hope, you need to hope. At a prayer meeting this morning, I opened by reading Psalm 13: 'How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?' David is in a situation where it feels like God has forsaken him, and yet he prays that God would come and help him, and he says, 'I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me' (Psalm 13:5-6). David feels like God has forgotten him forever. Yet he says, "I know that God has dealt bountifully with me." His faithfulness extends through all generations. That is where the hope has got to lie: the sovereignty of God has brought this, but I am going to hope in his steadfast love to be kind to me somehow, someday.

Now, there is an alternate reading to Job 13:15. That means, there are different ways to read this verse in the Hebrew text. You have the reading of the ESV, which says, "Though he slay me, I will hope in him." If you look at the ESV footnote, another way to read this is "Behold, he will slay me; I have no hope." The difference between the two is one letter. It's either "I have hope" or "I have no hope."

The main point of my message this morning doesn't hinge on this translation. Because, our message isn't "Be like Job and hope in God." Rather, it's your only hope is God, so hope in him. So whether Job was in a good place, hoping in the LORD or whether Job is in a bad place, despairing of any hope, our message is

still the same. We should hope in God. We should aim to be at a place where Job says, "Even if you slay me, yet I will hope in him." This is Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane when he said, "Yet not my will, but your will be done."

Well, Job continues in chapter 13, envisioning this day when he can argue his case before God (see verse 3).

Job 13:16-19

This will be my salvation,
that the godless shall not come before him.
Keep listening to my words,
and let my declaration be in your ears.
Behold, I have prepared my case;
I know that I shall be in the right.
Who is there who will contend with me?
For then I would be silent and die.

Job thinks that he can argue his case before God and win his argument. We will see later, in chapters 38-41, that this isn't the case. But he is confident. He's like the lawyer is confident that he has this case all wrapped up. He has everything filed away in his briefcase and is ready for every argument. He expects to stand before the judge and jury and to win his case. Job thinks he is going to do that before God.

In verse 20, Job begins to address God.

Job 13:20-28

Only grant me two things,
then I will not hide myself from your face:
withdraw your hand far from me,
and let not dread of you terrify me.
Then call, and I will answer;
or let me speak, and you reply to me.
How many are my iniquities and my sins?
Make me know my transgression and my sin.
Why do you hide your face
and count me as your enemy?
Will you frighten a driven leaf
and pursue dry chaff?
For you write bitter things against me

and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
You put my feet in the stocks
and watch all my paths;
you set a limit for the soles of my feet.
Man wastes away like a rotten thing,
like a garment that is moth-eaten.

In other words, give me an opportunity to stand before you, God. That's how Job thought about God, that he was God's enemy, why this had come upon him. He missed the love of God. You will notice throughout these chapters that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are always talking to Job, but Job is the only one who talks with God. I think it speaks of his relationship with the LORD. He is constantly praying, constantly talking to him, even as he gets pretty low.

We come now to my last point.

3. Hope in the Resurrection (chapter 14).

This isn't Job's conclusion, in fact it is the opposite. He speaks of how a man dies, is laid low, and that's all of him (14:10). Job had only a vague vision of the resurrection, and it dashed his hope. He had some thought about it. His message is pretty bleak.

Job 14:1-2

“Man who is born of a woman
is few of days and full of trouble.
He comes out like a flower and withers;
he flees like a shadow and continues not.

Then Job addresses the LORD with a pretty discouraging outlook on life. It's the reality of those who suffer. They are often depressed, and they often think the worst.

Job 14:3-6

And do you open your eyes on such a one
and bring me into judgment with you?
Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?
There is not one.
Since his days are determined,
and the number of his months is with you,

and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,
look away from him and leave him alone,
that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day.

Job is pretty low at this point.

Job 14:7-12

“For there is hope for a tree,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the soil,
yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put out branches like a young plant.
But a man dies and is laid low;
man breathes his last, and where is he?
As waters fail from a lake
and a river wastes away and dries up,
so a man lies down and rises not again;
till the heavens are no more he will not awake
or be roused out of his sleep.

Yet, here in verse 13, we begin to get a hint of the resurrection. He pleads that God would remember him beyond the grave.

Job 14:13-17

Oh that you would hide me in Sheol,
that you would conceal me until your wrath be past,
that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
If a man dies, shall he live again?
All the days of my service I would wait,
till my renewal should come.
You would call, and I would answer you;
you would long for the work of your hands.
For then you would number my steps;
you would not keep watch over my sin;
my transgression would be sealed up in a bag,
and you would cover over my iniquity.

And then, Job hints at a possible “renewal” beyond the grave. There is no firm belief in the resurrection here, but there is a hint of it. But then, he returns again to having no hope.

Job 14:18-22

“But the mountain falls and crumbles away,
and the rock is removed from its place;
the waters wear away the stones;
the torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
so you destroy the hope of man.
You prevail forever against him, and he passes;
you change his countenance, and send him away.
His sons come to honor, and he does not know it;
they are brought low, and he perceives it not.
He feels only the pain of his own body,
and he mourns only for himself.”

What a downer. These sorts of thoughts did not serve Job well as he sought to work through his suffering.

Joni Eareckson, on the other hand, is filled with hope and joy. And one thing that she has thought of much is the resurrection, when she will be able to walk again and use her hands. And I think that this has been a huge catalyst to help her through her years of suffering. Listen to what she wrote about heaven:

I sure hope I can bring this wheelchair to heaven. Now, I know that’s not theologically correct. But I hope to bring it and put it in a little corner of heaven, and then in my new, perfect, glorified body, standing on grateful glorified legs, I’ll stand next to my Savior, holding his nail-pierced hands. I’ll say, ‘Thank you, Jesus,’ and he will know that I mean it, because he knows me. He’ll recognize me from the fellowship we’re now sharing in his sufferings.

And I will say, ‘Jesus, do you see that wheelchair? You were right when you said that in this world we would have trouble, because that thing was a lot of trouble. But the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. It never would have happened had you not given me the bruising of the blessing of that wheelchair.’

Then the real ticker-tape parade of praise will begin. And all of earth will join in the party. And at that point Christ will open up our eyes to the great fountain of joy in his heart for us beyond all that we ever experienced on earth. And when we're able to stop laughing and crying, the Lord Jesus really will wipe away our tears. I find it so poignant that finally at the point when I do have the use of my arms to wipe away my own tears, I won't have to, because God will.^[9]

Just catch the hope that she has. How is it that she is so joyful, so hope-filled, so trusting in Jesus, walking with him through her great suffering? It is nothing but this hope of the resurrection from the dead, hoping that God has permitted what he hates in order to accomplish what he loves. She is hoping in the resurrection, that her body will be changed and transformed, in a way that Job at this point just did not quite have that hope. There are seeds of it in Job, but where are you going to find your hope? Find it in God. Find it in your repentance. But I think ultimately the best way to find our hope is in the resurrection, because this life is difficult. The longer you live, the more you realize how difficult life is. There is something beyond this life that we need to hope for if we are ever going to have hope. And that, of course, comes in Jesus, who gives us hope beyond the grave, because Jesus is the one who died for us, and he proved that his death was sufficient for our sins because he was raised from the dead. And that can be our hope.

Joni Eareckson Tada asks, is this hope so hard to come by? She says, I don't think it is. Our hope is for the desire of the nations, the healer of broken hearts, the friend of sinners, the God of all encouragement, the father of all comfort, the Lord of all hope. It's my prayer that the eyes of your heart might be enlightened, that you might know this hope to which he has called you. And that's my heart for you all as well, that we would realize the hope that we have, which far exceeds any temporal difficulty or sorrow that we have in this life.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 13, 2026
by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] Joni Eareckson and Joe Musser, *Joni* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 34-35.

[2] *Ibid.*, 44.

[3] Ibid., 49.

[4] Ibid., 68.

[5] Ibid., 75.

[6] Joni Eareckson Tada, “Ten Words That Changed Everything about My Suffering,” Desiring God, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/ten-words-that-changed-everything-about-my-suffering>.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Joni Eareckson Tada, *Hope...The Best of Things* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 29.