

## Christ Reformed Baptist Church (New Castle, IN)

Pastor Doug Barger –Delivered on 10/11/20

### Facing Sickness and Death

#### THE UNBELIEVER'S VIEW

As natural man, we are not naturally inclined to face sickness and death well.

The unbeliever lives for the here and now, and thus, this life is everything to him.

He dreams of a life free of illness, free of difficulty, and if possible...even free of death.

His life consists of the pursuit of happiness, and indeed he would want to live here forever if that were attainable.

The unbeliever therefore responds in anger and bitterness when illness and/or death interrupts their pursuit of a vain happiness that so often eludes them.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE BELIEVER'S VIEW

We only **wish** that we could say that true Christians were free of such sinful emotions and sinful responses to illness and death which describe the unbeliever.

**However**, it can be admitted that **when** serious illness and the possibility of death suddenly intrude our lives, there can be a real, internal struggle that arises in our hearts.

**The flesh** can rear its ugly head when the prospect of chronic or terminal illness dramatically alters the course of our lives.

Such a reaction to **divinely sent affliction** will, however, be a matter of grief to the believer, WHY?...BECAUSE...it is the desire of his renewed inner man to surrender fully to the providential leadings of his heavenly Father.

Such full and wholehearted surrender alone **will enable** us to face the reality of illness or the inescapable prospect of death.

Such surrender enabled Job to say that he would still trust the God who was slaying him and had thrust him into the furnace of affliction. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:5). The grace of God prevailed mightily in a man who, on another occasion, cursed the day he was born.

## WHAT WILL ENABLE US TO SURRENDER FULLY?

Clearly, only the sustaining grace of **God can enable** us to face sickness and death as a Christian—that is, someone who trusts his heavenly Father and the unfailing promises of His Word.

Therefore beloved, we must learn to make use of these promises when serious trials become our lot.

Only by appropriating God’s precious covenantal promises will we be able to rise above our circumstances and trust our heavenly Father when nothing appears to make any sense to us.

We must learn to judge God by His Word rather than our feelings and circumstances.

We must learn to judge God by His Word rather than our circumstances.

It was such unwavering trust that enabled Paul and Silas to sing God’s praises when they found themselves in unthinkable circumstances **(Acts 16:16–30)**.

Such trust enabled countless believers throughout the ages to remain steadfast during seasons of great trial **(The Pilgrim Story)**.

This is what Jesus wished to teach His disciples when He came to them in a raging storm.

He first calmed their hearts by speaking to them before silencing the storm.

His objective was to teach them (and us!) that in the midst of grievous trials, they should first consider His Word rather than their circumstances (the storm).

## LETS US ASK A QUESTION:

> What are some of the promises we can prayerfully appropriate when facing sickness or death?

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” **(Isa. 49:15)**. Even when God leads us in ways that are far beyond our understanding, God cannot, God will not...forget His own. His eye will always be upon those who fear Him.

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” **(Rom. 8:28)**. Even through sickness and death, God is

working things together for the spiritual good of those who love Him, conforming them to the image of His Son (v. 29).

This is only a small sample of the many promises our heavenly Father wants us to appropriate by faith.

What a blessing when God's grace enables us to say with the psalmist, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust" (Ps. 56:3-4)!

Only by faith (a gracious gift of God) can we face sickness and death and echo the words of all the saints who have gone before us.

Read >>> **Heb.11:1-10**