

## DEVOTIONAL- 9.00 – 9.30 – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

### HOPE FOR EUROPE TALLINN

**Baiba Baikovska**

*“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”*

*John 9:1-3*

The disciples had evidently been taught that sin and hurt, injury and handicap are linked together; that human hurt is the result of human sin. Notice that Jesus does not deny that. It is helpful to note right from the beginning that he recognizes there is such a link. However, it is not the one that many people think, as he will make clear.

What that indicates is that we are not living in a world where we can always expect perfection; that God does not try to operate the world in such a way that everything works out beautifully. We are living in a fallen world. The Scriptures declare that we are living in a broken world, a fragmented world, a world which is not what it once was and is not what it shall be. For the present we are afflicted with hurts, injuries, difficulties and hardships.

The Scriptures confirm that everybody is affected by human evil. Many of us think we have escaped it because we were not born with evident disabilities. But in fact we all have disabilities. Everywhere humanity reflects the weakness of the fall.

But Jesus makes clear that suffering is not always directly traceable to personal sin. Sometimes it is, but in the case of this man that is not true.

Jesus declares, No, it is not that; nor is it the parent's sin. Why, then, was he born blind? That the works of God might be made manifest in him, is Jesus' response. That gives a positive reason for this kind of affliction. It is an opportunity—not a disaster, but an opportunity—for certain things to be manifested in such a person's life, and in the lives of people who come in contact with that person, things that would otherwise never be brought out. The disabled frequently develop inner qualities of peace and joy and strength that otherwise normal people do not have. They oftentimes show a tremendous strength of spirit that is able to take on challenges and endure difficulties that other people cannot. I see my own disability as an opportunity. I have seen many people listed to me and also to come to Jesus, because of my disability. For example there is this one student in a wheelchair I met at the university and we spoke, I became her mentor and friend and we talked about all kind of things including faith and disability and she came to Christ and recognized as her Savior. Last summer she got baptized. So it is also worth to live with a disability if I can see stories like this one. Better being now with disability and gain eternal life with the Lord and take other people with me. And as today's topic will be Church and boundaries I think it is

important that churches starting from individual people would start to work on enabling people with disabilities to see their condition as opportunity for God's glory to be shown not as some bad thing. I believe that then Christian church will be complete when we involve fully people with disabilities and when we enable them to use fully their God given potential. So is your church involving and enabling people with disabilities to serve the Lord or ignoring or pushing aside people with disabilities?

And I want to leave also each of you with one life application question to think about and use: Do we see and resent ours and others disabilities as handicaps, or are we learning the freedom and joy of seeing them as opportunities for God to use them, and us, for His good and perfect purpose?

Resources:

Ray Stedman ministries

Personal experience