

# Friendship, On Pause

---

By adminlen On August 27, 2013 · Add Comment

This past week a friendship was interrupted. The relationship was just beginning, really. It began in blessing and joy, and I expect that it will continue that way in the future, but for now it has been interrupted.

Back in May, a twenty-six-year-old young man was in between jobs, looking forward to getting married, starting a career. Wanting something productive to do, especially to help other Christians, he offered his services at our home to do whatever needed doing at the time.

He spent a couple of long, hot days doing heavy weeding, and helping me dig post holes and fence a sheep pasture. He worked hard, and we talked together of his future hopes and plans, his education, his upcoming marriage, and most of all, his relationship with Jesus Christ. He tackled everything with happiness: he was just delighted to serve a fellow believer. He wouldn't take any money for the work, and we could hardly get him to accept a meal. His character shone as one who works hard, who desires to serve his Savior through selflessly serving others. The Lord blessed us through him in those days. Through the work and the sweat and eventual weariness (though he was a lot less weary than I was!), we went from being merely fellow citizens of heaven to having a warm friendship.

Over the summer I was able to keep track of my new friend's happenings, working for the Idaho Department of Lands as a firefighter and marrying the love of his life in July being the principal highlights. Before Josh and his new bride life spread out in all the glory and promise of a bright summer's morning.

But this past week, on the way home from work, Josh Wilkerson entered his heavenly home instead. His earthly life ended suddenly in a terrible car crash, leaving everyone who knew him and cared for him stunned, confused, anguished. To our frail and limited minds, there is no understanding the "why" of something like this. We can grasp it in terms of punishment for the wicked, to a degree, someone who "deserved" it (!) in our minds, but why, why would the Lord take someone away who was such a blessing? Someone who loved and served his Creator? Someone with so much to give? The event is so tragic that we can easily struggle with wondering how such a terrible thing could be consistent with a God who loves His children.

Yet it is the perversity of our minds that lead us to think this way. I think of the words of our Savior in the gospel of John, chapter nine:

**1** As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. **4** We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." **6** Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud **7** and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Though the story of the man born blind is obviously vastly different than Josh's story, nonetheless Jesus has something for us who are left behind. Particularly, the truth that confronting our sufferings successfully involves changing our way of thinking. We usually look for scapegoats and the guilty; the Lord works His purpose from eternity past to impact us for good in the present and future. There's a two-fold response here. The first is submitting to God's sovereign plan in each of us. The second is living from this day forward doing the works of heaven, glorifying the Savior who is the "light of the world."

I can already begin to see at least a few of "the works of God displayed" in Josh's story. Let's be honest; if Josh had been a selfish, despicable person, would anyone have paid much attention to his death, much less mourned and pondered anything of an eternal nature? No. Hundreds of people turned out to pay their respects to his memory, and the Lord was glorified. There was no hopelessness at his memorial, far from it. Tears, yes, and that's understandable. We will miss him. Pray for his widow and family and friends, for their sorrows are intense. But we know where Josh is, and that Christ has been faithful to him. Josh trusted the Lord Jesus with his soul, and would

want nothing greater than to know that the Lord used his life to turn others to the hope that he had on this earth, and that has now been fulfilled in glory. I can't even imagine the ripple effects of Josh's life and testimony in the long term, but I've already seen some of the "ripples" close in, and the impact in the lives of people is tremendous.

And for Josh himself? Well, the Lord has "sent" him on, and you'd better believe he's "seeing" now like he never saw before. He's with his Lord, and my friendship will have to wait a little longer to develop. I'll admit, I'm glad it's only a temporary interruption. Josh, because Christ has finished His perfect work I'm looking forward to fellowship with you again in His good time. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." ([Job 1:21](#))