

Child Bullied on a Bus

John Mark Hicks is professor of theology at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, and author of nine books. In one of them, *Yet Will I Trust Him: Understanding God in a Suffering World*, he tells about challenges facing his son, Joshua.

Joshua was born with Sanfilippo syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes mental and physical deterioration. Hicks said that one of Joshua's great dreams in childhood was to ride the school bus, just like his older sister.

Finally, Joshua got his wish. He was big enough to ride the school bus to school. As the bus approached his corner, Joshua jumped and shouted for joy.

So his parents were puzzled when, a few weeks later, Joshua didn't get excited when he saw the school bus pull up. In fact, he dragged his feet and tried to talk his parents out of sending him to school. As the bus pulled away, John Mark Hicks realized why Joshua had lost his joy.

He heard the older kids on the bus making fun of Joshua. He saw his son stumble up the aisle of the bus, searching for someone to sit with. And it broke Hicks' heart. How could they treat his son that way because of his disability?

Hicks poured out his heartbreak and anger to God. How could God let his son hurt this way? How could He let the strong bully the weak? Why couldn't Joshua be born healthy? Why would Joshua's short life be filled with hurt and weakness and rejection?

In the midst of his anguished prayer, Hicks felt God say to him, "I understand. They treated my Son that way, too."

Jesus didn't just take on human characteristics; He took on the human condition. He did it to show us that God can work in the toughest circumstances and the strangest places. And through Jesus, God showed us that God's ways can be trusted because God's love has been tested.

Maybe you are in a place of confusion or loss or suffering. That doesn't mean God is not working. The believers in the early Christian church were imprisoned, beaten and even killed for spreading the truth of Jesus. Life is sometimes hard and unfair.

And Jesus came to show us how to trust God in the present, no matter how it hurts, and to trust Him for a future when God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more death, or crying or pain.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11 ESV).

We can count on that promise!

– Beecher Hunter