

# Joni Eareckson Tada visits Dallas Baptist University



Joni Eareckson Tada (left), along with husband, Ken Tada (right), and DBU friend, Andy Horner (center).



Joni speaks to DBU students in chapel.

The importance of disability ministry and depending on God during suffering were the themes of Joni Eareckson Tada's message during a chapel service at DBU on November 30.

"How tragic it would be if the suffering that people with disabilities experience were nothing but a preface of the eternal suffering that awaits them in a Christ-less eternity," shared Joni. "That may be the most compelling reason for disability ministry."

Joni is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Joni and Friends International Disability Center, an international advocate for people with disabilities. After a tragic diving accident at the age of 17, she became a quadriplegic, confined to a wheelchair, and unable to use her hands. She underwent two years of rehabilitation; however, she never regained the use of her legs or hands.

Sharing with the DBU family about God's faithfulness in the midst of difficult times, Joni detailed her struggles with faith and God's purpose for her life following the accident. She spoke about the importance of seeking the Lord during times of suffering. "God is not quick to give advice; He gives Himself," she shared.

With more than one billion people in the world suffering from disabilities, 80 percent of which live in abject poverty, there is great need for ministry. Joni shared that Christians should not just tell others about Jesus, but rather give them an up-close, personal expression of Christ. She recounted the many instances of Christ's care to the blind, lame, and sick.

Joni, then, continued her message during a luncheon for faculty and staff held on the DBU campus. She elaborated on the importance of ministering to students with disabilities and helping encourage those who are suffering trials of various kinds.

The author of 46 books and numerous magazine articles, Joni also hosts a four-minute radio program that reaches one million listeners each week. She also hosts the "Joni and Friends Television Series," which is broadcast in 84 countries and provides an honest approach to answering life's tough questions about the goodness of God in the midst of pain and suffering.

Joni also encouraged students to enroll in the DBU class "Disability and the Church" that will be offered in the spring semester. The course was developed following the encouragement of Joni for DBU to help educate students on the many ways to minister to disabled people through local churches.