

“Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People”

John 9:1-12

Theme: God grants His children the supernatural grace needed to glorify His Name in any experience.

Introduction: Imagine living your entire life in darkness. No sunrise. No colors. No faces. No ability to work normally or participate fully in society.

That was the reality for the man in John 9. From the moment he was born, blindness shaped his life. In the ancient world, a person like this often depended on begging along the road, relying on the charity of others and frequently being looked at with suspicion or judgment. Many believed that suffering like this must be caused by sin—either his own or his parents’.

So, when Jesus and His disciples encounter this man, the disciples ask the question people always ask when they face suffering:

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” (John 9:2)

They were searching for a cause. Someone must be responsible. Someone must be to blame. But Jesus gives an answer that completely redirects their thinking. He does not focus on blame. He focuses on **purpose**.

“It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” (John 9:3)

In other words, this man’s suffering was meaningful. His lifelong blindness was not just a coincidence. God planned to use this situation to showcase His power and glory.

That statement challenges the way we often think about our own experiences. When hardship enters our lives, our first instinct is usually to ask, *Why is this happening? or What did I do wrong?* Yet Jesus points us to a much greater truth: **God often uses the very circumstances we would never choose as the stage upon which His glory is revealed.**

Throughout Scripture, we see that God provides His people with the grace needed to honor Him in every situation—even in weakness or suffering.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

The Lord does not just rescue His children from every hardship; instead, He grants them supernatural grace so His glory can be shown through their lives.

That is exactly what happens in John 9. A blind beggar becomes the vehicle for Christ to show His power, command obedience, and create a testimony that spreads throughout the community.

What began as a lifelong affliction becomes a platform for divine glory.

In this passage, we see three movements in God’s work through this man’s experience:

1. **The Objective of God’s Glory** – vv. 1–5 Jesus declares that the man’s condition exists so that the works of God may be displayed.
2. **The Obligation to Obey** – vv. 6–7 The man must respond in simple obedience to Christ’s command.

3. **The Opportunity to Testify** – vv. 8–12 The miracle opens the door for a public witness to the transforming power of Jesus.

And through it all, we understand this essential truth: **God gives His children the supernatural grace needed to glorify His Name in any experience.** Even the darkest circumstances can become the very means by which Christ's greatness is revealed.

I. The Objective of God's Glory – 9:1-5

A. The Men-Centered Focus of Sinners – vv. 1-2

1. The reality revealed in the previous chapter is the failure of human responsibility when tested by the Light – they completely rejected the Lord.
2. In contrast to that is the reality of chapter 9, where the central truth is God acting in sovereign grace after such a failure of human responsibility.

John 8	John 9
The darkness of man is exposed by the Light	Sight is granted to the blind
The Light is despised and rejected	The Light is received and worshipped
The Lord hides Himself as the Jews wish to kill Him	The Lord reveals Himself to the blind beggar.
Inside the Temple Christ is called a demoniac	Outside the Temple Christ is owned as Lord

3. While Jesus remains elusive to those attempting to stone Him, He reveals Himself willingly to this blind beggar – *“As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.”*
4. Although the sanctimonious unbelievers were uselessly seeking to stone Him, there is a divine appointment with a sinner who needs the grace of God.
5. This man serves well as an example of those in need of God's grace – not just physically, but spiritually as well: he was a *“man blind from birth.”*
6. His malady now becomes the occasion for the disciples to attempt to settle a raging philosophical & theological debate that was raging among the Jews – *“What causes suffering?”*
7. They *“asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?’”*

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

8. It introduces the topic often known as “**Theodicy**” – the effort to reconcile God’s sovereignty with the existence of evil and suffering.
9. The disciples’ seeming conclusion is that any suffering comes from personal sin—similar to Job’s three “advisors.”
10. It displays a complete misunderstanding of God’s purposes for men – an understanding that is grotesquely man-centered.
11. Some wrongly believe that it is God’s will for everyone to be healthy and fit, and they conclude that any illness results from personal sin.

B. The Main Concern for the Saints – vv. 3-5

1. However, Jesus immediately draws the issue away from a man-centered focus to a God-centered orientation – *“Jesus answered, ‘It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him’.*”
2. Although all sickness stems from our living in a sinful world, it is not always appropriate to link it to a specific sin or problem connected to the person who is ill.
3. Here, we find that God’s plan for our lives extends beyond our comfort and health, focusing instead on how He can be most fully glorified.
 - a) *This man had been blind “since birth” – at least 20-30 years.*
 - b) *He lived in such a condition that he would be able to serve as a means by which God might glorify Himself through His Son’s power.*
4. Likewise, the situations men face provide opportunities for God to magnify Himself through those who suffer.
5. Additionally, we are given the opportunity to showcase the grace and glory of God as we faithfully endure and overcome our trials.
6. The work of God must be prioritized if God grants the opportunity and occasion – *“We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”*
 - a) *“we” would be a reference to Jesus and the disciples who had asked him about the reason for the blindness.*
 - b) *Like Jesus, who understood the brevity of life, we must not allow ourselves to waste a single moment or situation in seeking the glory of the Lord in whatever we are experiencing.*
 - c) *Every experience we have is an opportunity for us to acknowledge that God is at work in us and through us to bring about His glory to our good – cp. **Romans 8:28**.*

7. God's main priority is the radiance of His glory – “*While I am in the world, [physically or through indwelling My people] I am the Light of the world.*”
8. Every one of us – as those eternally redeemed by the grace of God – is afforded the opportunity to display the glory of God shining from within us as we endure different trials and suffering – cp. [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#).
9. This life should not focus primarily on our physical comfort, pleasure, or happiness, nor on emotional encouragement, financial prosperity, or ease - Instead, it is a divinely granted responsibility to reflect God's glory and grace.
10. If it is the passion of believers to glorify God regardless of their situation, and if the believer sees trials as opportunities to grow in that ability, then a true child of God will “*consider it all joy ... when [they] encounter various trials*” – cp. [James 1:2](#).

II. The Obligation to Obey – 9:6-7

A. The Inducement to Obey the Savior – vv. 6-7a

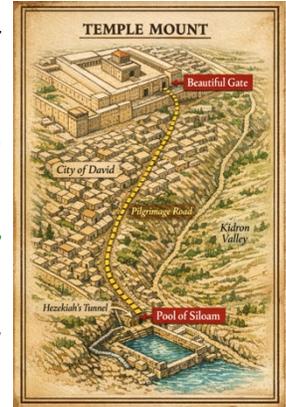
1. “*When He had said this ...*” - After emphasizing God’s priority in our trials, Jesus takes the initiative to bring glory to God by healing the man.
2. God can be glorified in different ways depending on His will –
 - a) *He can be glorified by providing the enabling grace for His children to showcase His glory through their supernatural faithfulness in a trial* – cp. [1 Peter 1:3-9](#).
 - b) *He can also be glorified by providing healing grace that demonstrates His glory through supernatural healing.*
3. The One who formed man out of the dust of the ground repeats His glorious creative power by using dirt to heal this man – “*He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes.*” – cp. [Genesis 2:7](#).
4. Jesus is here displaying divine authority, most clearly shown through His creative power – He is not only restoring damaged eyes but also re-creating sight in a man whose eyes have never functioned according to God’s design.
5. The “spit” was simply a means for Jesus *to “make clay”* – there is nothing mystical about the “spit” – the same is true in other instances when Jesus used his spit – cp. [Mark 7:33; 8:23](#).
6. Jesus gives the blind man the chance to obey and receive God's blessing – “*... and said to him, ‘Go wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is translated, Sent).*”

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7. It is only through our unwavering and simple obedience to God—whether through healing or ongoing distress—that God is glorified.

B. The Impact of Obedience on the Sinner – v. 7b

1. Jesus had done everything needed for the blind man to be completely healed, but the healing wasn't effective until he obeyed the Lord.
2. Because of his desperate heart and a divinely given confidence in Jesus, the blind man obeyed – struggling nearly a half mile from near the Temple (possibly by the “Beautiful Gate”) – through the downhill streets toward the southern end of the city to the Pool of Siloam.
3. We are told that *“he went away and washed, and came back seeing.”*
4. Similarly, Christ Jesus has done everything necessary for men to be made right spiritually.
5. However, a sinner is cleansed and reconciled to God only when they believe and obey.
6. This involved a significant act of faith in and obedience to the Lord.



III. The Opportunity to Testify – 9:8-12

A. The Curiosity regarding the Grace of God – vv. 8-9

1. We are told, as followers of God and beneficiaries of His grace, to always be prepared to give a reason for the transformation that has taken place in our lives.
2. One reason God gives us His grace and thus glorifies Himself through us is to ignite interest in the hearts and minds of the lost.
3. When this man who was born blind returns from the pool of Siloam able to see, *“the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, ‘Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?’”*
4. The change in the man was so powerful that some couldn't even recognize him as the same person – *“Others were saying, ‘This is he,’ still others were saying, ‘No, but he is like him.’”*
5. We are told that this man kept attempting to convince all of them that he was the man – *“He kept saying, ‘I am the one’.”*
6. As each of our lives, touched by the grace of God, is dramatically

transformed, others who are without grace ought to wonder what has happened to us – cp. *1 Peter 3:15*.

B. The Confirmation of the Grace of God – vv. 10-12

1. The change confused many who couldn't explain what had happened to the man – *“So they were saying to him, ‘How then were your eyes opened?’”*
2. In his joy at being healed, he readily shared what God had done for him – *“He answered, ‘The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me “Go to Siloam and wash;” so I went away and washed, and I received sight’.”*
3. The people pressed him for more details about Jesus, especially His location, but the man couldn't answer. *“They said to him, ‘Where is He?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’”*
4. This shows that the one who has received God's grace doesn't need all the answers; they just need to be able to share (confirm) what God's grace has done for them.
5. Some here may stumble when it is necessary to confirm the grace of God, unable to share either how the supernatural grace of God sustains them through great distress or how they have been healed.

So What?

1. **What current situation in my life might God be using as a platform to display His works and His glory?**
2. **What fears, doubts, or preferences tend to hinder my obedience when the Lord's commands are clear?**
3. **In what ways could my present circumstances – whether joyful or difficult – become opportunities to point others to Jesus?**

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