

John-21

“I was blind now I see”

John 9:1-41 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a second and welcome our first-time guests and those of you who are watching online!

We're walking through the Gospel of John and today we come to John chapter 9 where we're faced with the question... "Why is there so much suffering?"

If you've ever wondered about that question yourself, you're not alone...

A few years ago a poll conducted by the Barna Group asked Americans "If you could ask God any question and you knew that God would give you an answer, what would you ask Him?"

The majority of people said, I would ask Him about pain and suffering...

We live in a world that is full of sickness, pain, and suffering...

Maybe you came to church today and you're suffering in some way...

Maybe you have a loved one who is sick and you're wondering "God what are You doing?"

Maybe you're wondering "God am I going through this because You're angry with me?"
"God Did I mess up?" "God did You mess up?"

These are real questions that people have as they're dealing with hardships and suffering...

These are questions that I myself have asked, as I've watched loved ones suffer and pass away...

As I've watched my wife battle with anxiety and depression...as I've watched my two daughters battle through a rare blood disorder...

None of us are immune to suffering...and sometimes we don't understand why things are happening...

Here's what I've learned to do over the years...I've learned to trust in God...knowing that even though I'm going through this...He's got a plan!

Keep that in mind as we dive into our text this morning...

If you're just joining us, let me give you the backdrop...

Jesus is still in Jerusalem...He's actually been here since chapter 7...

That's when He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles...

Whenever Jesus went up to Jerusalem He would typically teach in the Temple during the day and then He and His disciples would retreat to the Mount of Olives in the evening...

John 9:1 (NIV)

Jesus sees our **SUFFERING**

This man was born blind...He has never seen a sunrise, or a sunset...he's never seen his mother's face...

Because of his physical condition...He's unable to work...but it seems that he's got no one to care for him...so in this culture, he has to beg for money and food to survive...

He's a social outcast...few notice him...

This man can't see Jesus, but Jesus sees him!

You may be going through some suffering today and you're thinking... Nobody sees me...nobody knows what I'm going through...Jesus sees and Jesus knows!

Notice that Jesus saw the man and knew that he was born blind...How did He know? He knows because He's God!

So if you can picture this Jesus and His disciples are walking and they see this man and the disciples ask Him...

2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"-Jn 9:2 (NIV)

In other words, Lord, why is this man suffering? Is it because of his sins or his parents' sins?

Notice that the disciples only give two options as to why this man is suffering...either he was bad or his family was bad...

This was a very common belief during this time...if you were suffering it had to be because of sin...By the way, this wasn't just a belief in Jesus' day...this belief goes all the way back to the time of Job...

Remember Job's boneheaded friends? With friends like that...who needs enemies?

Instead of comforting, and encouraging Job in his time of suffering, they tell him it's his fault he's going through what he's going through...In other words...God is punishing you because of your sins!

The thing is in Job's case we know that's not true because Job 1:1 says

There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil-Job 1:1 (NLT)

Job was blameless...This doesn't mean that Job was perfect...but he loved and feared God and as a result he was obedient to God...

So right from the beginning of Job we're told that Job's hardships and suffering were not because he sinned against God...

Because we know the story...we know that Job's suffering was because of Satan...

Sometimes we suffer not because we did something bad, but because we're doing something good!

Sometimes our suffering comes from a demonic attack...

In Job's case God allowed Satan to test Job for a season...the whole story points to God's faithfulness even when we're suffering...it had nothing to do with Job being a sinner...

Now this doesn't mean that our suffering can't be a direct result of our sin...The Bible does say...

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows-Ga 6:7 (NIV)

15 Good judgment wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction. -Pr 13:15 (NIV)

So it is true that when we make sinful choices, we will sometimes have to suffer hardships because of those choices...

But all suffering isn't because of our sinful choices...sometimes we suffer because of somebody else's sinful choices...

Sometimes we suffer simply because we live in a fallen world...

Our world has been broken since Genesis chapter 3...before Genesis 3 God made everything in the world good and very good!

Sin entered the world and it corrupted and infected everything...Now we have diseases, and sickness, we have injustices and tragedies of all kinds...

Plagues, natural disasters, war...evil people doing unspeakable things and sometimes good innocent people suffer because of it...

So the disciples automatically see this blind man and instead of seeing the person and having compassion...they just see the problem and assume it's a penalty for sin...

But Jesus is going to tell them that our pain isn't always punishment!

...“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. In other words, I'm not going to get sucked into a theological debate as to why this man is suffering...I'm going to do something about it while I can...soon I'm going to the cross...**5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”**

-Jn 9:2–5 (NIV)

Jesus is like...let me correct your theology here...Number one...

Not every misfortune in your life is God's punishment for your sin...Some of us need to hear that this morning...

Some of you are going through it right now...you're suffering or you have a family member who's suffering and you can't shake the lie that God is punishing you or your family for your past sins...

You know it's not true...but the thought keeps entering your mind because you're still going through it...

My prayer is that today will be the day that you are set free from that wrong thinking...that you'll be able by the power of the Holy Spirit take those thoughts captive and make them obedient to Jesus!

Number two...

Jesus teaches us that even though our suffering isn't a direct result of our sin or our family's sin...God can use it for our ultimate good and His glory! God can use the broken places in our lives...the places where we're suffering, and He can display His power through them!

So that sickness, that injury, that marital difficulty, that financial crisis, that prodigal child, the loss of a loved one...all of these become opportunities for God's faithfulness and God's power to go on display!

Think about this...

You need to be in a mess to experience a miracle!

Now you may be listening to this and thinking...how can my suffering help bring glory to God and be a witness to others?

Suffering equips us. When we've come through a season of suffering...we can then help others who are going through the same thing...

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.-2 Co 1:3-4 (NLT)

God will use our mess to become a message for someone else...God can use our deepest pain to bring comfort to another person...

“Cyndie”

Our suffering can equip us...

Suffering strengthens us

Suffering strengthens our faith

I know that many of you right now, are going through things, and if I were to give you the mic, you would say something like... “this has been one of the hardest seasons of my life...but at the same time, I’ve never felt closer to God!

The Apostle Paul understood this...He was going through a period of physical suffering...

8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong-2 Co 12:8–10 (NLT)

Suffering can actually strengthen our faith!

Suffering corrects us

If you're getting off the path a little bit, there's nothing like a little pain to set you straight!

If you're a parent you know this is true...There's a time tested technique that has been adjusting attitudes centuries...It's called spanking!

I'm not saying we should use it all the time...but I am saying that there are moments when negotiations just aren't going to work...

There's nothing wrong with time outs, breathing exercises, expressing feelings, redirecting...But sometimes the discipline requires a good old fashioned spanking...

“Ezekiel and the stove”

He didn't understand the severity of his actions until he got the pow pow...

Sometimes we're just like Ezekiel...and God has to spank us...the Bible calls it discipline

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” -Heb 12:5–6 (NIV)

Sometimes God gets our attention with a spanking...David wrote in Psalm 119

67 I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word...Ps 119:67 (NLT)

When we start to wander away from God...He corrects us...we repent and we come back to Him...Suffering can equip, strengthen and correct us...

These are just three ways that God can use our suffering for our good and His glory...Our suffering becomes an opportunity for the power and faithfulness of God to go on display in our lives...

Now Jesus does something in this story that's kind of strange...After He corrects His disciples theology...

John 9:6-12 (NIV)

So Jesus walks up to this man...He's not looking for Jesus...but Jesus sees Him! Jesus starts spitting on the ground until He's able to make enough mud for facial...

I can picture everyone looking at Jesus thinking what on earth is He doing? The blind man can hear Jesus spitting...and he's like what's going on?

Then Jesus takes the mud and He applies it to the man's eyes, and says now go wash in the pool of Siloam...

The guy's like um...okay? Now some commentators say that the Pool of Siloam was quite a long walk from the Temple Mount...

So this guy's got mud cakes over his eyes and he's making his way through the crowds to get to the Pool of Siloam...

He finally gets to the pool...He washes off the mud...and bam! He can see! For the first time in his life...he can see! He sees his reflection...He probably sees people looking at him like...

But he can see! It's a miracle!

Now the question many of us have is why did Jesus heal the man with spit and mud?

Why didn't He just lay hands on him?

Some commentators say that Jesus was once again showing that He was God in the flesh...Just like God formed Adam from the dust of the ground...So Jesus uses dirt to form new eyes for this man...

Other scholars believe that Jesus healed the man's eyes in this way to show that God can heal in all kinds of ways...

When we read the Bible, we see that there were times that Jesus simply said "go your faith has healed you"

There were other times when Jesus laid His hands on people and they were healed...

Jesus still **HEALS** today

The same Jesus who healed the blind man in John chapter 9 still has power to heal today!

Jesus is still...

Healing bodies...

Transforming minds...

Breaking chains...

If you're suffering today...in a few minutes we're going to do what James instructs us to do...

14 Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

-Jas 5:14–15 (NLT)

We're going to pray with expectation, and trust in God's wisdom and God's timing...

But I want you to know that miracles aren't just Bible stories that we read about...they're testimonies that still happen today!

And sometimes God heals instantly, and other times God heals in stages...

But the hands that touched this blind man's eyes have not lost their power!

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever-Heb 13:8 (NLT)

I bring this up because there are many today who believe that the gift of healing doesn't exist today...they criticize instead of celebrate...

We see this in our text...the man's neighbors question if it's really him who can see...

No one can take away your **TESTIMONY**
John 9:13-34 (NIV)

I feel for this guy...

His neighbors don't recognize him...

His parents basically disown him...

And the religious leaders shame him and kick him out of the church...all because he had an encounter with Jesus!

Can I just say that we have these same people in our lives when we get saved?

We've got people who don't recognize us anymore because we don't do the same things we used to do before we were saved...

We've actually got some people who will stop talking to us...disown us...all because of our relationship with Jesus...

You've got people in your life that just disappeared once you went public with your faith! Some of them are family members...

Then we've got people in our lives who are like those Pharisees...They're just not going to believe anything you say about Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done in your life...

This man couldn't answer every question or defend every argument that was being thrown at him...but there was one thing he was sure of...

...One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

People can question you, doubt you, hate you, disown you, mistreat you, but they can never take away your testimony!

Your testimony is powerful...and when you share it, it encourages believers and intrigues unbelievers...

I want to encourage you to share your story...

Share how Jesus saved you...

Share how Jesus healed you...

Share how Jesus provided for you...

Share how you were once lost but now you're found...

Share how you were once broken but now you're made whole!

Share how Jesus walked with you through that season...

You may not be able to quote every scripture...but you can share your story!

Now we know that everyone isn't going to believe that Jesus saves, that Jesus heals, that Jesus still sets captives free...

Remember, they're not really rejecting you...they're rejecting Jesus in you...

That's what the Pharisees did...They kick this poor guy out of the church...and here's the beautiful thing about Jesus... He hears about it and goes looking for him...

John 9:35-41 (NIV)

Jesus is saying to the religious leaders...Hey you guys say you know who I am...and you know who God is...so because you think you can see, you're really blind...

Why? Because you don't know Me at all...you actually reject Me...

But for everyone who really wants to see, then Jesus opens their blind eyes, so that they can see Who He really is!

This story in John 9 isn't just about receiving physical sight...This guy actually received a double miracle on this day...

He received physical sight...

And he received spiritual sight...

Because the eyes of his heart were opened to

Who Jesus really is...and this is something that
all of us need!

Most of us have physical sight...but all of us
need spiritual sight...The greatest blindness is
refusing to see your need for Jesus!

And here's the thing...

God wants to do a miracle in your life just like

He did for this man...

As we close, I want to go back to a question
that Jesus asked...

***“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”-Jn 9:35
(NIV)***

That's a great question to close with today...

If you're far away from God...do you believe Jesus can save you?

If you're suffering in some way, do you believe that Jesus can use it to draw you closer to Him?

Do you believe that He can strengthen you through it?

Do you believe that He can use it for His glory?

Do you believe He can heal you? Deliver you, provide for you?

Whatever your need is today...would you be willing to bring it to Jesus?

What's the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Altar Time

