InWord

MAKING SENSE OF SUFFERING
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LIFE STUFF

🟢 Quick Backdrop

The disciples asked the question for us: Why did this happen?

It's a question we ask in one form or another when confronted with unjust suffering: Why did this happen? A madman kills innocents with a gun. An earthquake kills hundreds in a few seconds. Children contract cancer. Why?

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Read John 9:1-7 below. Find the disciples' question of why and then note the apparent reason why the man in the passage was blind from birth.

John 9:1-7

[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.

Before jumping to the next chunk of Scripture, read the paragraph below so you can follow the incredible events in this scene. (You could also read John 9:8-34 out of your Bible or a Bible app.)

> After the healing, John gave some info in 9:14 that changed everything: it was the Sabbath when Jesus healed the blind man. Some of the Pharisees instantly accused Jesus of breaking the Law by "working" on the Sabbath and decided to use this infraction to corner Him. This meant interrogating the man who was healed and even calling in his parents (you know it's bad when that happens). Eventually the Pharisees kicked the healed man out of the synagogue—a harsh penalty for a Jewish man.

Now read John 9:35-38 below. As you read, note two things:

1. Look for everything Jesus said (draw a cross over these things if you've printed this out).

2. Look for everything the formerly blind man did (draw a pair of eyes over these things).

John 9:35-38

[35] Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" [36] He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" [37] Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." [38] He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Consider this for a minute: What do you think Jesus meant in John 9:3, "but that the works of God might be displayed in him"? Of the four possible meanings below, circle the one that you think is *most* correct. Think hard about where Jesus said the work of God would be displayed. Then look closely at what happened in the follow-up encounter between Jesus and the formerly blind man.

Possible Meanings of John 9:3

1. The healing of the blind man would display the power of God.
2. People would believe in Jesus as the Son of God if He healed the blind man.
3. The blind man himself would believe in Jesus as the Son of God.
4. The blind man would become famous and tour around sharing his testimony.

3 Putting Into Practice (God, Change Me!)

The most awesome thing that happened in this chapter wasn't the physical healing, but the formerly blind man believing in Jesus as the Son of God! *That* was the work of God displayed in His life (see meaning #3 and also John 6:29). So here's a question: do you want the work of God to be displayed in your life? Picture yourself having the conversation with Jesus that the formerly blind man had in John 9:35-38. Let Jesus do a miracle in you. Then spend a few minutes doing what the formerly blind man did in John 9:38.

One more thought: We can see from this scene in John 9 that God will redeem good things out of the bad things in our lives. Like with the blind man, He will redeem the physical (such as healing our emotions) and the spiritual (such as deepening/restoring our walk with Him. What bad things in your life can you start looking for physical and spiritual redemption?

Fold or Cut