



## WEEKLY STUDY

### Week 7

Pastor Jacob stepped back into our year-long series on the Book of John to address a constant point of contention for people of faith. The question we ask is, “Whose sin causes the suffering we witness or endure in the world?” This question is asked and answered in John 9 as it relates to a man who was born blind. Just like the disciples, we wonder about the suffering of others. Why is a person born blind? Why does a child die at 14 months? Why? Jesus clears the deck on sin—suffering is not always a direct result of sin. But for reasons we can’t quite explain, our suffering can still lead to God receiving glory. Ultimately, more people come to faith through their own suffering or the suffering of others. Admittedly, this week’s topic is not easy—it shouldn’t be. But let it be an occasion to consider: whose suffering has impacted your own faith? How have others come to faith because of your response to obstacles?

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark  
Lead Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

*Jesus,  
I am just like the disciples who walked around with you on earth. I struggle with suffering in this world. I wish that a good God would just wipe it all away. I’m trusting that one day in heaven, I will understand. For now, give me faith to see your Kingdom coming even amidst the tragedy and violence of this world. Your Way of peace will win out. Come Lord Jesus!  
Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: JOHN 9.1-2

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

- Sin is a real part of our world. It has been woven into our story since the early days of humanity (See Genesis 3). Much of the suffering in the world is a direct or indirect result of sin (i.e., Putin's war in Ukraine). So we look to sin as an explanation for the suffering we see or endure first hand. Like the early disciples, we want someone or something to blame. How do you see this lived out in the world around you today? When are you tempted to fault those who are suffering for their condition?
- *O God, I look to you for answers to the problems of this world. Meet my questions with your faithful presence today.*

## **TUESDAY: JOHN 9.3-5**

*“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

- The question asked by the disciples (“Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”) was asked in anticipation of an easy, black and white answer. In a society ruled by religious laws, there was a teaching to answer the question. But Jesus didn't give the easy answer. He pointed out the potential for God to be glorified in the difficult situation. What are you facing right now where Jesus might see potential for the world to witness the power of God?
- *Jesus, help me to see my suffering as an opportunity for healing and redemption—that I and others might know the power of God.*

## **WEDNESDAY: JOHN 9.6-12**

*After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

<sup>8</sup> *His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some claimed that he was.*

*Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”*

*But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”*

<sup>10</sup> *“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.*

<sup>11</sup> *He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”*

- The man who had been born blind began to share about his healing. He didn't seem to know much about Jesus. He just knew that he had been healed. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a healing? If so, how did you explain it? Consider how the power of God might be made known in that healing.
- *Jesus, step into my weakness today and I will declare your name!*

## **THURSDAY: HEBREWS 11.24-27**

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

- Moses walked through a lot of suffering in his life even though he had access to the best things in Egypt. He saw the suffering as more valuable than anything else and God was glorified through that suffering and through Moses' faithfulness. Here the writer of Hebrews is putting his story in context of Jesus Christ the Messiah—a beautiful reminder that Christ was present in creation and is present in our suffering.
- *Jesus, I look to you above any treasure this world offers. In you I have my hope.*

### **FRIDAY: ROMANS 8.22-25**

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.<sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.<sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?<sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

- It is not hard to sense the groaning of creation. We see suffering in the world around us, but we are not the first ones to notice it. All the suffering can be overwhelming and cause us to groan as well. You may be tempted to give up hope. But we are waiting eagerly for the redemption of our bodies and the redemption of this world.
- *Jesus, turn the groaning of this world and groaning of my heart into something new—new life in Jesus.*

### **SATURDAY: REVELATION 21.3-5**

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."<sup>4</sup> "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

<sup>5</sup>*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

- Pastor Jacob said that we will look for God's glory in our suffering until our suffering is over and we are in God's glory. This passage in Revelation describes that glory. At first glance it may not seem to help our current situation, but we endure all the way until we are fully in the presence of God.
- *God, I long to be fully in your presence where death, mourning, crying and pain are no more.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In the message we heard,

*“...if you want to lean in closely to the heart and words of Jesus about the spiritual truths that are true here in our physical realm, but also in the spiritual realm, Jesus is going to say some things that are so clear it feels like your brain is filled with light and understanding and he is going to say some things that are very mysterious and vast and big and Huh?”*

*And so the question is posed: do we want a Jesus that fits neatly in all our explanations or one who is in the questions and above the questions and answering the questions and calling us deeper. So what do we do? We hang with Jesus where he’s going.”*

- What do these words mean to you?
- How do you deal with mystery when it comes to faith and the Bible?
- How do you talk about suffering?
- When have you seen God’s glory through suffering?