

# SOUL FOOD

MARCH 19, 2017

## JOHN 9:1-3 THE MYSTERIOUS PURPOSES OF GOD

In this passage we are confronted with a man who had been born blind. He lived a life of begging for handouts and being treated by many as almost being less than human. The problems of evil and suffering are perplexing for us and many atheists claim that their lack of faith in God is based upon the presence of such evil and suffering in the world. How could a good God allow such to happen in His world? Is He powerless or indifferent?

For others they easily assume that individual circumstances of suffering must be the result of serious sin before God. Many assume that there is a direct link between personal sin and particular circumstances of suffering. Job's so-called friends and counselors believed in such things and left no room for compassion nor mercy.

Let us be clear. The only reason there is any suffering in the world is because of the presence of sin. Suffering and death are the result of sin. We live in a fallen world and we suffer because of the sins of others. While there certainly can be levels of suffering that results from particular acts of sin, this is not always the case. I don't think that those who died in the twin towers on 9/11 had committed some particular sin that resulted in that particular act of evil. Sometimes we look for easy answers in the midst of the complex, but we must never assume the cause of particular instances of suffering, nor must we ever minimize the suffering of others.

In the case of this blind man, Jesus' own disciples assumed that there must be some grievous sin committed by the man or his parents that resulted in his blindness. This was a very influential and common belief in Jesus' culture even as it is often in our own. However, Jesus' answer turns the tables on such thinking. Jesus brings God into the equation. In this particular instance of suffering Jesus says, "**It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.**" At least one of the purposes was the opportunity for Jesus to display the power of the Kingdom of God and its presence on earth.

God is able to bring beauty out of ashes. God is able to make gold out of brass. He displays His glory in the most impossible of situations. He is even able to use suffering to bring about His good purposes and ends. Let's always leave room for God to surprise us with His grace, love, and power.