



ENGAGE

Break the Ice: (The purpose of these first questions is to help your group open up. Please don't feel like you have to ask each question. You may even have a better question. Once you feel that the group is engaged, move on to the "Inspire" section.)

- As a kid, were you allowed to play in the mud? What did you do with the mud?
- What did God teach you during the message this weekend? Did anything in particular stand out?

Prayer: Take some time to pray for God's Spirit to speak to your group through His Word.

INSPIRE

(Since the group may need time to process each question, don't let silence scare you. Try to avoid filling the space with unnecessary explanation or moving on from the question too quickly.)

As a group, read John 9:1-41.

1. In this passage, Jesus and His disciples encountered a man who had been blind since birth.
 - What do you think was the disciple's motivation for asking the question v.1)? (Curiosity, Pity, Trap Jesus, Compassion)
 - What do you think Jesus meant with his answer (v.3)?
 - What is the "work of God" (v.3)?
2. How are sin and suffering related?
 - What is the difference between the consequences of sin and the condemnation of sin?
 - What does Romans 8:1-2 say about the condemnation of sin?
3. Through the healing of the blind man, we see that the work of redemption can come through painful circumstances. Jesus doesn't only address the man's physical blindness but also his spiritual blindness.
 - What parallels are there between physical and spiritual blindness?
 - What answer or response does our culture have for suffering? Do people run toward or away from God?
 - What makes the difference in the way Christians deal with suffering? Is there someone who has inspired and encouraged you through their personal suffering?
4. In his sermon, Phil said, "God is more interested in refining your faith and character than he is in keeping you from pain."
 - How difficult is it to accept that truth?
 - What hardship in your life has become an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate His power?
 - How did the hardship help you grow spiritually?
 - In what ways has your hardship enabled you to minister to others with a similar adversity?



EQUIP

(These questions will challenge your group members to apply the study to their daily lives. It is highly important that you go over this section with your group each week for the group study to be a success. Set aside 15-20 minutes at the end of your study to go over this section.)

In John 9:39, Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind." (CSB)

- How would you assess your own spiritual sight? a) 20/20 b) a little blurry c) a few "blind spots" d) I need a seeing eye dog
- What could correct this?

Prayer:

- Take some time to pray over each group member's identified action steps and life issues.

Equip Your Mind:

Jesus answered, "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him." (John 9:3b CSB)

Sermon Outline / Notes:

(The following is the sermon outline. This is to be used as a refresher or to help recall the Sunday morning message.)

- It is doubtful that anyone plans to step out of the light of Christ. However, there are forces in the world that try to shove us out of the light of Christ.

Mark 4:19

How are we supposed to abide in the light of Christ when the unexpected occurs in our world?

- We try to insulate ourselves from suffering.
- The Pharisees prove that the stubbornness of heart can keep us from seeing/believing the truth of the Gospel. (vv.25-27)
- "Judgment" in verse 39 means to convict us of sin leading to a contrite heart.
- Jesus lifts up the lowly and humbles the mighty.

We want to know the "why" to our suffering.

The better question is: What is God doing in the midst of my suffering?

- God is using you to carry out His purposes. (Romans 8:28; Genesis 50:20)
- God is refining our faith and character.

Relief is on its way!