

**One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.<sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.<sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!”<sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.**

**<sup>6</sup>Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”<sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.<sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.<sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God,<sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (NIV84)**

Theme: You don’t need to Know Why.

1. For you know God’s Power
2. For you know God’s Promises

When I was growing up, Stephen Spielberg was the executive producer of a cartoon named, “Animaniacs.” Animaniacs was a show in the spirit of “Looney Tunes” in that it consisted of random short sketches based on a variety of characters. One of those characters was Mindy and her faithful dog, Buttons. Mindy was a curious toddler, who always wanted to know what people were doing. She would often go up to adults and ask them, “Whatcha doin?” And when they answered she would respond with, “why” and then for each answer they gave, she would keep on asking, “why,” until finally they would get fed up with her. Then she would say her catch phrase and move on. We are like Mindy to God. We want to know what he is doing and why he is doing it. We especially want to know why when we are suffering or when God allows bad to happen in this world. And we ask God over and over again, “why.”

But you don’t need to know why. For as a Christian, you know God’s power, and you know his promises.

It wasn’t that long after Jesus ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in Jerusalem that our text takes place. Peter and John were headed to the temple around 3 o’clock in the afternoon. At that same time some people were carrying their loved one to a gate by the temple. He had been a cripple since he was born—over 40 years before. He had no means of making any money. So those who took care of them placed him by that temple gate everyday in order to beg from those who came to worship God. And one day the cripple caught sight of two men—Peter and John. He asked them for a donation.

So Peter and John stopped and looked at him. The cripple was expecting some change, but Peter and John didn’t have any money. They had something much greater. The cripple was about to get more than he ever expected. Peter said to him, **Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.** They lifted him up by the hand—and suddenly he could walk. And not just walk, but run and jump, and so on. It was an astounding miracle, not only did they cure him of whatever had crippled him, but he also had to spend no time learning how to walk. His feet, ankles, and legs were all strong enough and the coordination was there for him to walk and jump like he had been doing it his whole life.

But this man hadn’t been able to walk for 40 years. And no doubt, he often wondering why—why he had to suffer like this. Why was God picking on him? Why didn’t God cure him? We may wonder the same thing. Why—why doesn’t God help us out? Why does God allow bad things to happen to us or others? “Why did God allow me to get cancer? Why did I lose my job? Why did my loved one pass away? Why do I have no friends? Why do I feel all alone, or down in the dumps? Why hasn’t God blessed me a good home, extra money, or popularity? Why doesn’t he give me as many blessings as he gives to others?”

But unlike a little kid who keeps on asking why, our ‘whys’ are more than curiosity. Ours are ‘whys’ are “whys” of complaining and

grumbling. We don't like what God is doing. God claims to be loving. He claims to be all powerful. "But if he can do all things, and if he truly loves us, then why am I still suffering. Why doesn't God just take it all away and let me be healthy, rich, and happy?" So we begin to question God. And we question his decisions.

Job wanted to know why. Paul wanted to know why he suffered with his thorn in his flesh. But God didn't tell them why. They didn't need to know. And neither do we. For God knows why. He knows what he is doing. He understands what we are going through. He knows how much we are suffering. And he knows just how much we can handle. So we don't need to worry or fret over our problems. God will take care of us. It's in his hands, and that is good enough for us. We don't need to know the 'why.' All we need to know is that God has power over all things. The cripple certainly knew that. When Peter healed him he did it in the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**. And when he was healed he went into the temple with Peter and John so he could praise God. And he ran all around and jumped up and down giving thanks to God for healing him.

Now if God was able to heal the cripple then he certainly has power over all things. And if he has power over all things, he can certainly take care of whatever is ailing you. He has the power to take away, alter, or make us suffer through it. He knew what the cripple's problem was. And he knows everything that is bothering us. He not only knows what is bothering us, but he also knows how to take care of it—if he wants to.

So like the cripple we can sing God's praises because of his power. He healed the cripple. He can take care of our problems—and he often does. How many times have you suffered through something that seemed insurmountable and suddenly the problem is taken care of. You hear stories all the time about someone who has some incurable something-or-another. The doctors said all hope was lost. They give your loved one only a few short weeks to live. But nothing happens within a few weeks—or months—or years. And then the problem is gone.

God has power over all things. But his greatest power is his power over sin, death, and the devil. Christ showed that power on the cross and outside the tomb. For on the cross he ripped away the guilt of our sins, and put them on our shoulders. Three days after he died he rose

from the dead, crushed Satan's head and rules over his whole creation. Death could not hold Christ, so it does not hold us. All believers will live with our Savior forever. No matter what happens in our life we know the eternal consequences of Christ's power. And that causes our heart to run and jump for joy.

You know God's power. Yet at times it seems at times as if God refuses to use it and purposely makes us suffer. And we wonder why. But again, we don't need to know the why—for we also know God's promises.

After Peter and John healed the cripple he went running and jumping about praising God in the temple. Not surprisingly this caused a great commotion. People wondered what was going on. Peter told them they shouldn't be surprised. Then he went into a lengthy sermon. He talked about how the Jews murdered Jesus, the Son of God. But God raised him from the dead. He urged them to repent and turn back to God. After all the prophets, whom they adored, prophesied about Christ. This preaching about Christ in the Temple did not sit well with the Jewish leaders. And they threw them in prison.

That night, Peter and John could have wondered, 'why.' Why was God not watching over them? Why was God allowing them to suffer? They were doing something good. They were spreading the message about Christ. And because of this, they were thrown in jail. And the almighty, all-powerful, and all-knowing God, let it happen. They could have wondered why. But they didn't.

We wonder why. How can God allow that to happen? Why was he punishing them for spreading the gospel? Why were they suffering for doing good? But God knew what he was doing. He had a plan. The next day Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrin, the same group that sentenced Jesus to death. And they had the opportunity to tell them who Christ was and that he rose from the dead after they had killed them. They completed their statement before the Sanhedrin by saying this about Jesus, **Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.** The Sanhedrin let Peter and John go who then reported everything that happened to the other believers. That night the believers praised God for all that he had done, and their faith and courage was strengthened.

Do you realize what happened? God made everything turn out for good. God knew what he was doing. He had a plan all along. His plan was to use people suffering to spread the gospel. And in the end one cripple was brought to faith. Two disciples were able to preach the Word to many unbelieving Jews. And those who already had faith, had their faith strengthened by the Holy Spirit. God uses evil for good. He uses his power to accomplish his purpose, even when it doesn't seem as if he does anything.

And God promises to do the same for us. He says in Romans, **we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** No matter what happens to us, we know that God is in control. Not only does God have power over all things, but he also promises to use that power for our benefit. Everything that happens to us—even the things that seem as if they are harming us, will actually turn out to our benefit. It doesn't matter what it is—sickness, death, loss of a job, or so on. God will use it to give a blessing to us and our fellow believers. We may not always see it right away. We may realize it years down the road, or perhaps not till we get to heaven. But somehow and someway God will turn in negative into a positive for all of us.

So instead of complaining about the things we suffer through, we rejoice. As Christians we rejoice in our issues and problems. For through them Christ strengthens our faith. He leads us not to trust in ourselves and our power but to trust in him for all things. It leads us to turn to his Word for comfort. And through that gospel he strengthens our faith. And anytime our faith is strengthened, it is for our benefit. And for that reason alone, our sufferings are good for us. God has power. God has a plan. And God has made promises. He will keep his promises to use his power to protect us. He will turn what ails us into what blesses us. And so we are calm in our suffering. We don't get too worked up at the things that we go through. For in the end God will take care of them. And if he doesn't—it really doesn't matter. For in the end, we'll be in heaven. And whatever it was that was bothering us, will be gone.

When we suffer we often act like that little annoying girl, Mindy, from Animaniacs. Why can't stop asking 'why.' By nature we want to know why God allows us to suffer, why bad things happen in our

lives. But we don't need to know why. For God knows why and that is good enough for us. We don't need to know why because we know God's power and promises. We know that he has the power not only to heal us but also to save us. We know his promises to take care of us and to save us. And soon he will remove our sufferings forever as he takes us to live with him forever. Amen.