

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Before the creation of the world, God planned each day from first to last. Each one would be just as He planned it to be. Every creature in it would live, grow, and reflect His glory, just as He had planned.

As part of His plans for this world, God created people each with a mind to think and a will to act. They would use these to make their own decisions, every day of their life. Yet in God's mysterious and mighty way, before even the first people were created, He had already perfectly woven His good plans into all that they would choose to think and do.

God's plans would never fail. Not even the sin and suffering that would come into the world would ruin God's good plans for His creation. God would use even these terrible things to display His great love for His people by sending His Son Jesus to save them. God's people--people from every nation and language on earth--would all choose to love and obey Him, just as He had planned. Not a one would be lost. God, Himself, by the great power of His Spirit, would make sure that these good things would happen.

There is much about God's plans we cannot understand because God is so much greater and wiser than we are. That's why God tells us not to lean on our own understanding of things, but trust in Him instead. When we remember God's perfect faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future, we can rejoice that whatever happens. It is always, only, a part of His completely good, unfailing plan.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11, ESV

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

CASE STORY

John 8-9

Our story is:

The Case of the Beautiful Blindness.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was blind? Why did most people think he was blind?
2. What made the blindness beautiful? What did it show?

This is a New Testament story that took place when Jesus lived on earth.

"It's a boy! It's a boy!" two, proud parents spread their good news. Every child was a blessing from the LORD, but to the Jews in Jesus' day, a boy was the greatest blessing of all. He could work and make money. He could carry on the family name one day! No wonder his parents were so happy!

But all too soon their happiness was crushed by a terrible discovery: their little boy had been born blind! Surely these parents were sad that their boy would never see a beautiful sunrise or the faces of his family. Surely they worried about what kind of job he could get to make money. But what they probably felt more than anything else was shame! You see, many Jews in Jesus' day wrongly believed that any baby born with something terribly wrong with it--like blindness--was God's punishment. Maybe the parents had done something very bad; or maybe it was the baby who had done something bad--while still inside his mother. It may sound silly to us, but that is what many in Jesus' day wrongly believed. So, as word spread about this poor, little blind baby, so did the wondering whispers and the judging glares as to what terrible secret sin these parents or their child God was punishing them.

"Darkness for darkness," people thought. The baby had the darkness of blind eyes because of the darkness of some sin. Yet what the sin was, no one knew. Many years passed. The baby grew up. How many times as a young boy, did he wish he could see the little lamb whose soft fur he stroked? How many times as a young man did he long to see the changes in his own face as he could feel his own, stubbly beard begin to grow? How many times as an older man did he long to see the glittering, pure white stones of the great Temple, by whose gate he sat and begged for money? Or, the ripples on the Pool of Siloam when he plunged his cupped hands into its cool spring water for a drink? Probably many times! But never

did it happen. "Darkness for darkness" was all this blind man knew.

"What was my parents' sin, or my sin that God has been punishing me for all these years?" the man must have wondered. "I wish I could know."

But despite what the Jews thought, this man's blindness was not at all God's special punishment upon him or his parents. It had always been part of something wonderful that God had planned long, long ago, as this man was about to find out. For on one, particular Sabbath morning, Jesus, Himself, was to answer this question that had troubled the blind man and his parents all these years.

Jesus had been with His disciples in the Temple courts. As He was teaching, some of those who were listening became furious with what He taught. He rebuked them for their stubborn hearts, dark and blind with unbelief. "You teachers know God's Word! You should know that I am God's Son, but you don't want to believe and follow Me. You are acting just like Satan. He chose to rebel against God, too!" Jesus told them.

How angry these men were at Jesus' words! They picked up stones to kill Him for calling Himself God's Son. Jesus and His disciples escaped the shower of rocks by slipping away from the Temple grounds.

Not long after this narrow escape, who should Jesus and his disciples see along the way, but the man born blind. And what was the first thing to roll off of the lips of the disciples, but the same, old question that had troubled this poor, blind man for years: "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" they asked Jesus.

Then came from Jesus the most unexpected answer: "This is not darkness for darkness, like the people say," Jesus told them. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned. This man's blindness happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. This man might see darkness, but I am the light of the world."

The blind man could hardly believe it! His blindness a part of God's good plan? Would God really display His good work through his blindness? How?

The blind man soon found out. The same Jesus who had formed man from the dust of the earth, thousands of years earlier at the creation of the world, now stooped down, scooped up dust, mixed it into mud with His own saliva, and spread it upon his blind eyes.

"Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam," Jesus told him. So with mud oozing down his eyes, the blind man felt his way along the cobbled streets of Jerusalem as quickly as he

could.

Carefully, he felt his way down the steps to the cool, spring waters of the Pool of Siloam. He lowering himself down onto his knees, the blind man plunged his cupped hands into the flowing water and rinsed the mud from his face. Even as the mud washed away, the man began to sense light. But then the indescribable joy when he opened his eyes completely and the first rays of light flooded upon him in brilliance. Jesus had healed him! He could see! He could see!

Eagerly the man leaped up the stone steps and hurried home, his hungry eyes feasting upon the colors and sights all around him that he had only know as shapes, smells, textures and sounds before. And oh, the amazement of his mother and father as he burst into their home shouting, "Mother, Father, Jesus healed me. I can see!"

The shocking news of the blind man's healing spread quickly through town. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."
"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

"The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes," he replied. "He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

"Could Jesus really have freed this man from the darkness of the secret sin that supposedly caused his blindness? How could this be?" the people wondered. So they brought the man to the Pharisees to see what they would say.

The Pharisees gathered around the man and questioned both him and his parents. There was no doubt: Jesus had done an amazing miracle. But no matter what they heard or saw, the Pharisees' hearts remained shut in dark disbelief: "That man, Jesus, is a sinner. He is not from God," they said to the man. "He healed you on a Sabbath. He's a lawbreaker. How can anyone be from God who's a lawbreaker? Jesus isn't the Light of the World. He's not the Messiah or the Son of God. He's nothing but a sinner. Give glory to God, man!" they ordered the man. "Admit that Jesus is a sinner!"

The Pharisees hoped that this man would be scared of them and give in, but he would not. For even better than the light that poured into his blind eyes, was the light of truth that the Holy Spirit had poured into his heart that

day.

The man stood up to the Pharisees and said, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!...We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing," he declared.

The Pharisees were furious! "You're just a blind man punished for your sins from the day you were born! Don't talk to us like this!" And they threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man [the Messiah]?"

"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

You are looking at Him. It's Me!" Jesus said.

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him.

In one day, Jesus had flooded the dark world of this blind man with light. Jesus had given his eyes sight to see the beauty of all God had created; and better yet, He had given his heart spiritual sight to see that He was the Son of God. Jesus had even used His life as a display of His power that others might see and believe in Him, too.

This was just the beginning of the good plans God had in store for blind man's blindness. For in the more than two thousand years since the day he received his sight, God has continued to display His work in this blind man's life. Millions and millions of people have read how his story in the Bible and been encouraged to trust in Jesus, too. How wonderful and unfailing are the plans of God!

Our Bible Truth is:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 33:11

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

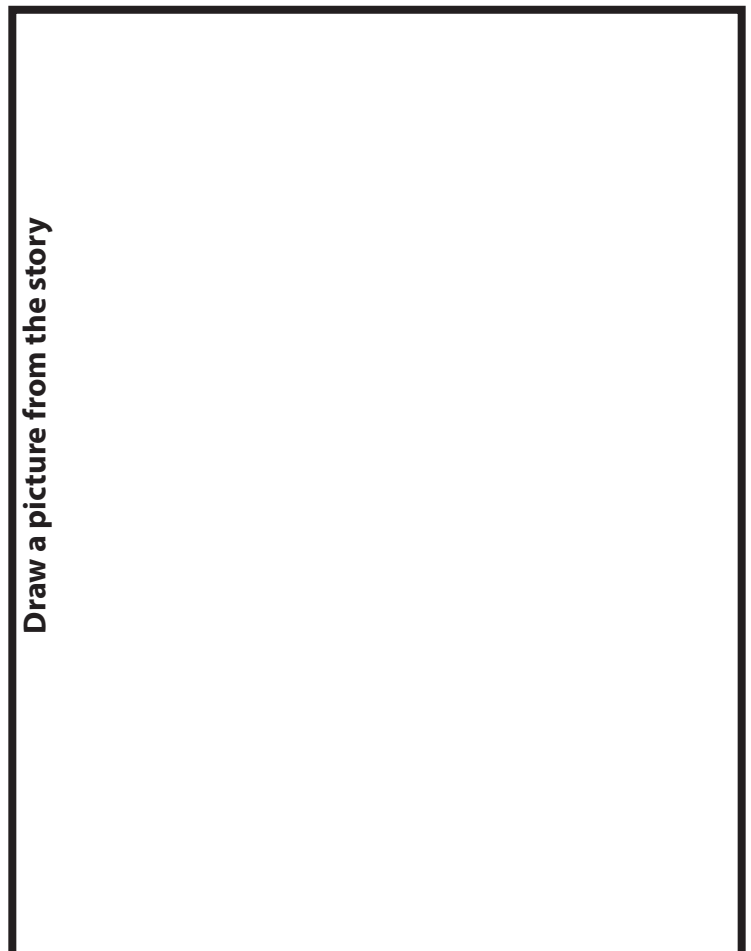
Does it seem strange or cruel for God to allow suffering in the weave of His good, unfailing plans? It would be easy for us to think so, since suffering is so hard and we have such very small brains with which to grasp God's great and mysterious ways. Perhaps there is suffering in your life or in the lives of those you love that doesn't make sense. Sometimes God, in His graciousness, shows us His good plan in allowing suffering, but many times He does not.

Perhaps we forget that we are all sinners who have

chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Perhaps we forget that while we all deserve God's punishment for our sins, that God sent His very own Son to suffer worse than anyone for the sins of all those who will ever turn from their sins and trust in Him. Jesus' sufferings were all part of God's good and unfailing plans for creation from before the beginning...and from those sufferings brought about the most wonderful part of God's plans. God's people can know that their sufferings will be much smaller than anything Jesus went through, yet God will make all of them part of Him good and unfailing plans, just as surely as He did with Jesus!

God's people also know that one day, God will put an end to suffering forever. And in the light of eternity, all His good plans will be made clear. There will be nothing but praise for God for His unfailing and good plans for creation.

Let's praise God for being the Maker of Good and Unfailing Plans for everything in our lives. Let's ask Him to give us faith to trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to make each and every one of our sufferings a display of His work in our lives that would lead us and others to Him, just as He did with the blind man long ago.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: 1. Bible Truth Question, True or False: God wove His perfect plans into everything that we decide. God's plans would never fail. Not even our sinful rebellion against Him would ruin His plans. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who was blind? Why did most people think he was blind? Answer: The son of a couple was born blind. Most people thought that he was blind as God's punish-ment for something sinful that he or his parents did.</p> <p>b. Who changed the blindness? How did He make the blindness beautiful? Answer: Jesus healed the man. He explained that God planned for this blindness to bring God's glory. Some saw what Jesus did and put their faith in Him. Even today people read about how Jesus healed this blind man and see God's glory. This made even this blindness a beautiful thing.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11 "The counsel of the LORD ___ forever, the plans of ___ to all generations." Answers: stand; his; heart.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>He Leadeth Me <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 16,17</i></p> <p>Verse 2 Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom, By waters still, o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me!</p> <p>Refrain He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful foll'wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.</p> <p>Verse 3 Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur nor repine; Content, whatever lot I see, Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me! <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that God's plans are good and un- failing. God's people know this best of all. They know God is always leading them through life, fulfilling His good plans for them. Whether it is something hard or sad or enjoyable and happy, it is all a part of God's good plans that He has woven into every single day. That is why they can be content, no matter what happens.</p>

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the great God who even weaves His people's suffering into His good and un- failing plans.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don't see the hard things we go through as a part of Your good and un- failing plans. Instead we grumble against You. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T Thank You for planning everything Your people go through to be for their good and Your glory. Thank You for sending Jesus to suffer more than any of us will ever suffer, in order to save sinners.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work out Your good and un- failing plans through us, even through our sufferings.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>The Counsel of the Lord <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 19</i></p> <p>The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations; His counsel stand forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations. Psalm Thirty-three, verse eleven.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 33:11, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>"The Bible tells us that God's counsel--that is, His wise plans-- stand firm for His creation. Throughout all generations, throughout all of history--every single day--God will do all of His will. And because God's heart is completely wise and purely good, we can trust that His purposes, even in the things we least understand, are always good. We can count on that because He never changes."</p>