

Stigma & Belief

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his sins or his parents' sins?"

"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him ..."

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"  
*John 9:1-3,6-8*

He doesn't exist - "Does he take sugar?"

No compassion or pity

Prejudice resulting from beliefs

Unable to see the person

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Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep ... whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away ...

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep." *John 10:7-15*

Prejudice resulting from beliefs

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where is God?

why have you forgotten me?

why have you rejected me?

Can this ever be 'life to the full'?

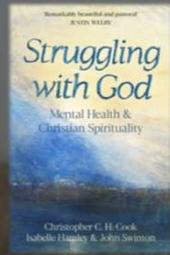
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where is JESUS: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

literally 'exceeding expectation'

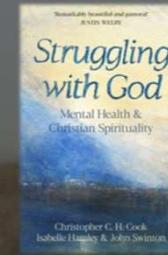
why have you rejected me?

## Stigma &amp; Belief



where is God? 'Stigma in churches is ... partly about what we imagine 'fulness of life' to be? ... What is 'abundant life'? And how do our ideas of what 'abundant life' looks like shape our response to others – and ourselves – when things go wrong or are difficult? Another way of asking the question is this: **is our idea of the life that Jesus gives us, or invites us into, spacious and generous enough to include the whole of human circumstances?**' (my emphasis)

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where is God? 'Abundant life with God clearly cannot be turned into a life of ease, comfort or happiness. Jesus encourages his disciples to take their cross and follow him. Jesus speaks of both fulness of life and bearing one's cross; these two things highlight the paradox of the life of faith; **it can be abundant at the same time as challenging and full of pain.**' (my emphasis)

*Struggling with God, p34*