

Learning to See

John 9:1-41 | Ephesians 5:8-14

Big Idea

The greatest blindness is believing we already see clearly.

I. The Road We're Walking

Series Context

This series explores how Jesus brings life into a broken world.

- **Week 1 New Birth** (Nicodemus, John 3)
Jesus teaches that spiritual life begins with being born from above.
- **Week 2 Living Water** (Samaritan woman, John 4)
Jesus satisfies the deep spiritual thirst of the human heart.
- **Week 3 Learning to See** (John 9)
Jesus restores sight and reveals deeper spiritual blindness.

Life often feels like walking a familiar road:

- Work
- Family
- Decisions
- Responsibilities

Sometimes the road feels clear and predictable. But occasionally something happens that exposes the limits of our vision.

Moments when confidence disappears and we realize we may not see things as clearly as we thought.

John 9 tells the story of a man who has never seen the road at all. Yet by the end of the story, he may be the one who sees most clearly.

II. The Encounter: The Man Born Blind

John 9:1-7

The Disciples' Question

The disciples ask: “Who sinned, this man or his parents?”

This reflects a common ancient assumption: Suffering must be the result of someone's sin.

Jesus rejects this blame-centered theology.

Instead, he reframes the situation: “This happened so that the works of God might be displayed.”

Jesus redirects attention away from assigning blame and toward recognizing God's activity.

The Healing

Jesus performs an unusual healing:

- He spits on the ground
- Makes mud
- Places it on the man's eyes
- Sends him to wash in the Pool of Siloam

The man obeys and returns able to see.

Creation Imagery

This moment echoes **Genesis 2**.

- God formed humanity from the dust of the ground.
- Jesus uses dust to restore sight.

John's Gospel repeatedly hints that Jesus is bringing about **new creation**.

The healing is not just a miracle, it is a sign that God's restoration has begun.

The Pool of Siloam

John explains that *Siloam* means “**Sent**.”

This connects to a major theme in John's Gospel: Jesus repeatedly describes himself as **the one sent by the Father**.

The man receives sight when he washes in the pool called “Sent,” after being healed by the one who was sent from God.

Old Testament Echoes

The prophets promised that when God's salvation arrived, the blind would see.

Examples:

- **Isaiah 35:5** “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.”
- **Isaiah 42:7** God’s servant will come “to open eyes that are blind.”

Jesus healing a man born blind signals that these promises are beginning to be fulfilled.

III. The Investigation Begins

John 9:8-34

The miracle quickly becomes controversial.

Several groups question the event:

1. **Neighbors** question the man’s identity.
2. **Pharisees** interrogate him about the healing.
3. **The man’s parents** are questioned.
4. **The man himself** is questioned again.

The story unfolds almost like a courtroom drama.

Narrative Irony

As the chapter progresses, two opposite movements occur:

- The healed man gains increasing insight.
- The religious leaders grow increasingly resistant.

The man’s understanding develops step by step:

1. “The man called Jesus.”
2. “He is a prophet.”
3. “If this man were not from God...”
4. Finally, he worships Jesus.

Meanwhile, the leaders’ certainty prevents them from recognizing what God has done.

Their confidence becomes their blindness.

IV. Identity Transformation: Ephesians 5

Ephesians 5:8-14

Paul describes salvation using similar imagery.

He does not say: “You were **in** darkness.”

He says: “You **were darkness.**”

Now believers are described as: “Light in the Lord.”

This emphasizes **identity transformation**, not merely moral improvement.

The Christian life begins with a fundamental change in who we are. Behavior follows identity.

V. The Turning Point: Jesus Reveals Himself

John 9:35-38

After the interrogation, Jesus seeks out the healed man.

He asks: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

The man asks: “Who is he, sir?”

Although he defended Jesus publicly, he does not yet fully understand who Jesus is.

Jesus reveals himself.

The man responds with faith and worship.

The healing reaches its true climax when sight becomes faith and faith becomes worship.

VI. The Real Blindness

John 9:39-41

Jesus concludes with a paradox: “I came so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

The Pharisees respond defensively: “Surely we are not blind?”

Jesus exposes the real issue: Claiming to see clearly can prevent people from recognizing the truth.

The tragedy in this story is not physical blindness. The tragedy is spiritual certainty.

Blindness itself is not the problem. Refusing sight is.

VII. Life Today: Recognizing Blindness

Spiritual blindness can take subtle forms.

It may appear as confidence, certainty, or even religious devotion.

The story invites believers to examine their own vision.

Three common expressions of spiritual blindness:

A. Certainty Without Humility

Conviction is important in the Christian life. But conviction must be accompanied by humility.

The Pharisees were knowledgeable and deeply committed to Scripture.

Yet their certainty prevented them from recognizing the work of God.

Humility keeps believers open to learning and correction.

B. Cultural Blind Spots

Every generation has assumptions it struggles to see.

History shows that sincere Christians have sometimes defended ideas later recognized as deeply wrong.

Cultural assumptions can shape how believers read Scripture and understand the world.

Following Jesus sometimes requires allowing him to challenge the things we have always assumed.

Examples of cultural assumptions that may require examination:

- Equating comfort with God's blessing
- Tying political identity too closely to the kingdom of God
- Treating constant busyness as normal or virtuous
- Measuring faithfulness primarily by visible success
- Overconfidence in one's own perspective

C. Religious Defensiveness

The strongest resistance to Jesus in this story comes from religious leaders.

They believed they were defending God's law. Yet in the process they opposed the very work of God.

Throughout history, religious communities have sometimes struggled to recognize when God works outside familiar expectations.

Discernment remains important, but defensiveness can close our eyes.

VIII. The Invitation of the Story

The healed man's journey moves from blindness to sight to worship.

The Pharisees' journey moves from certainty to deeper blindness.

The story invites readers to respond differently.

The first step toward seeing clearly is humility: Acknowledging that we may not see everything as clearly as we think.

Jesus does not shame the blind. He heals them.

But he confronts those who refuse to see.

IX. Series Connection

The Gospel of John shows Jesus bringing life in different ways.

- **Week 1:** New birth (John 3)
- **Week 2:** Living water (John 4)
- **Week 3:** Restored sight (John 9)

Each story reveals another dimension of the life Jesus offers.

X. Looking Ahead

The series continues to move toward a greater confrontation.

Next week the story leads to a tomb.

Jesus will face the deepest human enemy: Death itself.

And he will reveal that the life he offers is stronger than death.