

**John 9:1-41**  
*But Now I See*

**Main idea:** Jesus opens the eyes of the blind, but only when they admit they can't see.

Our teaching time today is going to be more of a conversation. Since we're not physically together, we thought the best way to have a sense of community would be to treat this more like a Bible study. So if you have a question or something to add, please leave a comment and we can talk about it together.

Abby: Let's practice this comment thing. I want everyone to think of one of their favorite movies, and replace one of the words of the title with "toilet paper." So, for example, if you like the movie, "Gone with the Wind," you could write, "Gone with the Toilet Paper."

How about, "Close Encounters of the Third Toilet Paper"

Okay, we're going to be talking this morning about receiving a new and spiritual vision in life.

So just the other day, I saw the most beautiful sunset. It was orange, pink, blue, and purple, and all of the colors were insanely vibrant, and the clouds seemed to be arranged just perfectly to maximize how the colors were bouncing all around the sky.

It was like, I'd certainly seen sunsets before, but this was like a whole new world.

Now, if I would have gone into that sunset thinking that I'd already seen it all, I probably wouldn't have noticed it. I wouldn't have looked up at the sky, because I wouldn't have thought there was anything to see. And if someone else would have told me to look up at the beautiful sunset, I probably would have told them, "Pfft! I don't need to do that! I've seen sunsets before! And I don't need to waste my time on another one!"

I wonder if we miss a lot of truth because we think we've already arrived at all the truth.

Does that make sense? Leave a comment.

Abby: Yeah, like, how many of you this week have been wondering. . . . what's next? I thought I had seen it all, but now the government is telling us we can't sit down at McDonalds and EVERYONE in America has joined my family in homeschooling?!?!?! I didn't see that coming did you? Last week, on Facebook Joe said, after being a correctional officer for 30 years nothing surprises him.... I'll be honest, this last couple weeks has surprised me and been unexpected for me.

Honestly, I'm probably one of the worst culprits of this. I went to seminary and I got my diploma. I have a Masters of Divinity, like I'm a master of all things divine. But can we really master the divine? Shouldn't we instead be mastered by the divine?

Abby: Yeah, sometimes because of my education I get myself opening the Bible not ready to learn anything new. Like I've already learned it all. It's sad but it's true. I read looking for what others need to hear maybe more than what I myself need to hear.

Yeah, so we're going to be talking about being humble and open to God changing our minds and hearts. Our Scripture this morning is John 9. So if you have a Bible other than the device you're watching this on, go ahead and grab it and follow along.

As he [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. (John 9:1-7)

The word of God for the people of God. *Thanks be to God.*

So this chapter tells the story about a man who received his sight from Jesus. The scene is simply that Jesus was passing by. This wasn't an appointment or a scheduled visit. And yet, it was God's providence.

Leave a comment. Can you think of a time when God interrupted your plans, and maybe you were frustrated at first, but it turned out that it was exactly what you needed?

Abby: I know seniors in high school this year have had some of their plans changed. . . what's gonna happen with Prom, Senior Trips, visiting colleges? So much is up in the air for our students. Some of you are suddenly out of work. Some of you are being told there is a chance you are going to be quarantined at the prison for 2 weeks straight: Ronnie, Nick, Matt. . . Most of us have had some plans interrupted in a big way this past week.

Yeah, and a lot of people, even Christians, often assume that if something bad happens to them, they did something bad to deserve it. Do you ever think like that? And it's true that the only reason we have evil in the world at all is because we brought it here. And yet, Jesus said that this blind man wasn't blind because he did something bad to deserve it, but so that God's work might be displayed.

Abby: Yeah, we have sickness, including Covid 19 in our world because our world has been tainted by sin, but that doesn't mean that God can't use even Covid 19 for his glory. I have not seen our democrats and republicans work as well together as they are right now in a long time. I have been calling several of you asking of needs and more than ever it seems like neighbors are stepping up and taking care of neighbors right now. People are sharing scriptures on Facebook to encourage and uplift.

Yeah, so sometimes we face hard times because God wants us to grow in our faith, and so that He can show up and do something about. And in our story today, we read that a man was born blind so that God could give him sight.

And the Bible says that we're all born blind. And while God is not the author of evil, I think maybe that's so that God could give us sight.

Look at verse 8.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called

Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." (John 9:8-12)

It's interesting that when Jesus gave this man his sight, Jesus didn't stick around to do crowd control. He wasn't really interested in getting all the credit. So when the man could see, everyone around him was amazed or confused or doubtful, and probably some combination of all of these things. So they questioned the man, and argued with him and with each other. In fact, we've barely even gotten into all the back and forth that goes on in this chapter, all the debating about who Jesus is, and all of it could have been avoided if Jesus had just stuck around to explain Himself.

And sometimes today, you might wish that Jesus had just stuck around a bit longer. Like, you know that God has worked in your life in the past, you know that He's forgiven you, and that He's revealed Himself to you, but now you just wish He'd be there to guide you through whatever it is you're going through now.

But here's the thing. He is with you. Because Jesus ascended to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to live in you. And you can trust that whatever situation you find yourself in, God is with you, and will give you strength to get through it.

And even though this man who just received his sight didn't have the Holy Spirit, because Jesus had not yet ascended, I think God was definitely guiding him as well, and even without knowing all the details, he began to be a witness for Jesus.

**Abby: Yeah, so maybe during this pandemic, we can be witnesses for Jesus.**

Verse 13.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." (John 9:13-17)

You know, we could nitpick and criticize all the things Jesus did - **we know we shouldn't do that though** - yeah, but we might be tempted to. Whether He should have healed someone on the Sabbath, or how He went about healing this man at all, but that doesn't change the fact that He did them. And since He did them, we have to figure out how He was able to do them, and why. So when it comes down to it, we could disregard Jesus, ignoring the clear signs that He did, or we can believe that He truly was sent from God.

And the same thing goes for all of the Bible. Like, there are some crazy stories in here! Leave a comment. What are some stories in the Bible that you find just really hard to believe? I think of how there's a talking snake, and a talking donkey, and how the people came out of their graves when Jesus died on the cross. That's some pretty unbelievable stuff!

Abby: I was at a church who wanted to print a bunch of promises from the Bible, and one of them was "You will do greater things than Jesus!" The printer called them back and was like, "Is this a misprint?" And they were like, "Nope, print it! It's in the Bible!"

But if the Bible is truly from God, and it is, then we should actually expect there to be some unbelievable stuff in it. God's trying to get our attention! And since God can do anything, then we should expect the miraculous once in awhile. We should even even expect the blind to see.

Verse 18.

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." (John 9:18-25)

Now, Jesus of course was not a sinner. He was tempted in every way that we are, and yet never sinned. That's a pretty basic biblical truth about Jesus. But this man who received his sight didn't know that. He didn't know that Jesus was the Messiah. He didn't know that Jesus was the Son of God. All he knew was that "I once was blind, but now I see."

And in the same way, your testimony doesn't have to be perfect. Sometimes I wish I had done more bad things in my life so that I could have this really powerful and dramatic testimony about God changing my life. But that's not me. But the truth is even more powerful. I once was blind, but now I see.

The truth is, even if you had what we might consider to be a powerful and dramatic testimony, and you share it often, many people still won't listen. That's what we read next.

Verse 26.

They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. (John 9:26-34)

If this passage wasn't so serious, it would be hilarious. You've got these Pharisees, who were considered to be the most respected, intelligent, and righteous Jews on the planet. And you have this man who spent most of his life begging for food because there weren't any jobs for blind people back then.

This guy wasn't a Bible scholar. He didn't know much about Jesus. And yet he was frustrating the Pharisees by speaking the clear truth. All he knew was that Jesus had given him his sight.

And, you know, we might think that we have a little more knowledge today. But we really don't need much more. In fact, it would probably be better if we didn't pretend we knew much more. According to Paul, all we really need to know is Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Verse 35.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. (John 9:35-41)

So here's an immensely important question: apart from Christ, do you think you can see? If you ask just about anyone outside the Church, they seem to have already made up their minds about Jesus, even if they've never really looked into Jesus.

And here's the thing: we can't change their minds. They need to change their own minds. That's what the word "repent" means. It means to change your mind. All we can really do is share our testimony with them, that I once was blind, but now I see.

But although we can't change their minds, God can. In fact, that's why Jesus came. He said in verse 39, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

Abby: And I think not just sharing our salvation testimony but also our testimony of why we can do good deeds and remain calm during this pandemic is because of Jesus. Our reaction to the pandemic can be our testimony. . . do we show faith in Jesus (not saying we defy sensible government orders, but that we can follow the orders without panicking, without hoarding, while loving our neighbor and respecting our governors request to stay home unless absolutely necessary to leave).

Yeah. And I think Jesus was saying this: that He came to seek and to save the lost. And even for those who don't claim to be lost, Jesus came to show them that they are lost, so that they could then be found.

You see, God doesn't desire that we continue to be blind. We're blind so that His glory would be made known both to us and the world. It's interesting that the Pharisees were actually right when they told the blind man to give glory to God, and yet they didn't see that this was exactly what the man was doing! They didn't yet see that Jesus really was and is God. So the ironic thing about all this was that the Pharisees were really the ones who were blind!

Isn't it interesting that the very people who sought to be the most righteous before God, and thought they taught others about God, were actually the people who were most blind to God? They couldn't see what was right in front of them.

A couple years back, I took the youth into a cave in Missouri as a part of our discipleship week during the summer. When we got to a certain part of the tour, we were all standing around a rock pillar in what appeared to be a small room of the cave, and the tour guide explained that we were standing around what they called the Rock of Ages. At this point, we turned off our flashlights and it was complete darkness. We couldn't see what was right in front of us: the Rock of Ages.

In the Bible, Jesus is called the Rock of Ages. And everything in the Bible, and in the world, and all of history declares His glory. And yet so many are still blind to it. They can't see what's right in front of them. Like, right now, you may be quarantined at home, or working from home, or working at your essential job. . . be Jesus to those around you.

**Abby: Have the peace and sensibility about you that comes from leaning on the Rock of Ages.**

Yeah, and have hope as you do that. Even though so many are blind, remember that it's only so that God would get all the glory. It's so that once we believe we can't point to our superior intellect or righteous deeds. We're blind for a time so that in the end, we'll say, "I once was blind, but now I see," and we won't take credit for it. We'll simply praise God for His amazing grace.

So we're going to close right now with that song: Amazing Grace.