

# **Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 11, John 9:1-41, Podcast Audio Overview**

Sponsored by [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) by Ted Hildebrandt

All right, get ready because today we're diving deep into John chapter 9, the story of Jesus healing the man born blind. All right, and you know, it's more than a miracle story, right? It's going to make us all think about, like, suffering and the true meaning of sight and maybe even, like, question some assumptions that we don't even know we have. Right.

We're looking at an academic lecture by Dr. David Turner, who's just amazing at making these ancient texts come alive. Yeah, he's so good at finding, like, those little details, you know, that just make you go, "Whoa, I never thought about it that way before. Yeah, he's a master at connecting the dots and just kind of uncovering those layers of meaning that I think you might miss on a casual reading.

Totally. Yeah. So the story starts with this question that I'm sure we've all asked at some point: like, why was this man born blind? I mean, was it some kind of, like, punishment from God? Right.

Like, that's what the disciples wanted to know. Yeah, it's a natural human reaction when we see suffering. We try to figure out why.

Why is this happening? But what's interesting is how Jesus responds to that question. Yeah, he completely flips the script. He does, instead of saying it was some kind of punishment.

He says it's actually an opportunity for God's work to be seen. Yes. It's almost like he's saying, don't jump to conclusions about why things happen.

Yeah, look for how God might be working even in the midst of suffering. Exactly. Yeah, this is where the story gets really interesting for me.

It takes place in Jerusalem right after this tense confrontation between Jesus and some of the Jewish leaders. Okay. The atmosphere is charged.

Yeah. And Dr. Turner suggests that this setting is a subtle echo of those Old Testament stories where God's glory leaves the temple. Oh, so it's like the stage is set for this major shift in power.

Yeah. A transition from like the old ways to something new. Exactly.

And remember Jesus has just declared himself the light of the world. Now here he is, about to literally bring light to a man who has never seen. Okay, I'm getting chills.

Yeah. It's like John is setting up this incredible contrast between physical and spiritual sight. Absolutely.

And the way Jesus heals this man is even more intriguing. Okay, how so? I mean, you'd think he'd just say a word, and it would be done, right? Right.

But instead, he mixes his spit with dirt, makes mud, and puts it on the man's eyes. Spit and mud. Yeah.

That's not exactly your typical healing method. Right. What do you make of that? Well, it's one of those details that makes you pause and think, what's going on here? Totally.

Dr. Turner suggests it might be, you know, a kind of reenactment of creation. Okay. Remember in Genesis, God forms Adam from the dust of the ground.

Oh, yeah. Maybe this is a hint that something new is being created in this man's life, both physically and spiritually. I love that connection to Genesis.

It adds like a whole other layer of meaning to this. Yeah, and then there's the pool of Siloam. Okay.

Jesus tells the man to go wash in this specific pool. What's amazing is that archaeologists have actually rediscovered this pool. You're right.

It's a real place, just like it's described in the Bible. And it's a reminder that this story isn't just some abstract parable. You know, this happened in a real place to real people.

That's so cool. Yeah. So this guy goes to the pool, washes off the mud, and bam, he can see.

Yeah. But of course, it wouldn't be a good Bible story without a little drama. Right.

The man's neighbors are like, wait, is that really you? What happened? Yeah. They can't believe their eyes. And then the Pharisees, the religious leaders, get wind of it, and they are not pleased.

They're happy. No, they start interrogating the man, trying to discredit Jesus and explain away the miracle. Yeah.

It's almost comical how much they're missing the point. They really are. It's like this is where we see that clash between those who are stuck in their old ways of thinking and those who are open to something new.

Yes. The Pharisees represent that sub-biblical mindset that Dr. Turner talks about. Right.

They're so focused on the letter of the law that they miss the spirit of it. And to be fair, I mean, sub-biblical can sound a little academic. What Dr. Turner means is that they have this rigid view of God, almost like a cosmic accountant keeping track of good deeds and bad deeds.

Oh, okay. You know, they're so obsessed with rules and regulations that they can't see the bigger picture of God's love and grace. So they're literally looking right at this miracle, this incredible act of healing, and they can't see it for what it is.

Yeah. It's a perfect example of spiritual blindness. Yeah.

They have all the religious knowledge, all the authority, but they're blind to the truth that's right in front of them. Wow. And the irony is that the man who is physically blind can now see clearly, both physically and spiritually.

That is wild. Yeah. It really makes you think, like, what are we missing in our own lives because we're so focused on our own agendas or limited perspectives? Yes, absolutely.

It's like we're all wearing these invisible blindfolds sometimes. Right. We think we're seeing clearly, but there's this whole world of beauty and truth and possibility that we're missing.

I think so. This whole idea of seeing versus perceiving. Right.

It's just a recurring theme in the Bible, isn't it? It is. Dr. Turner talks about how it pops up in the Old Testament as well, like the prophet Isaiah, who saw God's glory, but also knew that the people he was speaking to would hear but not understand, and see but not perceive. Right.

It's like that saying: there's none so blind as those who will not see. Yeah. But I think it goes even deeper than that.

Okay. Sometimes it's not about willful blindness, but just our limited human capacity to grasp the fullness of reality. Yeah.

I think that's true. So how do we break free from those limitations? How do we cultivate true sight, that deeper understanding? That's the question, isn't it? It is a big one. And I don't think there's an easy answer.

Yeah. But one thing that strikes me about this story is the contrast between the Pharisees and the blind man. Okay.

The Pharisees, with all their pride and self-righteousness, are completely blind to the truth. But the blind man who starts out humble and open is the one who ultimately sees Jesus for who he is. So maybe true sight begins with humility.

I think so. Admitting that we don't have all the answers, that we need something beyond ourselves. Absolutely.

And being open to learning from unexpected sources. Yeah. Remember, it was the marginalized, ostracized blind man who had the clearest vision in the story.

Wow. The people who are often overlooked or dismissed might be the ones who have the most to teach us. This deep dive has been so thought-provoking.

Yeah. But I can't help but wonder about the blind man himself. Okay.

I mean, sure, he got his physical sight back, but his life was completely transformed by this encounter with Jesus. Yes. What can we learn from his journey? His experience is a microcosm of the spiritual journey that's available to all of us.

Okay. He goes from physical blindness to physical sight, and then from spiritual blindness to spiritual insight. Right.

Yeah. It's a beautiful illustration of how God works in our lives. It reminds me of how we talk about having aha moments, those sudden flashes of insight where something just clicks into place.

Yeah. It's like the blind man is having a series of aha moments as he interacts with Jesus and the Pharisees. He's constantly reevaluating what he believes.

Yeah. Moving from seeing Jesus as just a healer to recognizing him as the Son of God. Right.

It's not just about seeing physically, but about understanding who Jesus really is. Right. His identity and his authority.

Right. And that takes time. It takes questioning, and it takes courage to stand up for what you believe, even when others don't get it.

Speaking of questioning, this whole story has got me wondering: how is blindness or visual impairment depicted in the Bible as a whole? You know, that's a really interesting point.

Yeah. Dr. Turner doesn't go into a lot of detail about that, but it's worth exploring.

Even in the Old Testament, you see laws put in place to specifically protect the blind and vulnerable. Right. There's a recognition that they need extra care and consideration.

And in the New Testament, you see Jesus healing blind people on multiple occasions. Yes. It seems like blindness is often used metaphorically to represent spiritual lostness or a lack of understanding.

Right. Like when Paul talks about opening the eyes of the Gentiles, turning them from darkness to light. That's a great connection.

It highlights how physical blindness can be a powerful metaphor for spiritual blindness.

Yeah. And the healing of the blind man in John 9 becomes a symbol of the potential for spiritual transformation that's available to everyone.

This one story has so many layers. It does. It's making me think about all the different kinds of blindness that we might struggle with.

Oh, yeah. If physical blindness can represent a lack of spiritual understanding, what other metaphorical blind spots might we have? That's a brilliant question to consider. It could be a blindness to our own biases and prejudices or a blindness to the suffering of others, especially those who are different from us.

Maybe it's a blindness to the beauty and wonder that surrounds us every day. Right. We get so caught up in our routines and anxieties that we miss the simple joys of being alive.

And that's where the challenge lies, isn't it? Yeah. To cultivate a sense of curiosity, to approach life with a beginner's mind, and to be open to new perspectives, even when they

challenge our comfort zones. Because who knows what we might discover when we start to really see? I love that.

Yeah. So we've explored the historical context, the theological implications, and the personal relevance of this story in John 9. We have. What stands out to you? What are the questions that are still lingering in your mind? I think one of the most important takeaways for me is that true sight, true understanding, is a journey, not a destination.

Okay. It's a process of opening ourselves to new possibilities, being willing to let go of our preconceived notions, and trusting that God can lead us toward a deeper, more meaningful way of seeing the world and our place in it. I love that.

Yeah. It's like we need to put on a new set of glasses, metaphorically speaking, and really look at the world around us. Right.

What do you think are some practical ways that we can cultivate that kind of sight in our own lives? Well, for me, it starts with being more intentional about who I'm listening to. Okay. You know, it's easy to get stuck in our own echo chambers, surrounded by people who think just like us.

Right. But if we really want to see more clearly, we need to be willing to listen to voices that challenge our assumptions, especially those who have different experiences than our own. It's about getting out of our comfort zones and being open to being wrong.

Exactly. Because sometimes being wrong is the first step to seeing more clearly. Right.

It's like that old saying: the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing. This story in John 9 is a powerful reminder that sometimes the people we least expect are the ones who truly get it. Yes.

The religious leaders, the ones with all the knowledge and the authority, are completely blind to the truth about Jesus. But the blind man who is ostracized and ridiculed is the one who sees clearly. It's humbling, isn't it? Yeah.

It challenges our assumptions about who's really in the know and who's missing the point. It makes me think about all the times I've been so sure I was right, only to realize later that I had it all wrong. Oh, totally.

Yeah. We talked about spiritual blindness, but I'm curious about what other kinds of metaphorical blindness we might struggle with. Okay.

What are some other blind spots that we might need to pay attention to? One that comes to mind is emotional blindness. We can be so disconnected from our own feelings or so afraid to feel certain emotions that we end up numb or shut down. It's like we're walking through life with a part of ourselves turned off.

It makes me think about how we often numb ourselves with distractions. Yes. Social media, Netflix, busy schedules.

It's easy to fill our lives with things that keep us from really feeling what's going on inside. It's like we're afraid of what we might find if we slow down and actually tune into our emotions. Right.

But the truth is, those emotions are trying to tell us something important. They're like signposts pointing us toward what we need to heal, what we need to change, or what we need to embrace. I love that analogy of emotions as signposts.

Yeah. It's like they're giving us directions if only we're willing to pay attention. And sometimes those signposts might lead us to uncomfortable places.

But if we're willing to be brave and follow them, they can lead us to a richer, more authentic life. Well, this deep dive into John 9 has been an incredible journey. It has.

We've explored the story, its historical context, its theological implications, and its personal relevance for our lives. We have. It's challenged our assumptions about suffering, miracles, and what it means to truly see.

And it's left us with some powerful questions to ponder as we continue on our own journeys of faith and discovery. I think so. If you're listening, we encourage you to take some time to reflect on what we've discussed today, what resonated with you, what challenged your thinking, what metaphorical blind spots you might be carrying, and most importantly, what steps can you take to cultivate a deeper, more compassionate way of seeing the world and your place in it? Thanks for joining us on this deep dive.

We'll see you next time. It's like we need to put on a new set of glasses, metaphorically speaking, and really look at the world around us. Right.

What do you think are some practical ways that we can cultivate that kind of sight in our own lives? Well, for me, it starts with being more intentional about who I'm listening to. You know, it's easy to get stuck in our own echo chambers, surrounded by people who think just like us. But if we really want to see more clearly, we need to be willing to listen to voices that challenge our assumptions, especially those who have different experiences than our own.

It's about getting out of our comfort zones, right? Yeah. And being open to being wrong. Exactly.

Because sometimes being wrong is the first step to seeing more clearly. I like that. It's like that old saying: the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.

This story in John 9 is a powerful reminder that sometimes the people we least expect are the ones who truly get it. Yeah. The religious leaders, the ones with all the knowledge and the authority, are completely blind to the truth about Jesus.

Right. But the blind man who was ostracized and ridiculed is the one who sees clearly. It's humbling, isn't it? It challenges our assumptions about who's really in the know and who's missing the point.

It makes me think about all the times I've been so sure I was right, only to realize later that I had it all wrong. We've talked about spiritual blindness, but I'm curious about what other kinds of metaphorical blindness we might struggle with. What are some other blind spots that we might need to pay attention to? One that comes to mind is emotional blindness.

We can be so disconnected from our own feelings or so afraid to feel certain emotions that we end up numb or shut down. It's like we're walking through life with a part of ourselves turned off. That makes me think about how we often numb ourselves with distractions.

Right. Social media, Netflix. Right.

Busy schedules. It's easy to fill our lives with things that keep us from really feeling what's going on inside. Yeah.

It's like we're afraid of what we might find if we slow down and actually tune in to our emotions. Yeah. But the truth is those emotions are trying to tell us something important.

They're like signposts pointing us toward what we need to heal, what we need to change, or what we need to embrace. I love that analogy of emotions as signposts. Yeah.

It's like they're giving us directions if only we're willing to pay attention. Right. And sometimes those signposts might lead us to uncomfortable places.

But if we're willing to be brave and follow them, they can lead us to a richer, more authentic life. I love that. Well, this has been a great deep dive.

It has. I feel like we learned so much about the story in John chapter 9 about Jesus healing the man born blind. We did.

We talked about all of the different layers: the historical context, the theological implications, and what it means for us today. Yeah. And I think the biggest takeaway for me is this idea that true sight, true understanding, it's a journey.

It's not a destination. Absolutely. It's about being open to new possibilities, being willing to let go of our old ways of thinking, and trusting that God can lead us to a deeper, more meaningful way of seeing the world.

I think that's a great way to put it. So as always, thanks for joining us on this deep dive into John 9. We'll see you next time.