

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 11,

John 9:1-41

6-Min. Video Overview

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Ok, so today we're diving into a story from the Gospel of John, chapter 9. And honestly, it's one of those stories that just flips everything you think you know on its head. It's about a man born blind, but his journey becomes this stunning lesson on what it really means to see. In a wild twist, the one who starts out in total darkness ends up seeing more clearly than anyone, while the so-called experts, the ones who claim to have all the answers, well, they're revealed to be the ones who are truly blind.

So here's the scene. The story kicks off with Jesus and his disciples, and they come across a man who's been blind since birth. And seeing him immediately triggers a question from the disciples, a question that tells you a lot about how people thought back then.

You hear that? That assumption is baked right into the question. They see this guy suffering, and their first thought isn't about compassion; it's about blame. They just assume his blindness has to be a punishment from God for some specific sin.

Either his parents messed up, or somehow he did, even before he was born. This was a really common way of thinking: this idea that you could draw a straight line from someone's suffering right back to a specific sin. But Jesus just completely shuts that down.

This is the first big pivot in the story. He basically says, you're asking the completely wrong question. This has nothing to do with punishment.

Instead, he totally reframes the situation. He says this man's condition isn't about something bad that happened in the past; it's about an opportunity for God's glory to be revealed right here, right now. It's a massive shift from looking for blame to seeing divine purpose.

And this really unconventional answer, well, it leads to an equally unconventional miracle. This isn't some clean snap-your-fingers kind of thing. It's earthy, it's a little messy, and, well, it's a little strange.

The process itself is just fascinating. Jesus spits on the ground, makes mud with it, and puts it on the man's eyes. You know, this is a deeply symbolic act.

Some scholars think it's meant to echo the creation story in Genesis, where God formed Adam from the dust of the ground. So maybe this isn't just a healing; it's almost like a recreation. But it's not done yet.

Jesus then gives the man a command, one final step he has to take himself. And where does he send him? To the pool of Siloam. And get this, the writer John points out this really cool bit of wordplay.

The name Siloam literally means sent. So Jesus, who was sent by God, sends the man to a pool called sent. It's this beautiful extra layer of meaning, reinforcing the idea that this whole thing is part of a divine mission.

And the result of the man's simple act of obedience is just stated with this powerful simplicity. He went, he washed, and he came home seeing. Boom.

Just like that, a man who has lived his entire life in darkness can now see. And as you can imagine, this causes an absolute uproar in his neighborhood. People are stunned, they're skeptical, and boy do they have questions.

So you'd think this would be a moment of pure celebration, right? Well, not exactly. This is where the story's conflict really starts to heat up. The healed man, instead of getting a party, basically gets put on trial.

He's forced to defend this amazing thing that just happened to him against wave after wave of skepticism and hostility from the religious authorities. I mean, he has to run this incredible gauntlet. First it's his own neighbors, who can't even agree if he's the same guy.

Then he gets dragged in front of the Pharisees, you know, the religious experts. When they can't get him to change his story, they call in his parents, who are frankly too scared to really back him up. And finally, they bring him back for one last hostile showdown.

He's just a regular guy getting hassled from every angle. For what? For telling the truth? So what is their big problem with all this? It really boils down to one thing. Timing.

The miracle happened on the Sabbath, the day of rest. And according to their very strict interpretation of the law, making mud and healing someone counted as work, and that was a huge violation. So for them, it's an open-and-shut case.

Whoever did this must be a sinner, definitely not from God. They are so stuck on their rules that they literally cannot see the miracle sitting right in front of them. And after being questioned over and over again, this is the turning point.

The man, who started out so passive, finds his voice. And he just uses simple, brilliant logic. He's like, look, I've told you already.

You didn't listen. Why are you asking again? And then he delivers this absolute zinger, just dripping with sarcasm. Do you want to become his disciples too? In that moment, this powerless outcast completely turns the tables on the most powerful religious leaders in the nation.

It's incredible. Now, as you might guess, that kind of boldness has consequences. You can't talk to the powerful like that and expect to just walk away.

The story now moves to its climax, where this man gets officially rejected by his community, only to be found by the one person who really matters. Their response to his logic and his courage isn't to debate him. It's to use their power.

They can't win the argument, so they just shut him down. They throw him out. And that means excommunicating him from the synagogue, which was the absolute center of Jewish social and religious life.

For telling the truth, he is made a complete and total outcast. But this next part, oh, it's so powerful. Jesus doesn't just bump into him later.

The text says he heard what happened to the man, and he actively went and found him. So at the man's absolute lowest moment, when he's been abandoned by everyone for standing up for Jesus, Jesus seeks him out. In this final meeting, Jesus reveals who he truly is, and the man's journey is finally complete.

Without a second of hesitation, he makes this incredible declaration. Lord, I believe. He's moved from physical sight to courageous testimony, and now, finally, to full spiritual insight and worship.

And this brings us to the profound, central lesson of the entire story. It's this huge paradoxical reversal that forces us all to ask the question: who is it that can truly see? And Jesus just spells it out for everyone. He says his presence in the world acts like a clarifying light, a kind of judgment that reveals what's really going on.

And it has this twofold effect. Those who admit they're blind, they're given sight. But those who are absolutely convinced they can already see everything, they're the ones who are shown to be blind.

I mean, just look at this contrast. It is so stark. The healed man starts out physically blind, powerless, and outcast.

But through this whole ordeal, he gains not just physical sight, but true spiritual insight. The Pharisees, on the other hand, start with everything: physical sight, power, status. But because they refuse to see the truth that's staring them in the face, they end up spiritually blind.

Their eyes are wide open, but their minds are completely shut. The leaders, overhearing this, ask this sarcastic question. You can just hear the contempt in their voice.

What? Are you saying we're blind too? And Jesus' final response is just devastating. He says, look, if you were actually blind, if you admitted you didn't have all the answers, you could be forgiven. But it's your very claim to sight, your arrogant certainty that you see everything perfectly, that's the very thing that proves your blindness and confirms your guilt.

Ultimately, this incredible story isn't just about something that happened 2,000 years ago. It's meant to be a mirror. It forces us to ask ourselves: what assumptions, what certainties, what neat little boxes that we put the world in might be blinding us today? It's a timeless challenge to check our own vision and to wonder what amazing truths we might be missing simply because we're so sure we can already see.