

## John 9:1-41 (NIV)

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

10 “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

11 He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

12 “Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided.

17 Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

18 They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. 19 “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

20 “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

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## John 9:1-41 (NIV) continued

24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

## RELIGION V. RELATIONSHIP (John 9:1-41): Leader's Notes

### Summary:

Jesus challenged the religious types of his day by showing them that God is not as concerned with keeping rules as he is with transforming lives through relationship with him.

### Cultural Notes:

In Judaic culture, the Pharisees saw it as their role to accurately interpret, regulate, and protect God's law. They believed it was their job to investigate the miracle of Jesus healing the blind man to ensure it was kosher.

### Key Observations:

- Jesus' actions and stories have a purpose: they tell us what God is like. Jesus often intimated that "if you want to know what God the Father is like look at me—watch me, listen to me, get to know me—because I am all about doing the work of the Father" (e.g. John 9:4).
- There is a strong contrast between what was commonly assumed to be the reason for this man's blindness and why Jesus believed he had been born blind.
- Jesus firmly believed he was sent by God to transform lives (through relationship).

### Discussion Questions:

- What did the disciples believe caused the man's blindness?
- Have you felt excluded from a group because someone assumed something about you due to your background?
- What does Jesus reveal about his purpose and his identity?
- What is it about Jesus that offends the Pharisees?
- What do the religious leaders seem to value? And what is important to Jesus?
- How would you feel if the religious leaders kept asking you to explain your healing?
- How did the blind man insult the Pharisees?
- Why did Jesus search for the blind man after the Pharisees kicked him out?
- Describe how Jesus transformed the blind man's life physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
- Describe the Pharisees' relationship with God versus Jesus' and the blind man's relationships with God.

### Ideas for Application:

- Jesus gave the blind man a chance to respond to him personally by calling him to belief. What do you believe about Jesus?
- The blind man's response—belief—led him to his next step in following Jesus. For him, it was worship. What is your next step in following Jesus?
- How would you describe your relationship with Jesus at this time? What kind of relationship do you want to have with Jesus?