

John 9:1-7, 13-17,34-39

Lent 4; March 15 & 16, 2026

It's a natural question to ask. *"Why does God allow some people to be born disabled or handicapped? Why does a good God allow accidents to happen that may cause a disability or handicap later on in life to happen? If God is good and all powerful, why does he allow bad things to happen to people?"* As Jesus was walking along the road one day with his disciples, they asked Jesus that simple question. **"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"** I suppose in a way it was a fair question. Why was this affliction allowed to happen? Did he or his parents do something to deserve this? Did they fail to do something that caused God to let this happen?

Before we look at Jesus' answer to the question of the disciples, let's take a look a short video showing how God might answer that question today. (Show video of Joni Tada¹)

Jesus acknowledges that it is a fair question that the disciples ask. Therefore, he is going to answer the question. **"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."** Then Jesus tells this man to do something that really doesn't seem to make sense. **"After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent")."** Yet, he listens to Jesus. He goes and he does. Suddenly, he can see the world in a way that he had never seen before. He could now see the birds that he could only have ever heard. He could see the faces of people that he could only have imagined. He could see color. He could see the clouds in the blue sky. For the first time in his life, he could see life in this world. Suddenly, he could see the way to his home that he previously only could feel. We can only imagine the joy this man saw as Jesus had given him sight.

Most of us cannot relate to such blindness. We may need glasses, but at least we are able to see where we are going. Right? We may not know blindness in our eyes, but there are blind spots that both the blind man in our text and ourselves experience. So, let's take a look at several of our blind spots.

First, we cannot see God. Perhaps that seems obvious, but we should admit it. We believe in a God, a Creator, a Father whom we cannot see. As John has written in his word, **"No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."** (1:18) However, we do see His handiwork. We also see glimpses of His love and mercy in our interactions with one another. But God Himself remains hidden from our eyes. This reminds us that God alone can give us the eyes to see Him by faith.

The Pharisees could not see God. Even when he stood right there in front of them. **"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." 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."**

Second, we cannot see ourselves. Yes, we see our reflection above the bathroom sink, but I am talking about a fuller, more honest seeing. We all have blind spots about ourselves. Sometimes, we are blind to our own failings. We can spot what is wrong with others a mile away. But when it comes to our own faults, we often do not see them. We are well-practiced at look away from ourselves and justify our own failings.

The Pharisees did not see their sins. In the verses just after our text, John writes: **"Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."** They did not see themselves as sinners.

Yet, at other times, the opposite is true. Sometimes we look in a mirror and we see nothing good at all. Our faults are so glaring that we only see what is wrong. It is like the pimple you got the night before prom. It did not matter what you were wearing or how you fixed your hair. You knew everyone would fixate on that pimple on the tip of your nose. Sometimes our faults, which are real, keep us from seeing God's good creation in the mirror.

That is why Jesus came. **“This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”** Why was this man born blind? This man was born blind so that Jesus would intersect with him on this day. As they would meet, the works of Jesus would give this man sight.

Third, we are blind to others. We simply do not see other people. I am talking about their needs and feelings, their struggles and concerns. In our text, the disciples did not see the man born blind as a fellow human. They looked at him and saw a theological problem. **“Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”** Rather than seeing his need for love and compassion, they looked at him as an object lesson.

Who do we sometimes fail to see? The widower in the congregation who goes home alone? The teenager who does not fit-in anywhere? The overworked and underemployed husband? The mom struggling with mental unhealth? We do not wish any of these people harm. We don't wish any harm on them at all. We are sometimes blind to the people around us that need the sight that only Jesus can give.

What happened to this man who had once been blind? We don't know after Jesus healed him. I'm going to bet that he lived every day of his life in the light of Jesus. I'm going to bet that he shared the message of Jesus with as many people as he could. God had open his eyes to see that Jesus is **“the light of the world.”**

Jesus wants you see him too as **“the light of the world.”** God has a purpose and plan for you in life. He wants to display his works in us as well. We may not always see why things happen to us and others in life. But one thing is certain – Jesus has removed the blindness of sin from you and shined his light into your heart. Therefore, we no longer live in the darkness. We live in the light of Jesus! Amen.

ⁱ Transcript of video: “It began back in 1967. I was 17, athletic. One summer day I went swimming in the bay with my sister, seconds took a reckless dive into shallow water. I knew then my life had changed forever. My doctor said, “Joni, you're gonna be paralyzed for the rest of your life, without use of your hands, your legs.” I knew I couldn't end my life physically, so I was tempted to end my life emotionally, mentally, spiritually. I wanted to just lay in bed, tell my mother to turn off the lights and shut the door. In the dark behind that closed door, I cried out, “God, if I can't die, then show me how to live.” God put Christian friends in my life who opened the Bible and showed me that God permits what He hates to accomplish that which He loves. And eventually I wheeled out of that dark bedroom and began to embrace life. I discovered there's a world of other disabled people in dark bedrooms who, like me, need to embrace life and know God. I started writing about this and speaking, and before I knew it, my message gave birth to Joni and Friends. Joni and Friends is a place where we share God's hope through every hardship. Joni and Friends is the heart, the hands, and the feet of Jesus Christ to people who are desperately hurting and need His help.”