

The Man Born Blind

John 9:1-41 details Jesus healing a man born blind, serving as a powerful sign that he is the "Light of the World" (v. 5) while exposing the spiritual blindness of the religious authorities. Jesus rejects the idea that suffering is direct punishment for sin, instead using the disability to display God's power. Jesus does not explicitly say God made the man blind his entire life for this one moment. God doesn't need suffering for God's glory.

Key Themes:

- **Healing as Sign:** The miraculous healing of a man born blind symbolizes the giving of spiritual sight. The use of mud (spittle and earth) may symbolize a new creation, reminiscent of God forming Adam from dust.
- **Shifting Focus from Sin to Purpose:** When asked if the man or his parents sinned, Jesus redirects the focus from blaming the past to seeing God's purpose in the present. The blindness was an opportunity for God's works to be revealed.
- **The Progression of Sight vs. Blindness:** The narrative contrasts the man's growing spiritual insight—moving from calling Jesus "the man" (v. 11) to "a prophet" (v. 17) to Lord (v. 38)—with the Pharisees' hardening refusal to see the truth.

- **The Judgment of Light:** Jesus explains that his presence renders a verdict: those who know they are blind (like the man) receive sight, but those who claim to see (the Pharisees) remain in their blindness.
- **Excommunication and Faith:** The Pharisees, blinded by legalism, cast the man out of the synagogue, but Jesus finds him, leading him to true worship.

The passage challenges believers to trust in Jesus as the source of light, even amid trials and societal opposition.

Does this passage challenge any notions you hold in your faith? How do you see the rules of religion in relationship to grace? When does grace need to be primary and when are the rules the most necessary?

How can you challenge yourself to "see" faith like demonstrated by Jesus in this story?

***The Man Born Blind, John 9:1-41
Acton United Methodist Church
Sunday February 15, 2026
Rev. Dr. Matthew D. Stultz***