

# Opening Our Eyes — Sermon Handout

John 9:1–41

Rev. Cheryl Farr, March 15, 2026

## Big Idea

Healing the man born blind turns into a confrontation between sight and blindness, belief and resistance. Lent presses us toward decision because Jesus doesn't just fix what's broken, He exposes what's blocking us. True sight doesn't come from having all the answers, it comes from trusting the One who heals.

## What's Happening in the Story

Jesus and the disciples see a man blind from birth, and the first impulse is to explain his suffering. The disciples want a cause, somebody to blame. Jesus refuses that framework and shifts the moment toward God's work in the present. He heals in a very earthy, hands-on way, then tells the man to wash. The man obeys, and he comes back seeing.

Instead of celebration, the healing triggers questions, arguments, investigations, and pressure. Neighbors debate whether the man is even the same person. Religious leaders focus on the Sabbath issue and interrogate him. His parents tell the truth but step carefully because they're afraid. The man who used to beg becomes the one person willing to speak plainly about what happened. He doesn't have a polished explanation. He has a lived experience. "I was blind, now I see."

By the end, the man has lost his place in the synagogue, but Jesus finds him. The story closes with a warning: people who admit they can't see are the ones Jesus can help, but people who insist they already see clearly may miss Him standing right in front of them.

## What Lent Is Asking Us to Notice

Lent isn't just about giving something up. Lent is about letting Jesus name what's true. It's about letting Him bring light into places we've learned to manage in the dark. Lent presses toward decision because you can't meet Jesus and stay neutral for long. You either open your hands, or you tighten your grip. This passage shows how certainty can become a kind of blindness. Sometimes our confidence isn't faith, it's control. Sometimes we'd rather be right than be changed. Jesus keeps moving toward the people who are honest, open, and willing. He keeps pushing against the people who use religion to stay safe from transformation.

## Listen For These Turning Points

Pay attention to how the man's faith grows. He doesn't begin with a full confession. He starts with what he knows. He tells the truth as far as he can see it, and the light keeps expanding. That's how faith often works. It grows step by step.

Pay attention to the contrast in the story. The blind man gains sight and courage. The religious leaders gain information but lose openness. The parents cling to safety. The neighbors hover in curiosity. Jesus moves steadily toward the person everybody else treats like a problem to be analyzed.

Pay attention to how Jesus treats the man after he's been thrown out. Jesus goes looking for him. That's grace. When people shut doors, Jesus shows up outside the building. When shame, fear, or rejection tries to name you, Jesus still calls you by name.

## Where This Hits Home

Some of us carry the disciples' question. We want life to make sense. We want neat explanations for pain. But Jesus doesn't give a theory here. He gives a healing, and He gives a next step.

Some of us carry the parents' fear. We know what's true, but we worry about what it'll cost to say it out loud. We don't want conflict. We don't want fallout. We don't want to lose community.

Some of us carry the Pharisees' certainty. We know what we've always been taught. We know how things "should" work. And if we're honest, we may feel threatened when Jesus shows up in ways we didn't expect.

And some of us are closer to the man than we'd like to admit. We're tired of being defined by what we can't do. We're tired of being a project. We're ready for Jesus to meet us personally, not as a debate topic. The good news is that's exactly what Jesus does.

## **A Question to Carry This Week**

Where have you been asking "who's to blame" when Jesus is inviting you to ask "what can God do here"?

Where have you been clinging to certainty because it feels safer than change?

What would it look like to tell the truth you already know, even if you don't have the whole story figured out yet?

## **Practice for Lent**

Try praying one simple prayer each day: "Jesus, help me see." Then stay alert. Watch for the places where you've grown used to darkness. Watch for the people you've overlooked. Watch for the assumptions you've held so long they feel like truth. Ask Jesus to open your eyes, not just to facts, but to grace.

## **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world, and we confess that we don't always see clearly. We ask You to heal what's broken in us, but also to expose what's blocking us. Free us from the need to blame, the need to control, and the need to be right. Give us honest hearts, humble spirits, and the courage to follow the light You give, one step at a time. When we feel pushed out or rejected, remind us that You come looking for us. Open our eyes to Your presence, Your mercy, and Your work already unfolding around us. We trust You, even when we don't have all the answers. In Jesus' name, amen.