

John 9:1-41
March 15, 2026
Fourth Sunday in Lent

Jesus 'signs in John reveal who he truly is

John reports only seven miracles in his gospel, though he never uses the word miracle. He calls them signs — events that point beyond themselves. A sign gives direction; it reveals who Jesus truly is. The sign in John 9:1–41 is a miracle of sight for the blind.

When I read John 9, I notice Jesus doesn't just heal the man's eyes. He uses mud. Does he sculpt new eyes? This isn't the first time human body parts have been formed from dust. In Genesis, God shapes humans from the "dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). This sign in John reveals Jesus as Creator.

From physical blindness to spiritual sight

Born with a disability in ancient times, this man — whom I will call "Daniel" — is doomed to a life of begging. There were many beggars along the roads, and society had grown desensitized to them. Notice how the disciples

speaking about “Daniel” as if he isn’t there, asking Jesus a theological question about him while he is standing before them.

Jesus is never desensitized to suffering. Not content to debate, he restores “Daniel’s” sight. But the healing goes deeper. Jesus gives him eyes to see who he truly is and what God is doing in the world.

The healing is not only physical but spiritual. Several “spiritual eye” healings emerge in this passage.

Moving from blame to compassionate action

When Jesus gives new eyes, we move from assigning blame to offering help. When problems arise — in church, family or society — our instinct is to blame. “Who sinned?” the disciples ask. “No one sinned,” Jesus replies, dismantling the assumption that suffering must be someone’s fault.

There are so many people ready to assign blame and

not enough people willing to help.

The issue is not what Daniel or his parents did, but what we will do now. Not who is at fault, but who will act. There are so many people ready to assign blame and not enough people willing to help. Jesus takes it a step further. Not only is this problem not anyone's fault, but it will help to reveal the glory of God.

From being stuck in the past to embracing transformation

When Jesus gives us new eyes, we move from being stuck in the past to embracing transformation. For "Daniel", the past says miracles don't happen; the Sabbath must be rigidly guarded; the Pharisees hold authority. But once healed, he sees a different future: miracles do happen; the Sabbath is gift, not burden; and Jesus is Lord.

We get stuck, too. When Samuel is sent to anoint Israel's next king (1 Samuel 16:1–13), he looks for someone impressive. He is stuck until God opens his eyes. God reminds Samuel, "The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (v.7). Samuel, open to this transformation, anoints God's choice in David.

From fear to faith in the face of opposition

When Jesus gives new eyes, we move from fear to faith. Fear runs through this story. The Pharisees fear Jesus' influence and refuse to rejoice. They interrogate "Daniel" and his parents. His parents, afraid, won't defend their son. Fear robs joy.

Faith is stronger. Once he can see, "Daniel" is not afraid. He calmly testifies: "I was blind, now I can see" (John 9:25). "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (John 9:33). Even when driven out of society, he believes and worships.

Living with mystery instead of demanding certainty

When Jesus gives new eyes, we move from demanding certainty to accepting mystery. The Pharisees cannot explain the miracle, so they reject it. Why must we explain everything? That impulse confines God and narrows our vision. "Daniel" simply tells his story again and again: "I was blind, now I see." Rejected by family, community and leaders, he continues to testify — even without a full explanation.

Never stop telling what Jesus has done for you.

Never stop telling what Jesus has done for you. Even if others doubt, keep witnessing. If we see clearly with new eyes, why deny it to satisfy those who cannot see? Can we live with holy mystery?

Blind eyes opened are a sign. Whenever someone sees something new and life-giving, it is a sign. Who is this who makes mud and creates new eyes? Is he the one who formed every eye in the beginning? And is he the one who will heal all our sight, to the glory of God?

Questions for reflection on John 9:1-41

1. What do I see when I look at myself? Do I see where I fall short? Or do I see a unique individual through whom God can work? What do I see when I look at others? What does our church see? Their shortcomings? Or an opportunity to do the work of God?
2. Am I open to transformation? Is my church open to transformation?
3. What has fear kept me from enjoying?

4. How has Jesus healed my spiritual sight? How has he changed me? How has he given me a better view?