



*TURN*  
**AGAIN**

# Sermon Growth Guide

**April 6, 2025**

**Eyes Opened**





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**“Eyes Opened”**

**John 9:24-38**

**Key Verse:** John 9:25

“Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

**Big Idea:** When you belong to Christ, your eyes are opened. You can now see.

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## Foundations

This week, we continue with our theme of Turn Again. In this passage, Jesus heals a man born blind by forming mud from saliva and dirt and placing it on the man’s eyes. The man then miraculously sees. This unusual form of healing occurred on the Sabbath.

It had already been declared that “anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue” (verse 22). The Pharisees were frustrated by this point, but they couldn’t argue with what had happened, though they tried.

Jesus finds the man after he’s been thrown out and is assumed to be steeped in sin. Now able to see, he has witnessed a miracle and wants to believe. He sees and knows the truth of Jesus.

This passage contrasts the faith and earnestness of the blind man with the Pharisees, who were looking for excuses and justifications for their hatred of Jesus.

This comparison is even more apparent because the chapter begins and ends with assumptions that the blind man was sinful, which Jesus corrects. The Pharisees were in constant pursuit of being sinless and blameless. The fact that the blind man believes and the Pharisees do not shows the condition of the Pharisees’ hearts.

## Understanding God’s Word

Together, read John 9:24-38. The Pharisees act frustrated about this healing and are trying to get to the bottom of this. How do you see the Pharisees acting out their frustration? What are the differences in tone and belief between the healed blind man and the Pharisees?

## Applying God’s Word

The man born blind did not waver from remembering what Jesus had done for him. He consistently gave voice to his incredible healing. He spoke the truth of what had happened in his life and backed it up with Spiritual truth (vss 31-33). How can we pay attention to what Jesus has done in our lives and give voice to it? This man was thrown out for speaking truth (but later met Jesus again). What might it cost us to give voice to what Christ has done for us?

## Witnessing God’s Word

Pastor Tim talked about illumination – that when you belong to Christ, your eyes are opened. What do you see more clearly now? How can you speak up about this?

Sometimes God lets us see what we haven't seen before. For example, my boys were taken by their grandparents on a special trip, senior trip, to Hawaii. They got to see waterfalls, sunsets, whales. Stuff they had never seen before. I got to see what happens when you are selected for jury duty. Life is fair, right? Is it fair? Turn Again. It's about conversion, meeting Jesus and starting a new life, being born again. One of the most used metaphors is blindness turned to sight. Once I see what Jesus shows me I can see, it feels like I used to be blind by comparison. To meet Jesus, to believe in Him, is to have your Eyes Opened.

The ancients talked about illumination. "Photismos" in Greek. You hear "photo" in there. Light. For hundreds of years that is what the church called the sacrament of baptism: photismos. Illumination. Not that the water made you see, not that the prayers made you see, but baptism is a marker of coming to Christ, of belonging to Jesus above all else, and when you belong to Christ, your eyes are opened. You can see differently; so differently, it is as if you didn't see at all until then. At the beginning of this story, Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5) The blind man was about to see light. C. S. Lewis said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." When you come to Christ you can finally see.

We again dipped into the middle of a longer story today. A man born blind met Jesus. Everyone believed, wrongly, that blindness was caused by the sins of the parents or, less likely, the sins of the unborn child. No. Sometimes we don't understand

the pain we bear, but this was no moral error. Jesus healed him, and here is how He did it: He took dirt, spit in it, made mud and rubbed it on the man's eyes, then told him to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash himself. The man is blind. "Where now?" So he stumbles his way to this pool with spit-mud on his face. There is humble obedience here, like Namaan we saw a few weeks ago. "Okay. I'll do it." He washed, his eyes were opened; he could see. It was the Sabbath. For Pharisees, this is sacrilege. Making mud is work. Washing is work. Healing is work. It is as if Jesus wanted to attack the legalism. He could have healed with a word. So, "'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.' 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!'" (John 9:24-25)

Now this man engages in what we call Apologetics, which simply means an answer in return. He gives an answer in return to the nonsense he is presented with. They say Jesus is a sinner because He broke their sabbath rules, but the man says God doesn't listen to sinners. You know that from Psalm 66: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." (Psalms 66:18) Or Isaiah 59, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2) So, God doesn't listen to sinners, the man says, but God sure listened to this guy! I was blind! It is more and more the responsibility of Christians in our times to make a reasonable answer in return to nonsense. Not in a nasty, combative way, but, as Peter says: "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the



hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15) We don’t have to go, fight, win, every argument. But it is increasingly our responsibility to not allow nonsense to stand, gently, with respect. Nonsense hurts people. Still, do you know, his strongest argument is something he already said. “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!’” (John 9:25) Your testimony of Jesus in your own life is always your strongest witness.

Even so, they reject him. Verse 34 says they “threw him out.” A good argument could be made for stronger language. They excommunicated him. They cut him off. No more contact. No participation in worship. No business dealings. Cast out. “Great! I finally get my sight; now I’m excommunicated, unemployed and exiled.” Jesus heard they did that, and went to find him. Jesus sought him out. Do you know that’s the character of Jesus? “I think Jesus is seeking me out; I think Jesus is on my trail, pursuing me. That can’t be, can it? God pursuing me?” Yes. “Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’” (John 9:35) Remember now, when last these two met, the man couldn’t see. He doesn’t know what Jesus looks like. “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “‘Who is he, sir?’ the man asked. ‘Tell me so that I may believe in him.’” Jesus said, ‘You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.’” (John 9:36-37). He only knew Him by His voice. Jesus speaks to the man, and the man sees His face. Only believe. Only believe and you will see. What does the man say? “Then the man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.” (John 9:38)

“I believe.” Conversion is putting your faith in Christ.

Jesus goes on, explaining in effect, “Do you know what is even better than physical sight? Spiritual sight. Seeing the world as I see the world. Forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. They don’t get it. But you can get it. Believe.” I once was blind, but now I see. Conversion opens the eyes. You see the entire world differently. When you know the Creator, you see the beauty of the creation with new eyes. The sky is bluer, the grass is greener, the air is sweeter. Why? You look at the blue of the sky and realize, “I know who made that! And He made it for me!” It makes the blue, bluer. Doesn’t it? “Nice sky, God! Nice sunset! Nice mountains! Nice wildflowers!” You see the whole world through new eyes.

You see others through new eyes. John Newton wrote the famous hymn, “Amazing Grace.” “Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.” But he was never blind. Do you know what he was? He was as slave trader. Most of his life. He gave his life to Jesus and his eyes opened. He was blind; he was blind to the mark of the Creator, the seal of imago Dei on every human being. His eyes opened and he saw the African man. “Hold! I was about to treat you like nothing, like a commodity, like cattle. Now I see the image of God in you! Something to behold, to revere, to honor and respect!” He became an abolitionist. You see the world differently. You see others differently. You see yourself differently. I once was blind, but now I see.



Larry Sanger is the founder of Wikipedia. Heard of it? Yeah, he's all right. He was an outspoken skeptic, atheist, arguing for most of his life that faith and science don't mix. Well, on February 5th, this year, he published an online essay. It starts like this, "It is finally time for me to confess and explain, fully and publicly, that I am a Christian." Now, this is scientific... and long! Ready? Here's how he explained his conversion: "From the structure of galaxies to the orbits of the planets, from the movement of waves to the fates of mountains, from the origin of life to the complexity of man... the universal constants permit the existence of spacetime and the coalescence of matter, then stars and planets; certain unlikely chemical facts are absolutely necessary in order for life to exist; certain incredible leaps seem designed to lead life on earth ever onward to greater awareness and knowledge, culminating in man. If the very emergence of order seems to exhibit ends or purposes or designs, we may hypothesize a designer. ...It was only time, study, and (I hope) humble reflection that finally brought me to something like an orthodox Christian faith. I certainly did, eventually, come to better appreciate my own sinfulness and why one of our deepest obligations is to be thankful to God for adopting me into his family and forgiving my many sins. I thank God for what share of insight his Word and his faithful servants have given me, as I have studied them; I thank him for the gift of faith that, for most of my life, I never imagined I would have. By the way, by 'faith' I do not mean that I believe absurdities against reason. Rather, what I accept (on, I think, quite rational grounds) is the full body of Christian doctrine as taught in the Bible; but my faith

is in God, which is to say, I am loyal to him and to his Son and his Holy Spirit, who are one."

I once was blind, but now I see. Do you see? Jesus is pursuing you just as much as Larry Sanger, just as much as the man born blind. He seeks you out with just as much love, patience, illumination. Can you see? I want to pray for you before we go to the table. I encourage you to make this prayer your own as I pray. "Jesus, I am blind. Open my eyes. I am deaf. Open my ears. I am in exile. Bring me home. I hear Your voice asking, "Do you believe?" Before I taste the bread of communion today, Jesus, I want to say, Yes, Lord, I believe in You. Save me, and I will be saved. In Jesus name. Amen." If that is something you prayed for the first time, please talk to one of us. We will have a baptism service on April 27 at the end of this series. Maybe it is time to come to the water. If you have renewed your faith today, share that with someone. New life is here in Jesus. Amen.

