

# Life Illuminated

March 15, 2026  
Based on John 9:1-41

Thomas is the disciple that I chose to tell this story through. It was his eyes that questioned and doubted that seemed appropriate for this text.

Good morning. My name is Thomas and I was a follower of Jesus. It is still hard to believe that it was this time of year when Jesus was crucified. He was one of the best guys I ever met in my life. I will admit though that until that night in the upper room when I saw his hands and his side that I doubted the legitimacy of who he was. That has always been a good thing and a bad thing about me. I struggle to trust people and many times it has paid off and I have not been swindled, especially in business. However, It also keeps me from seeing some days. And by seeing I mean what is really important in life. That's kind of the story I wanted to tell you today and encourage you to try and see with the eyes of Jesus.

One day we were walking down the road and there was a man who was named Bartemaues that was born blind. I got close to Jesus and said, "Master who sinned? This man or his parents that he was born blind." According to Jewish law and traditions it is written that sin can be passed on to a person for up to four generations. We all know that sin is the reason these bad things happen—at least we thought we knew.

Jesus said, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Then Jesus spat on the ground. I thought what is he doing? Is he angry because I asked the question? I was just about to start apologizing when he bent over and started stirring the dirt and his spit. He spits a couple more times and straightens up with two mud balls in his hands. Then he walks over to Bartemaues and smears the mud on his eyes. He tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam which means sent. He went and washed and came back able to see.

You can imagine the chaos and uproar this created. Some called it a miracle and others were saying no that's not Bartemaues, it's just someone who looks like him. He kept saying, no it's me, it really is me I was blind but now I can see. His neighbors asked him, "How did this happen?" He said, "There was this guy named Jesus who spit on the ground, made mud, put it on my eyes, and told me to go to the pool of Siloam and wash it off. When I got there I washed my face, opened my eyes and suddenly I could see. They asked him where Jesus was and he said, "I do not know." So they said we have to tell the Pharisees about this and they took him to the temple.

Now you would think that some people would be happy and want to celebrate this event. Yet, there are always people like me who are doubters.

When I get this way, it is more about not trusting the good that is in our brothers and sisters. I feel like some people are just trying to get ahead or take advantage of the system. Well if you think I am a doubter then you should have seen and heard those Pharisees.

Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The funny thing is when you say the word prophet or priest around Pharisees they lose their minds. You would think a group of people who claim to have such a strong faith in God might recognize someone from God. So now we have a sinner healing a sinner. When the reality is the Pharisees could not heal Bartimaeus and that just frustrated the snot out of them. Because they could not do it, then no one else should be able to either. So it becomes this huge ordeal.

They send Bartimaeus to go and get his parents. He brings them before the council and they ask them if he is their son. "Yes." they say. They ask, "Was he born blind?" and they nod their heads. Then they say well how

can he see. Word had gotten out that if you spoke in favor of Jesus then you would be thrown out of the synagogue. So they said, "He is of age—ask him." They did not want to get in trouble.

So they begin the round of questioning again to Bartimaeus. The more they question him the more he begins to get a little irritated. Finally he said, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven Bartimaeus out so he went looking for him. When he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus

said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Well you can imagine how that went over with the Pharisees. They stomped off and kept looking back and pointing fingers at Jesus. Bartimaeus was thrilled to be able to walk with us and to learn from Jesus. In fact, he was with us until the very end and now they say that he is still telling the stories of Jesus to anyone that will listen.

This story also taught me that sin is really a word that is thrown around to try and keep people from being nice to one another. If God forgives why do we have such a hard time forgiving? It comes back to seeing. Do we see with eyes of judgement and questions and doubt? Or do we see with eyes of care and compassion and love? The crazy thing is, we have a choice. How do you choose to see? Amen.