**Thesis:** Jesus’ miracles bring testimony of him giving the blind sight, allowing the lame to walk, and restoring the sick to full health. But much more than releasing people from their physical sufferings, Jesus came to free us from our spiritual cages. He opens our minds to see things above, strengthens us to walk worthy of our calling, and restores our souls from the pain of sin. Jesus wants to make us completely new in mind, body, and soul.

**Introduction:** This is The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. I’m so glad you’re with us today. Take a moment to follow the podcast as we near the end of our series on the miracles of the Messiah!

**Context:** Today’s story comes from John 9, following the story of a man born blind who has his sight miraculously restored. Though he may not know much about his healer beyond his name, or even what he looks like, his receptivity to the power of God and humility to receive the words spoken to him from the Lord opens not only his eyes to see the physical world around him, but opens his heart to see the kingdom of God at hand. Our story takes us through the experience of the blind man Simeon, walks through the darkened hearts of the Pharisees, before concluding with the beautiful revelation of the Messiah. Packed with excitement, I encourage you to jump in with an open heart and mind, allowing the Spirit to illuminate God’s truth to you as your eyes are opened to wonders of Jesus!

**Message:** Jesus’ miracles were always used as a platform to do a greater work. Sometimes this was to stir up the faith of an individual. Other times it was used to correct the wrong thinking of the Jews at the time. And sometimes it was meant to be a catalyst for radical community impact. The healing of the man born blind was used to accomplish all of these greater works.

In our story, Jesus and the disciples walk past Simeon, when one of them asks if it was his sin or his parents' sin that caused him to be born blind. In doing so, they were revealing a long held misunderstanding of sin and its consequences. The Jews understood that everyone was sinful in nature as a result of the fall of mankind in the garden as told in Genesis 3.

David acknowledges this truth in *Psalm 51:5* when he writes: *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*

They understood that everyone was sinful, but teachings of various rabbis purported that there was no suffering without iniquity, so one who suffered must be in sin of some sort. Unfortunately, not only did the disciples have a wrong understanding of sin, but their ponderings of theology had caused them to forget what the mission of Jesus was even about. Rather than ask the Lord if this man could be helped, they were more concerned with understanding why he was even suffering in this way in the first place.

Charles Spurgeon once said, *“It is ours, not to speculate, but to perform acts of mercy and love, according to the tenor of the gospel. Let us then be less inquisitive and more practical, less for cracking doctrinal nuts, and more for bringing forth the bread of life to the starving multitudes.”*

While we should be growing in our understanding of theology and doctrine, it should never come at the expense of the practicality of missional living and loving others with the same compassionate heart as Jesus. At the end of the day, we’re all born into sin, and we’re all in need of a Savior.

But this does raise an interesting question. If God is in complete control, sovereignly reigning from heaven, why would he allow people to suffer? This question has caused many to stumble and even turn away from God, viewing him as uncaring, unloving, and unbothered to help us in our struggles.

But Jesus addresses his concern when he says in *John 9:3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned…but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”*

God’s plan to redeem his creation is far more complex than we could ever imagine. He is often working in ways we can’t perceive. He knows the end goal, even if we can’t see how he’s getting there. Sometimes God allows suffering with a greater purpose. The consequences of our sin are natural and deserved. And God could allow us to bear the weight of our sin to no end and remain perfectly just. But we know that’s not our God. While he is just, he’s also loving. And it’s his love that desires to use our sufferings to show us his power over sin. Think of the story of Joseph. God allowed him to suffer, being sold into slavery and bound in prison for two years. It wasn’t until 13 years after his brothers betrayed him that God revealed the greater part he would play in his plan to save Joseph’s family, the foundation of his chosen people, from the famine. Being in a broken creation means we’re going to suffer. But as followers of Jesus, we can suffer with purpose, knowing that God wants to use our suffering to reveal his glory to this world.

For Simeon, God allowed him to endure a life of blindness to lead him to this very moment. Jesus wanted to use the blind man as an example of God’s ability to not only heal people from their physical blindness, but to make a statement about humanity’s need to be healed of their spiritual blindness. The Pharisees lived in spiritual blindness, unwilling to have their minds opened up to see the glory of God before them. Though they studied the Scriptures, made sacrifices, and worshiped in the temples, all of these were done in the flesh and through their own strength. What they failed to understand is that only the Spirit of Christ can heal us from our spiritual blindness.

Paul explains this in *2 Corinthians 3:12 “Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

The religious leaders had the same opportunity as everyone else to respond to the message of Jesus and have their spiritual sight restored. But it was their arrogance, rather than an excuse of ignorance, that caused them to continue to stumble in darkness. We know this to be true when we look at the story of Saul’s salvation on the road to Damascus. Saul was an incredibly high ranking Jew, considered to be holy in all of his conduct. And while he was ignorant of the gospel for a time, once Jesus revealed himself to Saul, causing him to go physically blind, he had a choice to make. Would he reject Jesus and remain spiritually blind, or would he allow his heart to be receptive to the gospel message?

Jesus wants to lead us out of our spiritual blindness, but we have to be willing to listen to him and be open to him transforming us, beginning with our hearts. We have to be receptive and humble. The blind man exemplifies this for us. With mud in his eyes, he chooses to obey the commands of Jesus and wash himself in the Pool of Siloam. And what we see is a fantastic picture that’s reminiscent of baptism. As he dunks down into the water, he’s preparing to leave his old life of blindness behind. And as he rises out of the water, he begins his new life with his sight restored. In the same way, Christ invites us to receive sight through his healing. Through humbling ourselves to him, identifying with his death that washes away our old life, and rising to new life, we can see the world with a new heart!