The Blinding Light of Jesus: Are You Unteachable?

Bible Study Guide
Scripture: John 9:1-41
Bro. Adam McGill
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Opening Prayer & Welcome

Begin with prayer asking God to open our eyes to see where we've become unteachable, stuck, or spiritually blind. Pray for humility to learn, courage to move, and wisdom to recognize where we've added human rules to God's Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to show us if we're truly seeing or if we only think we see.

Introduction: Are You Unteachable?

Key Definition: Being unteachable means you refuse to learn, refuse to change, refuse to be taught—no matter what you see, what is said, or what is done. You double down on who you are and somehow think God will be okay with that.

Scripture Foundation: "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.' Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, 'We are not blind too, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, "We see," your sin remains.'" - John 9:39-41

The Bidet Illustration

Bro. Adam opened with a surprising illustration about Japanese toilets (bidets) versus American toilet paper. His point: Americans have been shown a superior, more efficient, more sanitary way to clean themselves, but refuse to adopt it because "we've always done it this way." We'd rather stick with an inferior method than learn something new from another culture.

The Spiritual Application: How many times do we do this spiritually? We see better ways, more biblical ways, more effective ways—but refuse to change because "this is how I've always done it" or "this is how we do it here." That's being unteachable. That's being spiritually blind even though we think we see clearly.

Questions:

1. What's something you resisted learning or changing until you finally tried it and realized it was better?
2. Why is it so hard for humans to admit when there's a better way than what we're currently doing?
3. How does this apply to our spiritual lives and church practices?

The Big Idea

God expects moments with Jesus to produce movement for Jesus, which becomes ministry for Jesus. But if you're unteachable—refusing to learn, refusing to move, doing "just enough"—you're spiritually blind no matter how much you think you see. The question isn't whether you're saved; it's whether you're stuck.

Being teachable means being willing to see what God is doing, learn what God is teaching, and move where God is leading—even when it challenges your comfort, traditions, or understanding.

Reality #1: The Moment Creates the Movement

Key Scripture: John 9:1-7

"As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.'"

Main Points:

- The disciples assumed blindness was punishment for sin (it wasn't)
- The man was born blind specifically for this moment—to display God's works
- Jesus said "We must work"—God demands movement, not just meditation
- The moment is when you encounter Jesus; movement is what you do after

Key Teaching:

"He was born blind for this moment. Blindness your whole life. Arthritis your whole life. Cancer your whole life. AIDS your whole life. Disfigurement your whole life. And I'm this way for this moment. Well, does God have right to do that? Yes. You got to live with it."

"The moment is when you come into contact with Jesus. Now we know that by the things that are made, you can tell that it's God. So the moment is not when you were

born. The moment is when you come into God's family, his grace and acceptance through baptism. That's the moment."

The Moment-Movement-Ministry Framework:

MOMENT: When you become a Christian through faith, repentance, and baptism
MOVEMENT: You should immediately start moving—growing, serving, changing
MINISTRY: As you move, you become radicalized for ministry—actively serving God and others

The Problem:

"A whole lot of people got the moment. But they ain't moving because they're unteachable. They got where they feel it's just enough and I don't have to go further."

The Whistling Illustration:

Remember learning to whistle? You practiced until you got it. But once you could whistle a little bit, you stopped practicing. You achieved your goal—you could whistle—so you didn't keep improving. Many Christians do the same thing spiritually: they get "just enough" and stop growing.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you identify your "moment" with Jesus—when you truly encountered Him and became a Christian?
2. What evidence shows that you've been "moving" since that moment?
3. Where have you settled for "just enough" spiritually instead of continuing to grow?
4. What would it look like for you to move from your moment into active ministry?

Truth Bomb:

"We must carry out the works of him who sent me as long as we got work to do. Oh my goodness. We got work to do. God's house ain't White Castle. It ain't Church's Chicken. It ain't Mickey D's. We don't consider those top quality service places. Chick-fil-A. That's the gold standard."

Application:

This week, honestly assess: Are you moving or are you stuck? If you're stuck, identify one specific area where you need to start moving spiritually. Don't settle for "just enough."

Reality #2: Jesus Demands Results

Key Scripture: John 9:6-7

"When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing."

Main Points:

- Jesus deliberately healed on the Sabbath—He worked when the Pharisees said you shouldn't work
- Making clay was specifically listed as one of the 39 forbidden labors on the Sabbath
- Jesus wasn't ignorant of the law—He made the law and was making a point
- God expects results from His workers, not just presence

Key Teaching:

"Jesus is saying, 'I have a job and as an employer, I'm responsible for results. As an employee, I'm responsible for results.' ... Jesus going to say, 'Yo, I got to get some results cuz I am employed to do something. I've been sent by God to do something.'"

"Whatever job you do, you should be conspicuous in it. Are you a conspicuous Christian? I didn't say you have a ministry. If I said ministry, you can trip at any way you want to. 'I pick up the neighbor's trash. I feed the squirrels.' That's not the question. Are you a conspicuous Christian? God wants to see results, not incognito."

The 39 Labors Forbidden on Sabbath:

Jewish tradition added 39 specific categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath, including:

- Grinding
- Sifting
- **Kneading** (what Jesus did when He made clay)

The Pharisees created these rules to help people keep God's law, but ended up making burdens too heavy to carry. Even today, Orthodox Judaism debates whether you can cut fingernails on Sabbath, which order to cut them in, whether a wooden leg counts as a shoe, etc.

The Problem with Adding Rules:

"What the Pharisees did was they added extra laws to God's law to help them keep the law and the people couldn't keep it because of what the Pharisees were doing. This is still going on."

Warning for Churches of Christ: In the 1980s, there were unwritten rules about how to dress for church. If you didn't wear certain things, some questioned if you were a "real Christian." Give it a couple hundred years, and these human traditions can become treated like Scripture.

Discussion Questions:

1. What results is God seeing from your Christian life? How would He evaluate your spiritual productivity?
2. Are you "conspicuous" about your Christianity, or are you incognito—blending in with the world?
3. What human traditions or preferences have we elevated to the level of biblical commands?
4. Where have you judged others based on traditions rather than Scripture?

Truth Bomb:

"How you going to tell me God is ignorant of what He made? You're trying to help people do Bible by adding you. That's a bad formula. You the weak point in all this."

Application:

Identify one area where you've confused tradition with Scripture. Study what the Bible actually says versus what you've always been told or assumed. Be willing to change if needed.

Reality #3: The Unteachable Refuse to See

Key Scripture: John 9:13-34

"They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes... Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, 'This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.' But others were saying, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And there was a division among them."

Main Points:

- The Pharisees interrogated the man, his parents, and the man again—four times total
- They refused to accept the obvious miracle because it challenged their rules
- The man born blind had more spiritual clarity than the educated religious leaders
- Being unteachable made them deny what was right in front of them

Key Teaching:

"They asked him, for the fourth time, 'Tell us what happened.' How many times do I have to tell you a thing before you get it? So he's going to say, 'I don't know if he's a sinner or not. Here's what I know. I was blind. Now I see. That's the facts. He did it. I told you how he did it. And you're caught up in, "Yeah, but it was a Sabbath.""'

"This is a man born blind who's a beggar talking to the teachers of Israel. These are the teachers. 'You don't listen. You won't be tempted again. You want to become his disciples.' And they said, 'We are Moses's disciples. You believe in somebody you read, but refuse to believe in somebody you saw.'"

The Beggar's Testimony:

The man born blind was spiritually sharp despite never having read Scripture (being blind). He soaked up God's Word at the temple gate where he begged. When challenged by the Pharisees, he boldly defended Jesus:

"Since the beginning of time, you've never heard of anybody being born blind being able to see. You know that's true. In the Old Testament, there is no example of somebody getting their sight. This is a brand new miracle. How can you deny this?"

The Cost of Speaking Truth:

The Pharisees threatened excommunication—which meant:

1. **First degree:** 30-day restriction from congregation
2. **Second degree:** Indefinite restriction
3. **Third degree:** Perpetual exclusion from all rights and privileges—religious, civil, social. No one would talk to you, trade with you, or marry you. You might as well leave the country.

The blind man knew this and still told them the truth. His parents knew this and stayed silent. Why was he brave but they weren't? **Because when you've been blind your whole life and someone gives you sight, you can't deny it. You see clearly.**

Discussion Questions:

1. Why were the Pharisees—the most religious, educated people—the most spiritually blind?
2. What makes someone reject obvious truth even when it's right in front of them?
3. Have you ever been like the Pharisees—rejecting something because it challenged your understanding or traditions?
4. What gives people courage to speak truth even when it costs them everything?

Truth Bomb:

"The blind man who just got his eyesight 20 minutes ago looking at people dead in the eye. Where did that courage come from? When you've been blind your whole life and now you can see, you want me to step aside and act like this didn't happen? You ain't paying me enough money to deny what I got."

Application:

Is there truth you've been denying or avoiding because it would require you to change? Are you like the Pharisees, defending your traditions, or like the blind man, willing to see what God is actually doing?

Reality #4: Spiritual Blindness Deceives

Key Scripture: John 9:39-41

"And Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.' Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, 'We are not blind too, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, "We see," your sin remains.'"

Main Points:

- Jesus came to reverse sight: the blind will see, the seeing will become blind
- The Pharisees—religious leaders—were the darkness who couldn't grasp the light
- Claiming to see while being blind is worse than admitting you're blind
- Being unteachable is being enveloped in smoke—you can't see clearly but think you can

Key Teaching:

"In him was light. The light was light of mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not grasp it. Who's the darkness? The religious people. This ain't Satan. It's God's people who are the darkness who don't grasp the light."

"Jesus said, 'Because you admit that you see, then your sins are still on you.' If you admit you were blind, sins wouldn't be. But because you say you see, because you say you're teachable, but yet you refuse to be taught, because you said you could be taught, then it's on you."

The Weed Illustration:

When you're in your car or yard and smell weed everywhere—people are smoking in their cars, walking down the street—you can tell they're not in their right mind. They're

literally physically impaired, enveloped in smoke, unable to see or think clearly.

The Spiritual Application: When you're unteachable, you're spiritually enveloped in smoke. You're not in your right mind spiritually. You can't see clearly. But here's the problem: **people who smoke can't smell it on themselves. They think it's hidden. But everyone else can smell it clearly.**

"When you're unteachable, you're spiritually blind. You can't see. But you think you can't smell it because you can't smell it. Unspiritual people think it's masked and hidden from you. So as a Christian, you'll be surprised if you're mature and spiritual what you can see. You can see people in God's house who are unteachable. But they think you can't see it because they can't see it."

The Stevie Wonder Principle:

Stevie Wonder was blind but wrote lyrics like: "I'll be loving you until the rainbows burn the stars out in the sky... till 8 times 8 times 8 is 4." How does a blind man see so clearly? **Because sometimes those without physical sight have greater spiritual sight.**

"How can somebody born blind write the lyrics that he writes? Though he's blind, he can see better without sight. So God has a way of making the sighted blind and the blind sighted."

Discussion Questions:

1. How can someone be spiritually blind but convinced they see clearly?
2. What are the warning signs that you're becoming unteachable or spiritually blind?
3. Why is claiming to see (when you're actually blind) worse than admitting blindness?
4. Who in your life can you trust to tell you when you're spiritually blind to something?

Truth Bomb:

"It's not what comes out of the mouth that makes a man unclean, not what goes into a mouth makes a man clean, but what comes out of his mouth because that comes out of his heart. That passage wasn't for God. It was for humans. Other people can tell what you have inside of you based on what comes out of your mouth."

Application:

Ask someone you trust: "Where do you see me being unteachable or spiritually blind?" Be willing to hear hard truth and respond with humility rather than defensiveness.

Reality #5: You Can't Steward What You Won't Move With

Key Scripture: Galatians 6:7 (referenced)

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Main Points:

- If you can't steward what God gives you now, you won't be a good steward in heaven
- Doing "just enough" here means you'll do even less there
- Your life doesn't start when circumstances improve—it starts now with what you have
- God can't trust you with more if you won't move with what you already have

Key Teaching:

"If you can't steward what God has given you now, what do you think heaven is? And if you can't steer it on terra firma, you're not going to be as good steward in infinity. So the beggar is lecturing the teachers and he is spiritual and godly."

"The man who just got his eyesight 20 minutes ago looking at people dead in the eye. Where did that courage from? When you've been blind your whole life, three decades of blindness, and now you want me to shut up from the guy who let me see. You ain't paying me enough money to deny what I got."

The Lottery Illustration:

Why do so many professional athletes go broke after making millions? Because they never learned to steward and manage resources. When they got much, they spent it foolishly—bulletproof fish tanks, velvet constellations on the ceiling. It wasn't that they didn't deserve the money; they never learned stewardship.

"Was that they didn't deserve the money, they never learned how to steward and manage it. So because they didn't, when they got it, what they spent it on? A bulletproof fish tank."

Your Life Starts Now:

Don't wait for better circumstances to start serving God faithfully:

- "Just give me some more money, God, and then I'll be all right."
- "Let me win the lottery and then I'll be okay."

- "Once I get a better job / house / situation, then I'll really serve."

Reality: "If you're not okay with a little bit, then you ain't going to be okay with much. Matter of fact, if you're not careful, it'll spell your downfall."

Discussion Questions:

1. What are you waiting for before you'll fully serve God? Why are you waiting?
2. How are you currently stewarding your time, talent, and treasure?
3. If God can't trust you with what you have now, why would He give you more?
4. What does it mean to be a good steward "on terra firma" (on earth) versus in eternity?

Truth Bomb:

"The beggar didn't stop being godlike or god-fearing just because he was beset with the difficulty. We're all beset with something. You still got to move. Your life doesn't start when you get better."

Application:

Stop waiting for circumstances to improve. Start moving now with what God has already given you. Identify one way you can be a better steward this week with your current resources.

Practical Application: Moving from Unteachable to Teachable

The Final Question: Are You Stupid?

"Are you stupid? Before you answer that question, are you unteachable? Are you so stuck in your ways that there's nothing anybody can say to you? No matter what sermon you hear, no matter what plea goes out, I'm going to keep on doing what I've been doing."

Four Signs You Might Be Unteachable:

1. You Refuse to Change Despite Evidence:

- Like Americans refusing to use bidets even though they're superior
- You defend "how we've always done it" even when shown a better way
- You double down on your position no matter what Scripture says

2. You Do "Just Enough" to Get By:

- You've achieved your minimum spiritual goal (like whistling once) and stopped growing
- You compare yourself to others instead of examining your own work
- You're satisfied with where you are and see no need to move

3. You Can't See What God Is Doing:

- Like the Pharisees who denied an obvious miracle because it challenged their rules
- You're so focused on traditions and preferences that you miss God's work
- You judge others based on human standards rather than Scripture

4. You Think You See Clearly:

- You're convinced you're teachable but haven't changed in years
- You're offended when anyone suggests you might be wrong
- Like the Pharisees, you say "We are not blind too, are we?" while being completely blind

Three Steps to Becoming Teachable:

STEP 1: Admit You Might Be Blind

"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

- Humility is the foundation of teachability
- Admit there might be things you don't know or have wrong
- Be willing to say, "Yes, I'm stupid—teach me"

STEP 2: Move From Your Moment

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day."

- Don't just relish your salvation moment—move!
- Start serving, growing, changing
- Stop doing "just enough" and become radical for Jesus

STEP 3: Pursue Results, Not Just Presence

"Are you a conspicuous Christian? God wants to see results, not incognito."

- God expects productivity from His workers
- Your Christianity should be obvious to everyone around you
- Don't blend in—stand out for Jesus

Ministry Opportunities at Liberty City:

- **Teaching Ministry:** Are you helping others learn and grow?
- **Service Ministry:** Are you actively meeting needs in the church and community?
- **Evangelism:** Are you conspicuously sharing your faith?
- **Mentorship:** Are you helping new Christians move from moment to ministry?

Self-Examination Questions:

1. **Am I teachable or unteachable?**
    - When's the last time I changed my mind about something spiritual?
    - How do I respond when challenged or corrected?
    - Am I defending traditions or pursuing truth?
2. **Am I moving or stuck?**
    - What evidence shows I've grown spiritually in the last year?
    - Am I doing more or less for God than I was a year ago?
    - Have I settled for "just enough"?
3. **Am I producing results?**
    - If someone followed me for a week, would they know I'm a Christian?
    - What fruit is my life producing for God's kingdom?
    - Am I conspicuous or incognito?
4. **Do I see what God is doing?**
    - Am I so focused on my preferences that I miss God's work?
    - Do I judge based on Scripture or tradition?
    - Am I willing to change when shown a better way?

Connection to Previous Sermon: Pass the Baton

Last Week (Bro. Fred - Galatians 6:1-10): Pass the Baton

- Moments with Jesus → Ministry for Jesus → Movements for Jesus
- Restore the fallen, bear burdens, sow to the Spirit, persevere in doing good
- **The call:** Pass the baton from person to person

This Week (Bro. Saint - John 9): Are You Unteachable?

- **The obstacle:** Being unteachable stops you from passing the baton
- If you're stuck at your "moment" and not moving, you can't pass anything to anyone
- The Pharisees had knowledge but were unteachable—they couldn't receive or pass God's truth
- The blind beggar was teachable—he received sight and immediately passed the testimony

The Connection:
You can't pass a baton if you're not moving. Being unteachable means you're spiritually blind—stuck in your ways, doing "just enough," unable to see what God is doing. To participate in God's movement (passing the baton of restoration, burden-bearing, and

ministry), you must first be teachable enough to move from your moment with Jesus into active ministry for Jesus.

Group Prayer & Commitment

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **Humility:** Pray for grace to admit where you've been unteachable or blind
2. **Movement:** Ask God to show you where you need to start moving spiritually
3. **Results:** Request strength to be conspicuous for Christ and produce spiritual fruit
4. **Clarity:** Pray for eyes to see what God is doing instead of defending traditions

Commitment Challenge:

This week, identify one area where you've been unteachable. Maybe it's a spiritual practice you've resisted, a person you've judged, a tradition you've defended without biblical basis, or a call to ministry you've ignored. Commit to being teachable in that one area. Don't stay stuck.

Reflection: "Are you stupid? No—but am I teachable? That's the real question."

For Further Study

Additional Scriptures:

- John 9:1-41 (Read the entire chapter slowly)
- John 8:12-59 (Context leading into chapter 9)
- Proverbs 9:8-9 (The wise love correction)
- Proverbs 12:1 (Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge)
- Proverbs 26:12 (Wiser in his own eyes)
- James 1:22-25 (Doers of the word, not just hearers)
- Matthew 23:1-39 (Jesus confronts the Pharisees' unteachable hearts)
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (Itching ears—wanting to hear what confirms our biases)

For Deeper Study:

- Research the 39 categories of work forbidden on Sabbath in Jewish tradition
- Study other times Jesus healed on the Sabbath and the controversy it caused
- Examine other passages where Jesus called religious leaders "blind"
- Compare the teachable thief on the cross with the unteachable religious leaders

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Closing Prayer

Father, we come before You humbling ourselves, admitting we might be blind in areas we think we see clearly. Forgive us for being unteachable—for defending our traditions over Your truth, for doing "just enough" instead of moving radically for You, for being incognito instead of conspicuous about our faith. Thank You for the example of the blind beggar who, when given sight, immediately testified boldly even at great cost. Give us that same courage and clarity. Help us move from our moment with You into active ministry for You. Make us teachable. Open our eyes to see what You're doing, even when it challenges our comfort and traditions. We don't want to be darkness that can't grasp the light. Make us people who see clearly, move boldly, and produce results for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Remember: The question isn't "Are you saved?" It's "Are you stuck?" Don't settle for just enough. Don't become unteachable like the Pharisees. Be like the blind beggar—teachable, moving, and bold in testimony, even when it costs everything.

For those ready to move: If you're stuck and need to rededicate your life to Christ, come forward. If you've been doing "just enough" and need prayer and encouragement to move, we're here. If you've never had your moment with Jesus through baptism, today is the day. Don't stay unteachable. Don't stay blind. Move.