

Sermon Title:

“Faith Beyond What We Can See”

Gospel Text:

John 20:24–29

Disclosures: This sermon was created utilizing internet readings, Working Preacher, Chat GPT, and our weekly Text Study notes.

Have you ever said, “I’ll believe it when I see it”? Or maybe “I have to see it to believe it”? As a mother and a wife, I have definitely said these statements. When I have said these statements, it was usually in reference to a task that I wanted completed around the house, homework assignments, or a behavior changes I was hoping to “see”.

As I was preparing this message, I looked to “Google” regarding the statement “I have to see it to believe it”.

The idiom "seeing is believing" is generally attributed to the 17th-century English clergyman and historian [Thomas Fuller](#) (1608–1661). While often used to mean you need visual proof to accept something, Fuller’s original 1639 formulation was actually, "Seeing is believing, but feeling is truth". The phrase was likely a reference to the biblical story of "Doubting Thomas," who refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection until he saw and touched the wounds. The original quote, “Seeing is believing, but feeling is truth” highlights the distinction between mere observation (seeing) and personal experience or conviction (feeling).

Utilizing Working Preacher, I enjoyed reading Thomas B. Slater’s message. Let’s recount what just happened with Jesus.

Jesus was just brutally crucified on the cross and laid to rest in the tomb. It was a devastating time for his followers.

“The disciples were in seclusion because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities.

They were fearful of being arrested and suffering the same fate as Jesus. They still did not believe Mary’s story that Jesus was alive. The doors were locked and Jesus appeared before them.”

Wait a minute...Jesus died and then he “rose from the dead”. This has never happened before to another living being. And now Jesus is demonstrating something truly mind blowing.

Jesus returns to Mary and to his disciples after being crucified and resurrected.

“Jesus showed them his wounds and then they rejoiced. It is noteworthy that like so many of us the disciples had to see Jesus for themselves. For them, the movement ended with the crucifixion of Jesus. They were totally unprepared for the resurrection. The words of John 16:16-24 which foretold of Jesus’ death and return to the Father had not taken root in their lives. They did not believe Mary’s report. They only believed when they saw Jesus for themselves.”

I would say that the disciples were likely in a state of “awe”. And Thomas wasn’t there to experience this moment. Would you believe the disciples...or for that matter, can you believe any of this story? It defies all logic and is truly “hard to believe”.

Poor Thomas.

For centuries, he has carried the nickname “**Doubting Thomas**,” even though I think many of us might admit that if we had been in his shoes, we would have asked the very same thing.

Thomas says: “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

Thomas wants proof. Thomas wants evidence. Thomas wants something tangible before he can trust what seems impossible.

And honestly—don’t we all?

We live in a world that values what can be measured, tested, and proven.

This past week many watched as NASA’s Artemis II mission completed its historic journey around the moon—the first crewed lunar mission of its kind in more than 50 years. Scientists and engineers spent years preparing, testing, calculating, and verifying every detail because when you send human beings into space, faith alone is not enough—you need evidence, data, and trust in what has been proven.

And yet even with all of that preparation, every astronaut stepping onto that spacecraft still has to trust.

They trust the engineers.

They trust the math.

They trust the mission.

They trust what they cannot personally inspect themselves.

The NASA team and the world was “watching” this amazing feat. Everyone was on the edge of their seats waiting to “see” the outcome.

And isn’t that the nature of faith?

Faith is not pretending there are no questions.

Faith is not shutting off our minds.

Faith is not blind optimism.

Faith is trust.

Thomas wasn't condemned because he had questions.

Jesus did not shame Thomas for his doubt.

Instead, Jesus came to him.

Jesus met him exactly where he was. -This statement is truly one of my favorites.

Jesus met Thomas exactly where he was at.

Jesus offered his wounded hands and side and said: "Put your finger here. See my hands."

What beautiful grace this is.

God is not afraid of our doubts.

God is not offended by our questions.

God does not abandon us when our faith feels shaky.

Instead, Jesus comes through locked doors.

He enters fearful hearts.

He meets uncertain disciples.

He stands before doubters and says:

"Peace be with you."

That is the Gospel today:

Not that Thomas doubted—

but that Jesus came anyway.

Because the good news is not that we must have perfect faith.

The good news is that Christ is faithful even when we are not.

Sometimes life puts us in Thomas's shoes. Sometimes I wonder "what is the point"?

Why are we running this race of life? How can devastation exist, food insecurity, poverty, social injustices? Where is God?

Sometimes grief makes us doubt.

Sometimes suffering makes us question.

Sometimes prayers seem unanswered.

Sometimes the world feels too broken for resurrection to be real.

And Jesus does not turn away.

Jesus can be found all around us.

I have spoken before about Ignation Values, and I turn to these values again today. Ignatian spirituality is rooted in the teachings of [St. Ignatius of Loyola](#) who was the founder of the Jesuits. It is a way of life that focuses on "finding God in all things". Finding God in daily life rather than just in church or prayer. It focuses on reflective living, active engagement with the world, and discerning God's presence through prayer and decision-making.

From Jesuits.org: **Finding God in All Things**

Ignatian* spirituality* is summed up in this phrase. It invites a person to search for and find God in every circumstance of life, not just in explicitly religious situations or activities such as prayer in church or in private. It implies that God is present everywhere and, though invisible, can be "found" in any and all of the creatures which God has made. TAfter a long day of work, Ignatius* used to open the French windows in his room, step out onto a little balcony, look up at the stars, and be carried out of himself into the greatness of God.

Artemis II reminds us that humanity is still exploring mysteries beyond what we fully know—still venturing into places unseen, trusting in preparation, hope, and guidance as we move forward.

And as Christians, we too are people journeying.

We do not have every answer.

We do not see everything clearly.

We do not know exactly what lies ahead.

But we trust the One who goes before us.

We trust the risen Christ,
who conquered death,
who entered the tomb and walked out again,
who says to us:

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

That blessing is for us.

Because we have not touched the wounds ourselves.

We have not stood in the upper room.

We have not seen the empty tomb with our own eyes.

And yet—
through grace,
through the Spirit,
through the witness of the Church—

we believe.

Not because our faith is perfect,
but because Christ is present.

So maybe Thomas should not be remembered as “Doubting Thomas.”

Maybe we should remember him as **Honest Thomas**.

Seeking Thomas.

Questioning Thomas.

Faithful Thomas.

Because in the end, Thomas gives one of the clearest confessions in all the Gospel:

“My Lord and my God!”

May that confession be ours too.

Even in uncertainty.

Even in mystery.

Even when we cannot yet see the whole picture.