

Stories That Matter — Week 1: Unless I See

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, We come before You with honest hearts—some full of faith, others full of questions. Thank You for meeting us in both places. As we gather today, give us courage to speak openly, to listen deeply, and to encounter You in new ways. Help us to see beyond what is visible and to trust in Your presence among us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Theme: Faith is not the absence of doubt—it is the willingness to stay connected to Christ in the middle of it. Thomas reminds us that doubt is not failure—it is often the doorway to deeper belief. The invitation of this week is to move from needing proof... to practicing presence.

Secular Quote: “Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith.”

— Paul Tillich

Starter Question: When have you experienced a moment where you needed to *see it to believe it*? What made that moment difficult or meaningful?

Digging Deeper Questions:

1. In **John 20:24–31**, Thomas says, “Unless I see... I will not believe.”
 - Why do you think this response is so relatable?
2. Thomas is called “the Twin.”
 - In what ways do you feel like Thomas’s “twin” in your faith journey?
3. Verse 24 tells us Thomas “was not with them.”
 - How does isolation impact our faith and doubts?
4. Jesus does not reject Thomas—He meets him.
 - What does this teach us about how God responds to our doubts?
5. **1 Peter 1:8–9** says, “Though you have not seen him, you love him...”
 - How can love and trust grow even without physical proof?
6. The sermon suggested that *being is believing*.
 - What does it look like to “live out” belief rather than just think about it?

Actionable (Live It Out This Week):

Choose one way this week to **practice “being” instead of just “seeing.”**

- Reach out to someone you’ve felt disconnected from
- Offer forgiveness or grace where it’s difficult
- Spend intentional time in prayer—even with unanswered questions

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for meeting us in our questions and not turning us away. Thank You that we don’t have to have perfect faith to be loved by You. Help us to remain connected—to You and to one another—especially when we struggle to understand. Teach us to live as people who reflect Your love, even when we cannot see clearly. Strengthen our faith as we walk, question, and grow together. In Your name, Amen.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Monday — Honest Doubt-Mark 9:24

Focus:

Faith and doubt can exist together. God welcomes honesty.

Tuesday — God Meets Us Where We Are-Psalm 34:18

Focus:

God doesn't wait for perfect faith—He draws near in our struggle.

Wednesday — Faith Beyond Sight-2 Corinthians 5:7

Focus:

Faith grows not by what we see, but by who we trust.

Thursday — Staying Connected-Hebrews 10:24–25

Focus:

Isolation feeds doubt. Community strengthens faith.

Friday — Tested and Refined Faith-1 Peter 1:6–7

Focus:

Doubt and difficulty can deepen and refine our faith.

Saturday — Seeing Through Living-Matthew 5:16

Focus:

We become the evidence of Christ through how we live.