

Bible Study Guide: Encountering Jesus – Faith Beyond Sight



Source Transcript:

Big Idea

True encounters with Jesus move us from needing physical proof to living by faith through the Holy Spirit and loving others.

Theme

Jesus calls us beyond fear, doubt, and religious systems into a living, personal relationship marked by faith, humility, and action.

Core Scriptures

John 20:24–29

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Matthew 25:40

“Whatever you did for the least of these... you did for Me.”

Introduction: The Struggle Between Sight and Faith

After the resurrection:

- The disciples are afraid and hiding
- They are confused and uncertain
- Their expectations of Jesus seem shattered

Key Insight:

“We often want to see before we believe—but Jesus calls us to believe so we can truly see.”

This study explores:

- Fear behind closed doors
 - The struggle of doubt
 - Moving from proof to faith
-

Main Point 1: Fear Drives Us Into Hiding

Explanation

After Jesus' crucifixion:

- The disciples scatter
- They hide behind locked doors
- Fear controls their actions

“They were afraid they would be killed.”

Spiritual Truth

Fear causes us to:

- Withdraw
- Isolate
- Lose direction

Application

- Where am I hiding because of fear?
- What is keeping me from stepping forward in faith?

Sticky Quote:

“Fear locks doors—but Jesus walks through them.”

Main Point 2: Guilt and Failure Can Isolate Us

Explanation

Peter's denial creates:

- Shame
- Isolation
- Emotional distance

The disciples:

- Likely blamed one another
- Struggled with regret

Spiritual Insight

Failure can:

- Separate us from others
- Distort our identity
- Weaken our faith

Application

- What guilt am I carrying today?
- How is it affecting my relationship with God?

Sticky Quote:

“Failure may isolate you—but it doesn't disqualify you.”

Main Point 3: Jesus Speaks Peace Into Chaos

Explanation

Jesus enters the room and says:

“Peace be with you.”

This is powerful because:

- He meets them in fear
- He restores their hearts

“Jesus meets them with peace in the middle of their fear.”

Spiritual Truth

Jesus:

- Brings peace, not condemnation
- Restores, not rejects

Application

- Where do I need Jesus’ peace right now?
- Am I allowing Him to speak into my situation?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus doesn’t bring shame—He brings peace.”

Main Point 4: Doubt Often Comes from Desire for Real Encounter

Explanation

Thomas:

- Missed the first encounter
- Refused to believe without proof

“I will not believe unless I see.”

Spiritual Insight

Thomas’ doubt reveals:

- A longing for real connection
- A desire for personal experience

Application

- What doubts am I wrestling with?
- Do my doubts come from distance—or desire?

Sticky Quote:

“Doubt can be a doorway to deeper faith.”

Main Point 5: Jesus Meets Us Personally in Our Doubt

Explanation

Jesus returns specifically for Thomas:

- He invites him to touch His wounds
- He meets him at his level

“Jesus comes back for the one who is struggling.”

Spiritual Truth

Jesus:

- Sees individual needs
- Responds with compassion

Application

- How has Jesus met me personally?
- Where do I need Him to meet me now?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus meets you where you are—not where you should be.”

Main Point 6: Faith Goes Beyond What We Can See

Key Scripture: John 20:29

Explanation

Jesus teaches:

- Seeing is not the highest form of faith
- Believing without seeing is greater

Spiritual Truth

Faith requires:

- Trust
- Surrender
- Dependence

“Greater are those who do not see and yet believe.”

Application

- What am I waiting to see before I believe?
- How can I strengthen my faith today?

Sticky Quote:

“Faith trusts God even when evidence is absent.”

Main Point 7: The Holy Spirit Is Our Ongoing Encounter

Explanation

Jesus leaves—but sends:

- The Holy Spirit

Spiritual Truth

The Spirit:

- Lives within us
- Guides us daily
- Connects us to Christ

“Encounter with Christ becomes a faith walk with the Spirit.”

Application

- Am I listening to the Holy Spirit?
- How can I become more aware of His presence?

Sticky Quote:

“You don’t need physical proof when you have spiritual presence.”

Main Point 8: Jesus Cannot Be Contained in Systems

Explanation

People often try to:

- Contain God in buildings
- Limit Him to traditions

But Jesus:

- Breaks religious systems
- Moves beyond structures

“You can’t contain God in a building or a system.”

Spiritual Insight

True faith is:

- Personal
- Relational
- Active

Application

- Am I limiting God to certain places or routines?
- How can I experience Him beyond structure?

Sticky Quote:

“God is not confined—He is alive and moving.”

Main Point 9: We Encounter Jesus Through Loving Others

Key Scripture: Matthew 25:40

Explanation

Jesus teaches:

- Serving others = serving Him

“You encounter Christ in the least, the last, and the lost.”

Spiritual Truth

Real encounters happen:

- In compassion
- In service
- In broken places

Application

- Who can I serve this week?
- Where can I show Christ's love?

Sticky Quote:

“You find Jesus where people are hurting.”

Main Point 10: Be Patient with Others on Their Journey

Explanation

Not everyone believes at the same pace.

“There is always someone not there yet.”

Spiritual Truth

We are called to:

- Show patience

- Extend grace
- Walk alongside others

Application

- Who needs my patience right now?
- How can I encourage someone growing in faith?

Sticky Quote:

“Grace for others reflects the grace given to you.”

Discussion Questions

1. What fears are causing you to “lock the door” in your life?
 2. How has guilt or failure affected your faith?
 3. What doubts are you currently wrestling with?
 4. How do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life?
 5. Where can you encounter Jesus through serving others?
-

Practical Application Steps

1. Face Your Fear

- Invite Jesus into your hidden places

2. Bring Your Doubts

- Be honest with God in prayer

3. Walk by Faith

- Trust God without needing full clarity

4. Listen to the Spirit

- Create space for quiet and reflection

5. Serve Others

- Look for someone in need and act

Closing Prayer

Father,

Thank You for meeting us in our fear and doubt.

Teach us to trust You beyond what we can see.

Fill us with Your Spirit,

guide our steps,

and help us encounter You through loving others.

Give us patience, humility, and faith
to walk with You daily.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Takeaway

The greatest encounters with Jesus don't come from seeing Him—they come from trusting Him, following Him, and loving others in His name.