

Believing Without Seeing

Pastor Anthony J. Shetley
John 20:25–31

The Struggle to Believe

Many people struggle with believing things they cannot see, touch, or fully explain. Wanting evidence does not mean a person is faithless—it means they are being honest. Thomas, one of Jesus' own disciples, wrestled with this very struggle. When he heard that Jesus had risen from the dead, it seemed too good to be true. Yet instead of condemning Thomas, Jesus met him in his doubt and invited him to believe.

Jesus' response to Thomas reminds us that doubt is not the opposite of faith—refusing truth is. The resurrection challenges us not to abandon reason, but to consider the truth that God has revealed.

Faith Grounded in History

Christian faith is not built on myth or blind belief. History itself testifies to the reality of Jesus Christ. Roman and Jewish historians who were not followers of Jesus recorded that He lived, was executed under Roman authority, and was worshiped shortly after His death. These writers had no reason to support Christianity, yet their records confirm the core claims of the Gospel.

The Gospel writers also recorded the life of Jesus while eyewitnesses were still alive and in the very places where the events occurred. These accounts were public, specific, and open to verification. If the resurrection had been fabricated, it could have been easily exposed. Instead, the message of Christ spread rapidly and powerfully.

Eyewitness Testimony of the Resurrection

The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred people at one time, many of whom were still living when he wrote his letter (1 Corinthians 15:6). This was not a private vision or a hidden experience—it was a public event confirmed by many witnesses.

The Authority and Works of Jesus

Jesus Himself pointed people to His works as evidence of who He is. He said that if He was not doing the works of the Father, then He should not be believed—but if He was, then the works themselves testified to the truth (John 10:37–38).

Those who heard Jesus teach recognized something different about Him. He did not speak like the scribes or religious leaders of His day. He taught with intrinsic authority—an authority that came from who He was, not merely from position or tradition (Mark 1:22).

Understanding Our Spiritual Nature

Not everything that is real is visible. Love cannot be handed to someone like a physical object, yet no one denies its reality. Fear, anger, peace, conviction, and faith are all unseen, yet they are known by how they manifest in our lives. Scripture teaches that we are body, soul, and spirit, and that spiritual realities are revealed through their effects.

Jesus compared spiritual life to the wind—you cannot see it, but you know it is real by its movement (John 3:8). The deeper issue of belief is not merely intellectual; it is a matter of the heart. Jesus taught that sinful

actions flow from an unregenerated heart, which is why we must be born again spiritually (Matthew 15:19).

How Jesus Still Reveals Himself

Jesus continues to reveal Himself today through the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, and through the witness of the Church. One powerful example is the apostle Paul, who encountered the risen Christ while persecuting believers. Jesus confronted him directly and transformed his life (Acts 26:14).

Today, Christ still makes Himself known through conviction of sin, changed hearts, transformed values, enduring faith, peace in suffering, and His abiding presence in the lives of believers.

The Blessing of Believing Without Seeing

Though we do not see Jesus physically, we see His work clearly. Faith in Christ is not mystical or irrational—it is a response to truth that has been revealed. God came to us where we live. The Word became flesh, and Jesus manifested the Father to the world.

Purpose of the Gospel

John tells us plainly why these things were written: so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we may have life in His name (John 20:30–31). Faith is not believing without evidence—it is trusting the truth God has clearly shown.