

Theme: Jesus has risen. Believe it or not!

Object: A copy of Robert Ripley's "Believe It or Not." You should be able to find a copy in some form at the public library or a bookstore. If not, you can use the examples in the sermon without a copy of the book. There is also a Ripley's "Believe It or Not" comic strip online. (See Resource below)

Scripture: John 20:19-31

There is a very interesting book called "Believe It or Not" by Robert Ripley. Mr. Ripley enjoyed collecting strange and amazing bits of information which, although they seem unbelievable, were true. Let me read some examples of some of the amazing things you will find in his book.

A man by the name of James Cook once had a chicken that laid a perfectly square egg. Now, I've seen white eggs, brown eggs, even spotted eggs, but I have never seen a square egg. Have you? I think I'd have to see it to believe it!

Joann Barnes was a 15-year-old from California, and she once swung a lot of hula-hoops on her body at the same time! How many do you think she swung on her body? (Take guesses until kids say 68.) Can you believe that? I can't even keep one hula-hoop going. I think I would have to see that to believe it!

Here's one I'll bet you didn't know. How long do you think the world's largest weenie was? (Take guesses until kids say 3,000 feet.) The world's largest weenie was over 3,000 feet long, weighed 885 pounds, and took 103 butchers to carry it! Now that's a lot of baloney! I would have to see that to believe it!

This book is filled with things that are very hard for me to believe. But do you know what? If it's true, it's true--whether I believe it or not!

In today's Bible lesson we learn that on the Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave, He appeared to a group of His disciples. One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with them. When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and that He was alive, Thomas said, "I won't believe it until I see it with my own eyes. I want to put my finger in the nail-prints in His hands—and place my hand where the spear was thrust into His side.

A week later, Thomas saw Jesus. Jesus invited Thomas to touch His hands where the nails had been. He told Thomas to put his hand in the wound in His side. Then Thomas believed! Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

A lot of people today won't believe that Jesus really rose from the grave because they haven't seen Him with their own two eyes. Do you know what? It is true whether they believe it or not! You and I have never seen Jesus, but we believe. We accept Him by faith. We don't have to see it to believe it.



