**Faith – Stories & Illustrations**

**Imagine a world saturated with ignorance and hatred, a lonely, brutish place without any hope of redemption. Now, picture a man -- Abram, the Bible calls him -- who hears a command from God: Leave behind the life you know, and I will one day bless the entire world through you. How this will happen, and why, is a mystery to this man, but he sets out. In time God gives him a new name: Abraham. In time he will become the patriarch of three monotheistic faiths -- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. And history will be forever transformed by his story. *(Tad Szulc, in National Geographic)***

**Man: “I now have faith.” Trout: “Fine.” Man: “That sounded cynical, Trout. Do you doubt my faith?” Trout: “Yep.” Man: “You should never doubt my faith. You should have some faith in my faith.” Trout: “Sorry. I have no faith in your faith.” Man: “I don’t believe you.” Trout: “OK. I believe that you don’t believe me.” Man then says to himself: “Sniff. I always get a little teary-eyed when agnostics take their first new baby steps.” *(Tony Cochran, in Agnes comic strip)***

**Last year, 44 million people passed through Chicago's O'Hare Airport, obedient to disembodied voices, electronically amplified, telling them to get into cylindrical membranes of aluminum to be hurled by strange engines through the upper atmosphere. The passengers were content not to understand how any of it worked. And we think of the 12th century as an age of faith. *(George F. Will, in Newsweek)***

**A young Jew wrote these words on the wall of the Warsaw ghetto: I believe in the sun, even if it does not shine. I believe in love, even if I do not feel it. I believe in God, even if I do not see Him. *(LectionAid)***

**Dog: “I love chili! But I’m not allowed to have it.” Cat: “’Not for dogs’ they say!” Dog: “I can smell them cooking it. But they never let me taste it!” Cat: “If you’ve never tasted it, how do you know you love it?” Dog: “I have faith.” *(Chris Browne, in Raising Duncan comic strip)***

**What I admire in Columbus is not his having discovered a world but his having gone to search for it on the faith of an opinion. *(A. Robert Turgot)***

**Donald Miller, minister and seminary president, tells about a woman who phoned him one Saturday night and asked, “Dr. Miller, what do I believe?” “What do you mean?” asked Miller, not sure he had heard her correctly. “I mean,” she said, “what do I believe? You see, I’ve just come from a party where several people got into a discussion about their various beliefs. One woman was Jewish, and she told us what she believes as a Jew. Another was Roman Catholic, and she told us what Catholics believe. Somebody was a Christian Scientist, and he talked about what they believe. I was the only Protestant in the group, and, frankly, I didn’t know what to say. What do I believe?” “That woman,” said Miller, “must have come into the church on confusion of faith, not the confession of faith.” She didn’t know what she believed, but she did feel she needed to believe. *(LectionAid)***

**The first step or “day” of creation involves “light” or understanding, and the second step, faith in the knowing quality of mind.  This does not refer to the visible realm of forms but to the mental image in Divine Mind, which deals only with ideas. *(Charles Fillmore, in Mysteries of Genesis, p. 17)***

**The Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and other historical expressions of faith recited by congregations every Saturday, all begin with “I believe.” Not “I suppose,” or “I assume,” or even “I know,” but “I believe.” This doesn’t make belief a poor substitute for knowledge, rather it is a modest claim to a kind of knowledge. Even scientists -- at least any worth their salt -- do not claim any sort of finality to their findings. Belief carries even the scientist beyond the horizon of established and accepted evidence into the frontier of further knowledge. *(LectionAid)***

**Some years ago a hydroelectric dam was to be built across a valley in Maine.  The people in the town were to be relocated and the town itself submerged. During the time between the initial decision and the completion of the dam, the town, which had once been well-kept, fell into disrepair.  Why keep it up now? Explained one resident: “Where there is no faith in the future, there is no work in the present.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The great modern revival of divine healing is due to the application of the same law that Jesus used. He demanded faith on the part of those whom He healed, and with that faith as the point of mental and spiritual contact He released the latent energy in the atomic structure of His patients and they were restored to life and health. *(Charles Fillmore)***

**Doubt vs. Faith: Doubt sees the obstacles -- Faith sees the way. Doubt sees the darkest night -- Faith sees the day. Doubt dreads to take a step - Faith soars on high. Doubt questions, “Who believes?” -- Faith answers, “I.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**In 1878, Thomas Alva Edison announced that he would try to invent a practical electric light bulb. Such was the faith of the world in this young man (he was only thirty-one) that, on the bare announcement, illuminating-gas stocks tumbled in value in New York and London. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 59)***

**The Christian uses faith and gets marvelous results, the electrician uses electricity and also gets marvelous results, and neither of them knows the real nature of the agent he uses so freely. The man who called electricity faith doubtless thought that he was making a striking comparison when in fact he was telling a truth, that faith is of the mind and it is the match that starts the fire in the electrons and protons of innate Spirit forces. *(Charles Fillmore, in Atom-Smashing Power of Mind, p. 13)***

**The farmer is a man of faith. He knows that the crop will be harvested in due course and so he confidently drops the seed into the waiting earth, taking no anxious thought for the eventual result of his work. He trusts and knows the day of the harvest will come. And so it does! *(Jack E. Addington, in All About Goals)***

**One of my favorite movies is Field of Dreams. I love the film because it encourages all of us to take plow in hand and till our own hopes and aspirations into fruition. In the movie, Kevin Costner plays a thirty-six-year-old college-educated Iowa farmer. While out in his cornfield, he begins hearing a voice: “If you build it, he will come.” At first, Costner’s character, Ray Kinsella, thinks he may be going crazy.  But as he continues to listen, he begins examining his life more closely. He fears becoming old and ordinary before his time, as his father had after giving up a minor-league baseball career to raise a family and take an ordinary job. Costner’s character is guided to create a baseball field from his cornfield, believing that if he does so, his late father’s hero--Shoeless Joe Jackson--will return to play. The community thought Kinsella had indeed gone mad when he built a baseball diamond in the middle of nowhere. To make matters worse, his farm was on the verge of bankruptcy. Yet Ray Kinsella’s willingness to step out on faith and follow that voice transformed not only his own life but the lives of those around him. The long-dead Jackson did return, bringing with him other ball players. In the end Kinsella’s faith was rewarded, and he saved not only his farm but his dream as well. *(Mary Manin Morrissey, in Building Your Field of Dreams, p. 8)***

**There must be a firm place in the midst thereof before the mind can unfold and accomplish its mission of expressing God. The firmament represents the quality or attribute of faith. When we are distraught and fearful we should declare, “Let there be a firmament; let faith come forth to give stability to my being.” *(Elizabeth Sand Turner, in Let There Be Light, p. 16)***

**The second day’s creation is the second movement of Divine Mind. The central idea in this day’s creation is the establishment of a firmament in the “midst of the waters” diving the “waters from the waters.” “Waters” represent unexpressed possibilities in mind. There must be a “firm” starting point or foundation established. This foundation or “firmament” is faith “moving upon” the unformed capacities of Spirit consciousness.. The first step or “day” of creation involves “light” or understanding, and the second step, faith in the knowing quality of mind. *(Charles Fillmore, in Mysteries of Genesis, p. 16, 17)***

**That the word of faith has an inner force, and that this force rushes forth and produces remarkable transformations in the phenomenal world, is the testimony of thousands who have witnessed its results. *(Charles Fillmore, in The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 30)***

**You feel better the moment you drop your letter in the mail box and soon you realize you have had a healing. It is because you have touched the hem of the garment – the garment of faith in the almighty Power of God. *(Helen Hopper)***

**Once Unity was in serious financial straits. Bills that had to be paid were piling up, and there did not seem to be money enough to meet the pay roll.  The Fillmores called their staff together to pray about the matter. One of the staff said, “Let us pray that the money holds out.” “Oh, no,” whispered Myrtle Fillmore, “let us pray that our faith holds out.” *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 17)***

**You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty. *(Mahatma Gandhi)***

**Do you remember the movie character Indiana Jones? In “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," when he's getting close to the Holy Grail, there's a big chasm to cross. Indiana is guided to believe that if he'll just step out, a bridge will appear. But all he can see is the deep cavern. Should he fall into it, he will surely die. He must trust that if he steps out, he'll be supported. He knows that his dream, finding the Holy Grail, requires a literal leap of faith. He hears his father's voice in his mind saying, “You must believe, son." He steps out into the void, and the bridge does appear. As he takes the next step more of the bridge appears. Step by step, his faith allows him to walk to the other side. There he finds the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail represents your dream. Your current dream will lead you to even greater dreams if you are willing to take each step as it appears. Once you listen deeply and feel your guidance, take the step, even if you feel yourself bungee-jumping off a cliff. *(Mary Manin Morrissey))***

**Rose: “If you make me invisible I won't be attacked by monsters while I'm sleeping!” Angel: “Okay! Invisibility will take effect when you shut your eyes! No peeking, ye of little faith!" *(Pat Brady, in Rose Is Rose comic strip)***

**It has been said that faith can move mountains but no one has ever seen it done, save by the faith that man has in himself, in the steam shovels and the dynamite he has invented in the face of a hostile Nature. *(Louis Bromfield, in The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg)***

**In Tennyson’s Idylls of the King, a city is described as built to music, and therefore never built at all, and therefore built forever. So it is with the pillars of the city of our faith. They are there -- although we cannot touch them with our hands. Ours is a city built to music, and therefore never built at all, and therefore built forever. *(Clarence E. MacCartney’s Illustrations, p. 118)***

**An old Scotsman was operating a small rowboat for transporting passengers across one of the little lakes in Scotland. One day a passenger noticed that he had carved on one oar the word “Faith,” and on the other oar, the word “Works.” Curiosity led him to ask the meaning of this. The old man said, “I will show you.” He dropped one oar and plied the other called “Works,” and they just went around in circles. Then he dropped that oar and began to ply the one called “Faith,” and the little boat went around in circles again--this time the other way around. After this demonstration the old man picked up both “Faith” and “Works” and, plying both oars together, sped swiftly over the water, explaining to his inquiring passenger, “You see, that is the way it is in life as well as in the boat.” *(Canadian Churchman)***

**I once read a piece in which a very successful pastor told how his people had had the faith that God would fill the church if they would build an oversized church building. Sure enough, God filled it! But, baloney (if I may say so in a kindly way). Where is the evidence that God cares a snap about what size churches people build? This congregation’s “faith” is the same as that of the developers who decided that if they would build an oversized mall at a particular location with the right kind of shops, it would soon be filled with customers – which it was. This is not faith; it is just smart calculation. (Vernard Eller, The Outward Bound, Eerdmans.) The strong yearning to believe can cause us to verify our faith through tangible, material proofs – like a filled sanctuary or a nice house or financial prosperity or good health. That’s approaching our stewardship from the wrong direction. *(LectionAid)***

**The central problem in the lives of the disciples was not that they did not have enough faith. The problem was that they did not use the faith they had.  It is true for us as well. Actually, we have more faith than we think. If we have ever turned on a light switch, filled our car with gas, mailed a letter, flown in an airplane, or ridden in an elevator, believe me, we have faith. Jesus knew the disciples’ problem wasn’t lack of faith. He knows that it’s not our problem either. It’s that dread disease, “paralysis by analysis.” By waiting around until we receive more faith, or until God gives us some special feeling or some other unmistakable sign, we remain immobile, dysfunctional Christians. *(Dynamic Preaching)***

**Many have criticized Peter for losing his faith, for sinking, but remember, he was the only one of the twelve willing to get out of the boat. His willingness to move beyond where he sat demonstrated a faith beyond that of his companions. Peter walked on water and so was forever changed. He stepped out of fear and onto a plane where he was kept afloat by the power of faith. Peter did not fail. He moved one step closer to his greater self. *(Mary Manin Morrissey, in Building Your Field of Dreams, p. 96)***

**Faith is like radar that sees through the fog – the reality of things at a distance that the human eye cannot see. *(Corrie Ten Boom, in Tramp for the Lord)***

**Religious faith is not a storm cellar to which men and women can flee for refuge from the storms of life. It is, instead, an inner spiritual strength that enables them to face those storms with hope and serenity. Religious faith has the miraculous power to lift ordinary human beings to greatness in seasons of stress. Religious faith is to be found in the promises of God. *(Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., in Humor of a Country Lawyer)***

**You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong as long as you are merely using it to cord a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it? *(C.S. Lewis, in A Grief Observed)***

**You have to play according to the rules. You have to start with a seed, and the seed is that first glimmer of faith in you that whatever it is you desire can be possible. *(Charles Roth, in Unity magazine)***

**Simone Weil, that uncannily perceptive 20th-century mystic, speaking of a cathartic sort of atheism, suggests that where a person is confronted with a choice between faith that has an element of skepticism in it and skepticism that has in it a touch of faith, the more honest choice may be the agony of the latter. An illustration of that is seen in life of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900(, the philosopher who wrote and taught against religious belief quite vigorously. His own life suffered from his absence of a positive belief system. He died insane after years of great loneliness, inner struggle, and suffering. His great intellect was like a two-edged sword, because it could not accept pure faith. *(LectionAid)***

**This atmosphere of faith in God as the source of healing pervaded the Fillmore household from the early days of Unity. Once, Lowell had the mumps, and Rick caught them in one jaw. That day his mother found him playing barefoot in the rain. When she reprimanded him, he asked, “Don’t you believe what you say?” Of course, Myrtle Fillmore believed what she taught, and Rick suffered no ill effect. *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 156)***

**The spare tire of your car deteriorates faster than the tires on the wheels that carry the load. Did you know that? The spare loses its resiliency because it is inactive. "Faith without works is dead." *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 38)***

**Her faith healed her, yes. But it was a faith that was completed by an action. She didn’t just sit in her living room, drinking tea and hoping that it might happen. She stepped out and took a risk. If touching Jesus hadn’t resulted in healing, she stood the chance of looking very foolish in front of a crowd that probably included people from her hometown. She proved her faith by her action. *(Russ Johnston, God Can Make It Happen, p. 56)***

**Partly from listening to elderly people, I have learned that faith means trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse. Fifty years cast another light on marriage; the century looks different from a grandmother’s view. And I believe that human history will take on a new look from the vantage point of eternity. Every scar, every hurt, every disappointment will be seen in a different light, bathed in an eternity of love and trust. Not even the murder of God’s own Son could end the relationship between God and human beings. In the alchemy of redemption, that most villainous crime became a day we now call Good Friday. *(Philip Yancey, in Finding God in Unexpected Places)***

**In the 1930’s, when great industrial empires with carefully hoarded reserves were going bankrupt, it might have seemed to an onlooker that an institution like Unity, that had no source of income except the literature that was sold for a nominal price and the freely-sent offerings of people who were not even members of the organization and whose only connection was often only that of a letter and a prayer, could not possibly survive. But the casual onlooker could not have perceived the real source of Unity’s strength, for this was invisible; it was faith. *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 135)***

**You know that walking is simply continual falling. You stand on one foot and throw yourself forward, relying on the force of gravitation to bring your body into position to be caught by the other foot. Now if the force of gravitation should change, becoming less or greater or reversed in direction, the result would be disastrous. So it is literally true that we all walk by faith and not by sight. *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 37)***

**The famous incident at Brooklyn Heights, when George Washington’s army was surrounded on land by the British, and the British fleet lay offshore; there was no way of escape. The following morning they would be destroyed. Washington determined to try to slip away during the night on every rowboat and sloop that he could muster. His officers told him they would be easily seen from the British frigates and destroyed. Washington determined to go ahead; nevertheless, as they started to embark, a fog rolled in from the sea, totally concealing them. When the fog lifted in the morning, the British were astounded to find that the American Army had completely disappeared. *(Dr. D. James Kennedy)***

**Sweeping across Germany at the end of World War II, Allied forces searched farms and houses looking for snipers. At one abandoned house, almost a heap of rubble, searchers with flashlights found their way to the basement. There, on the crumbling wall, a victim of the Holocaust had scratched a Star of David. And beneath it, in rough lettering, the message: “I believe in the sun -- even when it does not shine; I believe in love -- even when it is not shown; I believe in God -- even when he does not speak.” *(Robert Schuller)***

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