

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NASHVILLE
OFFICER TRAINING

Thoughts on Faith

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Martin Luther:

“True faith is a divine work, by which we are born anew. It kills the old self, and transforms us in heart, soul, mind, and faculties; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. This faith is a living, busy, active, and powerful thing.”

“Faith is a vibrant and courageous confidence in God’s grace. It is so sure and certain that believers would stake their lives on God’s grace a thousand times. This confidence makes people joyful, bold, and happy in their relationship with God and with other people.”

John Calvin:

“We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.”

“Faith, then, has no firm footing until it stands in the mercy of God.”

Thomas Merton:

“Actually, faith and reason are meant to get along happily together. They were not meant to live alone in divorce or in separation.”

Paul Tillich:

“Faith is certain in so far as it is an experience of the holy. But faith is uncertain in so far as the infinite to which it is related is received by a finite being. This element of uncertainty in faith cannot be removed, it must be accepted. And the element in faith which accepts this is courage.”

“Where there is daring and courage there is the possibility of failure. And in every act of faith this possibility is present. The risk must be taken.”

H. Richard Niebuhr:

“For no man lives without living for some purpose, for the glorification of some god, for the advancement of some cause.”

“We never merely believe that life is worth living, but always think of it as made worth living by something on which we rely. And this being, whatever it be, is properly termed our god.”

W.H. Auden:

“To choose what is difficult all one’s days as if it were easy, that is faith.”

Donald M. Baillie:

“We cannot create our faith in God, we cannot make ourselves trust in Him. Our faith must be His gift.... God works faith in our hearts. He bestows on us the gift of faith, by winning us, gaining our confidence, not forcing it. His graciousness overcomes our mistrust, His grace creates our faith, so that when we come to Him, it is really our faith, and we come willingly.”

John Dillenberger:

“Fundamentally, faith is a living confidence and trust in God in the experience of knowing God’s gracious presence as manifest in Christ.”

Fr. Andrew:

“Great faith is not the faith that walks always in the light and knows no darkness, but the faith that perseveres in spite of God’s seeming silences, and that faith will most certainly and surely get its reward.”

St. Augustine of Hippo:

“Faith is to believe what you do not yet see: the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.”

Charles Kingsley:

“I do not merely to possess faith; I want a faith that possesses me.”

Mary Flannery O’Connor:

“Faith is what you have in the absence of knowledge.”

John Lancaster Spalding:

“Your faith is what you believe, not what you know.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“Faith is reason at rest in God.”

The Heidelberg Catechism:

Q. 21. *What is true faith?*

A. It is not only a certain knowledge by which I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also a wholehearted trust which the Holy Spirit creates in me through the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also God has given the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, out of sheer grace solely for the sake of Christ’s saving work.

Q. 22. *What, then, must a Christian believe?*

A. All that is promised us in the Gospel, a summary of which is taught us in the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, our universally acknowledged confession of faith.