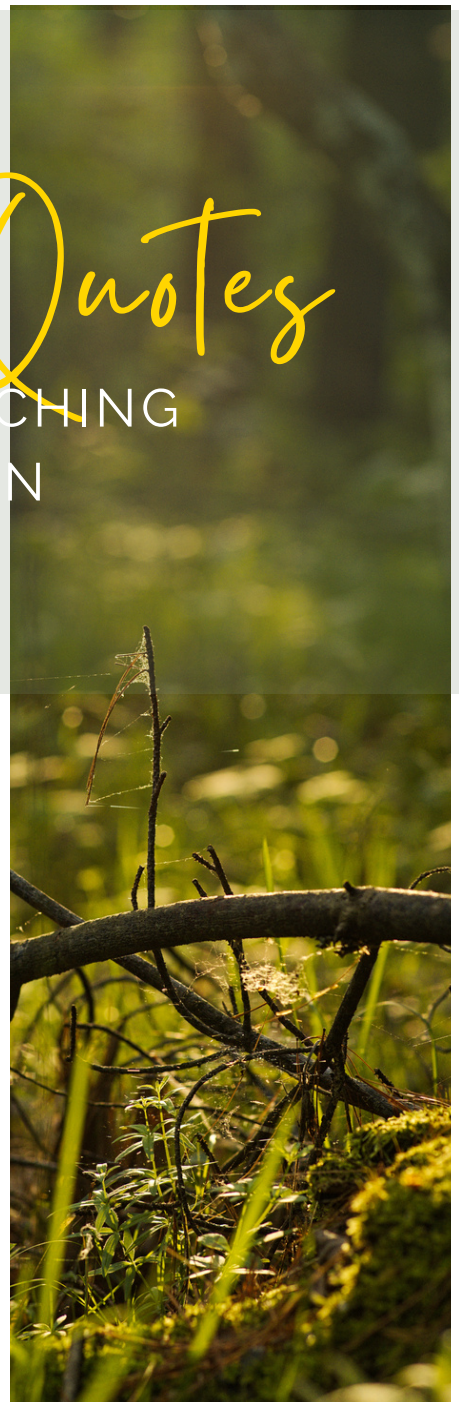




Epiphany Quotes

ON FAITH FOR PREACHING
AND REFLECTION



INTRODUCTION

Why do you have faith that God exists?

Why do you believe in this entity that can't be proven, who has an inconsistent, almost erratic characterization in Scripture (i.e., compare Ps. 137.9 against I John 1:1-5), and who rarely gives a straight answer but seems to delight in confounding us about why, what, and how God does what God does!

On the surface of it, believing in God is almost ridiculous, so I love to ask people why they believe, why they put their faith in something that can't be measured through the scientific method.

For instance, recently at the Academy of Homiletics meeting, I asked one of the professors in attendance why she believed. She said there were three reasons.

The first reason is that faith gives her hope.

She relies on faith to expand humanity's imagination for a different, better, more loving way to live. Without faith, believing in an alternate future than the one we create by our own ego- and power-tripping designs feels impossible.

The second reason is that faith makes more sense of the world than not having faith.

Science answers many questions, and it describes the mysteries of creation and our part in it. But science can never describe it all; it can describe the how but never the why. Science can never reduce the experience of joy, wonder, or gratitude to a chemical interaction.

And the third reason, she said, is that she has faith because she can't not have it.

She's had too many experiences of the ineffable, too many encounters with something bigger yet more intimate and more true than anything else. Even if she were able to say with conviction that God weren't real, she'd still have to reckon with her direct encounters with Love.

And then she asked why I believed — and I said, “Yes.” I didn't have anything to add to her list.

And what about you? Why do you have faith?

Coming to faith is a process, which is the theme of Epiphany. Faith is built over time as strands of experience, curiosity, knowledge, and trust are knit together until we can declare that Jesus is the Son of God.

The quotes in this article come from those who have gotten curious and offered their insights about:

- Faith and Love
- Faith and Trust
- Faith and Doubt
- Faith and Science
- Faith and Works

I hope you find them helpful in your preaching and personal reflections.

Be good news to preach good news,

Lisa+

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Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Love

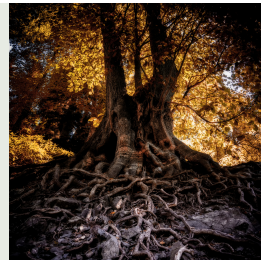
...and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

I Cor. 13.2



...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

Ephesians 3.17



...faith is the beginning and the end is love, and God is the two of them brought into unity.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, "Letter to the Ephesians."



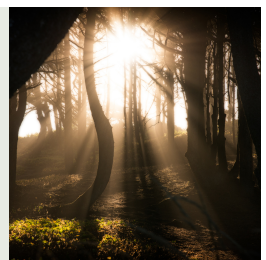
For our life is founded on faith with hope and love.

Julian of Norwich, *Showings*



Faith does not quench desire, but inflames it.

St. Thomas Aquinas



Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Love



In surrender to a word that is paradoxically “too good to be believed,” our hearts are opened, and we are gathered into relationship with God.

Margaret A. Farley



We put our faith in love.

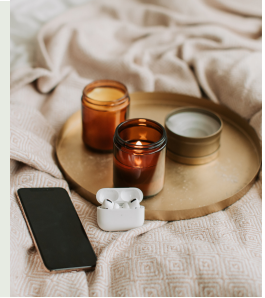
Lauren Kate

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Science

To exclude God from consultation is a form of malpractice. Spirituality is wonder, joy, and shouldn't be left in the clinical closet.

Arthur Kornhaber, Psychiatrist (quoted in *Newsweek*, 1.6.92)



To think that creation resulted by accident is like thinking that Webster's unabridged dictionary resulted from an explosion in a print shop.

Attributed to Albert Einstein



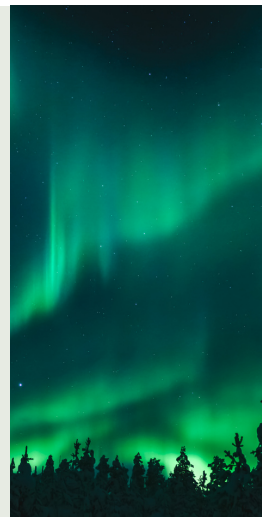
Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.

Albert Einstein



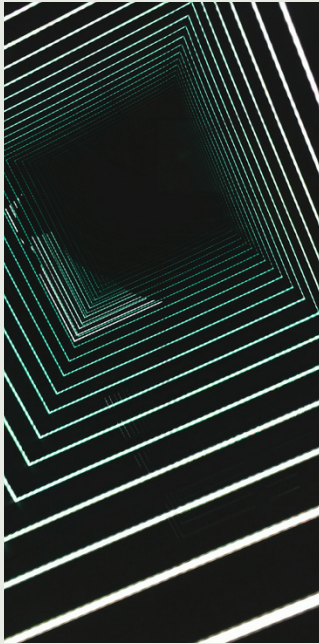
Talking through tough social issues — such as cloning — as Lutherans, as Christians, as church, means respectful, yet zealous dialogue rooted in shared faith. God is active in all realms of life – the scientific, the social, the political. God cares for creation, orders society, seeks justice, and draws us out of our individual lives to engage the world.

Margaret McLean



Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Science



[Georg Cantor was the first to prove that there could be a series of infinities; that infinities come in an infinite number of sizes.] Thus Cantor's Absolute is a perfect image for what we experience of God. When I speak of a Big Enough God I am not merely thinking of an Infinite God, but the God of infinities, the Absolute, which either chooses to reveal itself or remains veiled in mystery. Modern mathematics does begin to feel like the language that God talks.

Sara Maitland



If your science contradicts your religion, you've either got bad science or bad religion.

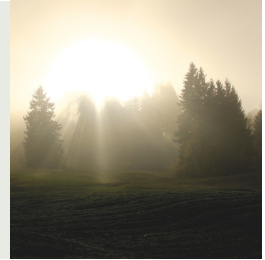
April Papke

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Trust

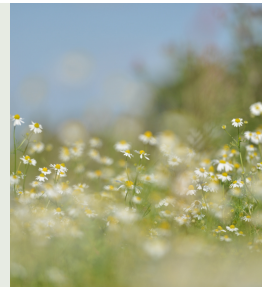
Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.

St. Augustine



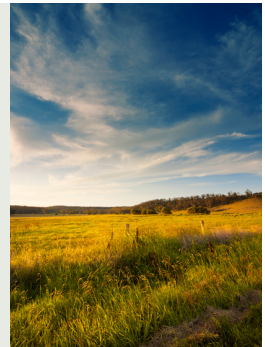
Faith is the knowledge of the meaning of human life, whereby the individual does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the force of life.

Leo Tolstoy



No coward soul of mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

Emily Brontë, *Last Lines*



To believe only possibilities is not faith
but mere philosophy.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*



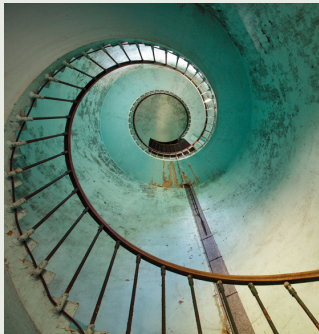
Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Trust



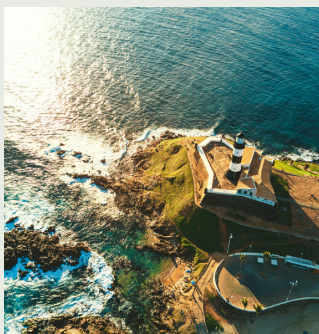
We have but faith; we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness; let it grow.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam"



Faith is the final triumph over
incongruity, the final assertion of the
meaningfulness of existence.

Reinhold Niebuhr



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

Hebrews 11. 1

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Trust

Into your hands I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

Psalm 31.5



If one seeks a vulnerable posture of faith, there are no assurances ahead of time, no guarantees that the life of faith will “work.” There is only the conviction, the trust, the hope, that God’s promises are reliable, and that God will make use of our commitments, weaving them into the ultimate fulfillment God alone can provide.

Robert McAfee Brown

Faith is in part a mystery because faith is trust, and who can explain the origins, the vitality, the dynamic, the tenacity of trust one person has in another? Trust has its reasons, to be sure, but it also bears its wounds.

Fred B. Craddock



Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Trust



After the removal of intellectual obstacles, it's a matter of facing what faith is: emotion (a deep feeling) and intuition (a hunch not based on consciously-reasoned data).

Henry H. Mitchell



Trust involves decision and risk. And the decision is not just once and for all; it has to be renewed regularly, if it is to be authentic. Faith is response-in-relationship; it is an ongoing thing, a process....We are acceptable to God because we trust God. It is as simple — and as profound! — as that.

Douglas John Hall



Epiphany Quotes Faith & Trust

Whatever else Christian faith has been about, it has always included the proclamation of new possibility, an opening to a new reality that transcends the present limits of ourselves and our lives.

Margaret A. Farley

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Doubt

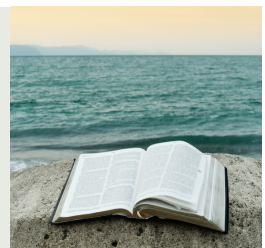
Faith and Doubt, both are needed — not as antagonists but working side by side — to take us around the unknown curve.

Lillian Smith, *The Journey*



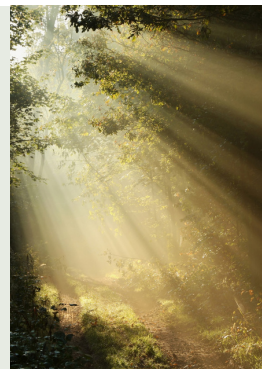
There lives more faith in honest doubt
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam"



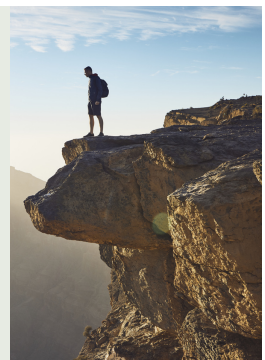
Doubts prove that we are in touch with reality, with the things that threaten faith as well as the things that nourish it. If we are not in touch with reality, then our faith is blind and not worth much.

Frederick Buechner



Doubt is often a sign that your faith has a pulse, that it's alive and well and exploring and searching. Faith and doubt aren't opposites, they are, it turns out, excellent dance partners.

Rob Bell



Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Doubt



Doubt is a question mark; faith is an exclamation point. The most compelling, believable, realistic stories have included them both.

Criss Jami



In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't.

Blaise Pascal



I respect faith, but doubt is what gets you an education.

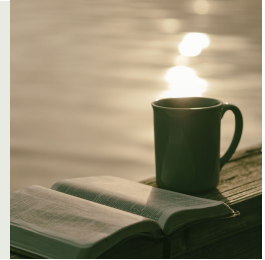
Wilson Mizner

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Works

The words of faith are just.

Hildegard von Bingen



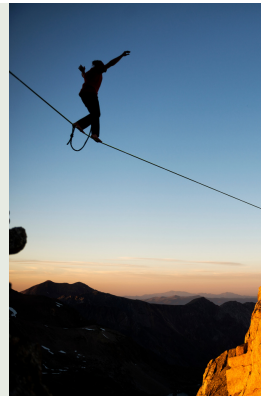
'Tis not the dying for a faith that's so hard...everybody of every nation has done that — 'tis the living up to it that's difficult.

Henry Esmond, *Thackery*



Faith is an excitement and an enthusiasm; it is a condition of intellectual magnificence to which we must cling as to a treasure, and not squander on our way through life in the small coin of empty words, or in exact and priggish argument....

George Sand, *Correspondence*



Has any religious group ever expressed concern that they were boring God?

Roy Blount, Jr., *Camels are Easy, Comedy's Hard*



Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Works



By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

Romans 3.27-28



The only thing that counts is faith working through love.

Galatians 5.6



For the LORD loves justice, he will not forsake his faithful ones.

Psalms 37.28

Epiphany Quotes

Faith & Works

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Surely that faith cannot save, can it? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

James 2.14-17



It is not the place of people of faith to chastise the world for its lack of faith, as if the world could be scolded into coming to its senses. It is, rather, the task of people of faith to be faithful, to live as those who belong to the God we have met in Jesus Christ.

Tom Long

The Senegalese conservationist Baba Dioum can summarize: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."

Ursula Goodenough



Epiphany Quotes Faith & Works



Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.

Helen Keller



Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

Martin Luther King Jr.



Epiphany Quotes Faith & Works

God has not called me to be successful;
God has called me to be faithful.

Mother Teresa

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