



# THEOLOGY PUB

## What's FAITH all about?

Guest Rev. Kim Risedorph • [www.facebook.com/TheologyPub](http://www.facebook.com/TheologyPub)

**“Prior to the modern period, the most common Christian meanings of ‘faith’, were not matters of the head, but matters of the heart....Faith is the way of the heart, not the head.”/ Marcus Borg • The Heart of Christianity**

### Questions on Faith

- \* What does it MEAN to have faith? Does it mean one believes in certain doctrines or creeds or Bible stories? What about the virgin birth? The resurrection?
- \* Do some people have more faith than others?
- \* **Is faith about what we believe in, or what we experience, or both?**
- \* Are we asked to have faith IN Jesus or the faith OF Jesus? What's the difference?

### What exactly IS faith?

“In the Protestant Reformation, the emphasis was on ‘justification by faith’....Faith will save us.” (Borg, *The Heart of Christianity* 28)

Contrast with James 2:20: “Faith without works is dead.”

According to much in James, faith is not enough. Our works will save us.

Often we hear people say “I wish I had more faith” - as if they were lacking an essential ingredient for a relationship with God. So what exactly IS faith? Is it something we're born with? Can we develop it or nurture it? Is it a choice?

What does it mean to be a PERSON of FAITH?

- \* We talk about “people of faith” as a way to describe people who are connected to church or religious intuitions. Do all people have faith? Does everyone have faith in something? Can we change what we have faith in? Can we cultivate faith? Grow in faith?

## **Faith vs. Belief – Some Quotes**

### **Harvey Cox on faith vs. belief:**

“For many people, ‘faith’ and ‘belief’ are just two words for the same thing. But they are not the same. Faith is about deep seated confidence. Belief is more about opinion....We can believe something to be true without it making much difference to us, but we place our faith only in that which is vital to the way we live.” (*The Future of Faith*, 3)

### **Marcus Borg, on faith vs. belief:**

“When you think of it faith as belief is relatively impotent. You can believe all the right things and still be miserable. Believing a set of claims to be true has very little transforming power.” (*The Heart of Christianity*, 31)

### **QUESTION: What is the connection between faith and belief?**

### **Elaine Pagels:**

“Besides belief, Christianity involves practice, and paths toward transformation.” (*Beyond Belief*, 143)

**QUESTION:** Could it be that belief is the starting point for faith. And faith is the way we put our beliefs into practice; faith is the way we live out our beliefs?