

Faith and the Valley of Transfiguration

Matthew 17:14-23

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[Movie Clip: The Matrix]

Scene: Neo is trapped in the Matrix. Rather than running from Agent Smith, he battles against him. Outside of the Matrix, Morpheus and Trinity watch the confrontation on a computer screen.

Trinity: What is he doing?

Morpheus: He's beginning to believe.

“He's beginning to believe.” When Neo, the new man, begins to believe that the world—the Matrix—in which he's been living is not really the real world but a lie, then that old world is transfigured and has no control over him. His faith can move mountains. Yet if he's faithless and believes the lie, the illusion can truly kill him. For what's believed real in his deepest imagination is real in its consequences.

In the 20th century, physicists discovered that if you believed a sub-atomic particle was a particle, it would behave like a particle, but if you believed it was a wave, it would behave like a wave. All matter, including mountains, consists of these particles. It's as if everything is at least two things at once or exists in two worlds at once. And so the world in which you exist is dependent upon your faith.

In the last century, faith was defined as “unreasonable.” Yet now scientists say *everything* depends

on faith. And, of course, you must have faith in reason to reason at all.

In the Matrix—as in physics, as in the Bible— faith is foundational to everything, even your reason. People will say, “Teach on faith,” and I’ve always struggled with that because you can’t teach on faith the way you teach on other things. You can’t really explain it, for only by it and on it can you explain anything at all.

So Faith cometh not by explanation;
it must cometh some other way.

Faith is foundational to our intellect and more powerful than our intellect. So Neo can know he’s in the Matrix with his mind, but until he truly knows it in the depths of his heart, he doesn’t have the kind of faith that moves mountains and transfigures all reality.

Faith is like knowing in the depths of your being with your deepest imagination. James Whitehead said, “Faith is the enduring ability to imagine life in a certain way.” Biblical faith is the “enduring ability” to imagine life in God’s way: that is, to deeply trust His Word, Jesus.

Jesus said, “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain ‘move’ from here to there and it will move.” Maybe Jesus really meant it! And maybe there really are other worlds, and we can walk in them by faith or this world can be transfigured into them by faith.

Now we can get real philosophical and metaphysical about all of that, yet every parent, at least, has a pretty good feel for what I’m saying.

Years ago when my son Jonathan was four, a man came to our house to work on the furnace in our basement.

As Jonathan and I watched, the man took off the grill and examined the flame. Jon's eyes got really big, and I could tell he was stressing over this fiery beast that lived in his very own basement. So I turned and said, "Don't worry, buddy, those flames just heat the water in our house so we can have warm baths and get clean." (Actually the water heater does that, not the furnace, but I wasn't really paying attention.)

Well, Jon was paying attention. The next few days, we couldn't figure out why Jonathan would not take a bath, and why he wouldn't go near the toilet, which led to some very unpleasant consequences for everyone involved. I finally had to just confront Jonathan, and that's when he admitted he was afraid of the toilet and bathtub because "those flames would come up and get him!"

Imagine the horror at being engulfed in flames as you sat there, vulnerable, the most intimate and private part of your being exposed to the fire. It may be hard for you to imagine now after hundreds of thousands of trips to the throne, but it wouldn't be hard to imagine when you were four.

Well, needless to say I sought to educate my son's intellect. I explained water heaters, furnaces, and the dynamics of indoor plumbing, and Jonathan understood with his intellect. Yet as soon as he would see the porcelain throne, his imagination would get the best of him. Grandma even came over and did the unthinkable... she put her hand in the bowl saying, "Look, Jon, it's nice, cool water."

As the hours turned into days and days into a week, and I changed just one too many pairs of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle underwear, I must confess I became exasperated. That's the word my father used to use, "exasperated." I was *angry* that Jon wouldn't trust me and

yet filled with compassion, for he was truly trapped by a lie in a world of illusion. It was an illusion.

Yet what was real in his imagination was real in its consequences. The flaming toilet of death was an illusion, yet all that dirty underwear was not an illusion, and neither was his suffering, his agony, or his painful fear. And if he continued to believe the lie, his world would turn into hell, real hell, because dirty Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle underwear does not go over well in the locker room at Bear Creek High School.

I was angry but compassionate; I was exasperated. I remember thinking, “Oh Father in heaven, is this how you feel about me?”

Matthew 17:9: “They were coming down the mountain.”

Matthew 17:14:

And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” And Jesus answered, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?”

I think Jesus was *exasperated*. He had just come down from the Mount of Transfiguration where He had been transfigured before Peter, James, and John, and now

He's dealing with this stinky mess because His disciples just won't believe. He's exasperated. How will He get them to believe?

The word translated "epileptic" in verse 15 is not the medical disease, epilepsy, but refers to symptoms that look like epilepsy. A demon was afflicting this boy in such a way that it could seize control of his body, flinging it into the fire or water.

Demonic spirits inhabit lies. I'm not sure if they are more like the lie or more like the dirty underwear that is the result of the lie, but apart from the lies and illusions, they lose their power—like lies exposed to truth, like shadows exposed to light, like Satan exposed to Jesus.

One time, Jesus revealed to a friend of mine that when she was afraid, Satan grew (as if she put flesh on him with her fear), but when she had faith in Jesus and His love, Satan shrank. At one point, she saw Satan shrink to a little, screaming figurine on her coffee table. Jesus walked up, put the little screaming Satan in His pocket, smiled, and walked away. I've often wondered if that was a vision of Satan being thrown into the lake of fire, the pocket of Jesus.

Well anyway, exasperated, Jesus said:

"O faithless and perverse generation..."

See, our problem is that we're all perverts because deep down inside we've come to believe perverted information, that is, lies. Lies like:

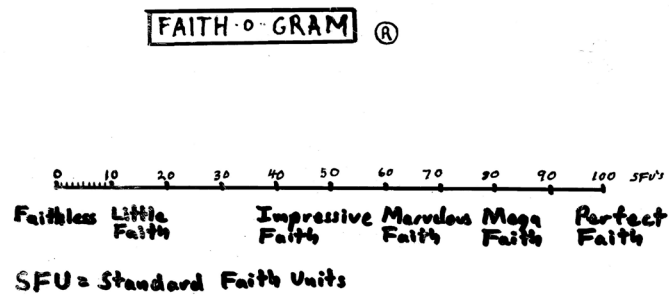
1. God isn't really good.
2. And so He can't really be trusted.

3. So we had better get more fruit from the tree of knowledge to hide our shame, for if we expose the most private, intimate parts of our being to the throne, He will consume them with His fire. So avoid the bath, avoid the fire, even if it gets really stinky.

“O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

So what’s the problem? Their little faith, I guess. We really don’t have much faith. If we had perfect faith in God, we would be perfectly obedient to God from the depth of our being, even if it hurt—willing whatever He willed, trusting that it was truly good, saying, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou will.”

Jesus says they have “little faith,” and then, “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will.” Now, that’s a little confusing. Maybe it would help if we plotted it out on a “Faith-O-Gram.”



This is a standard faith diagram. I'm sure you've all used one. Faith is measured in SFU's, Standard Faith Units.

On the left is "0" faith, the faithless, the scribes and the crowd. On the right is perfect faith, 100% faith, Jesus. Already in Matthew Jesus has mentioned other types of faith:

- Little Faith (between 1-10 SFU's)
- Impressive Faith (about 50 SFU's)
- Marvelous Faith (about 65 SFU's)
- Mega Faith (about 80 SFU's)

Now, you'd think if anyone could move a mountain, other than Jesus, it would be with Mega Faith. Marvelous Faith might levitate a Volkswagen. Impressive Faith might

bend a spoon. Little Faith might put a fish decal on a notebook.

Now check this out:

- The Little Faiths are the disciples.
- The Impressive Faith was the four friends who ripped the roof off to get to Jesus.
- The Marvelous Faith wasn't even a Jew but a Roman Centurion.
- The Mega Faith was the despised, Canaanite, pagan woman who said, "Lord, even the dogs get the crumbs."

That's bizarre, but it gets even more bizarre: where on the Faith-O-Gram is "*Mustard Seed Faith*?" In Matthew 13:31, Jesus has already taught that the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. So if faith is like a seed, the smallest unit of faith is Mustard Seed Faith — that is, 1 SFU, Little Faith or less than Little Faith. Yet "if we have faith as a mustard seed," we will "move mountains." That's impressive, marvelous, and great ("mega" in Greek).

Do you see what all of this means? It means these Faith-O-Grams are stupid. It means that the way we think about faith as some sort of work we achieve must be ridiculous and flawed.

Well then, if the problem is our "Little Faith," the solution is our "Little Faith" as a mustard seed. Maybe the issue is not the *size* of our faith, but its *nature*—not the *size* of our faith, but what our *faith* is in. Then, we won't worry about the size of our faith but what we do with it.

If faith is like a mustard seed, then it is a great mystery. It's, like, alive, even though it may look dead.

Jesus already said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a kernel of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field.” Maybe faith is like a kernel of the kingdom of heaven sown in our hearts. The kingdom is the residence of the King.

Augustine wrote, “If there is faith in us, Christ is in us,” for Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, (Ephesians 3:17).

If faith is like a mustard seed, we can’t fully comprehend it, but that’s okay because it’s not faith in our ability to comprehend. It’s not faith in the fruit of the tree of knowledge. It’s not faith in ourselves, but faith in Christ through Christ, almost like Christ having faith inside us and for us.

But, you see, we cannot manufacture faith or even grow faith any more than we can manufacture a mustard seed or make it grow. Usually when we try to grow faith, we’re trying to acquire knowledge so that we won’t *need* faith. For we think that if we know everything, we won’t have to trust anyone. But faith is trust, not knowledge.

Now, God does want our faith to grow, but we can’t really make it grow. At best, we can plant it. And that is counter-intuitive.

A seed is such a wonder, you would think a farmer would take it, put it in a container on a shelf, and guard it with his life. But the farmer takes it and sows it in the dirt and dung. It looks and feels like death, but it’s life.

In John 12 Jesus compares Himself to a seed saying, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Well, Jesus was sown in the soil of this earth, and Peter tried to stop Him.

Just before this, Peter tried to contain Jesus in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration saying, “Lord, I’ll

build three booths.” In fear, we think we need to quarantine and contain the glory... contain our fragile faith, keeping the seed safe from the dirt—safe in church, religious crowds, and Christian institutions.

In high school some told me, “Don’t question your faith or you might lose it.”

Well, it was a struggle, but it only grew.

Some said, “Don’t study geology at a secular university; you might lose your faith.”

It was a struggle, but it only grew.

Some have said, “Don’t take your faith to certain folks in the valley because your faith is not big enough.”

Many times I have listened in fear, but when
I’ve gone, although it’s a struggle, my faith
has grown.

Satan will say, “Hide your sin and dirt from your faith, for it will damage your faith.”

But, you see, mustard seed faith damages
the dirt; transforms it into a tree.

In fear, we try to keep our faith on the mountain, afraid we might lose it in the valley, but it grows in the valley and transfigures all things. If it doesn’t grow, maybe it wasn’t faith in the first place.

Jesus said, “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there.’” I’ve never seen a physical mountain move (except

in an earthquake, like when Jesus died), yet I think I've seen Mustard Seed Faith. Faith is trusting God's will, and maybe God doesn't want many physical mountains moved, I don't know. But Jesus didn't say "any mountain," he said "this mountain." We know what mountain that was; it was the Mount of Transfiguration.

If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will sow it in the valley, and it will grow and transfigure all things. The Mount of Transfiguration will move with you, almost as if it's in you.

So Jesus comes from the mountain to the valley, from the cathedral to a scene from The Exorcist. Reality is not being transfigured. Jesus says, "Bring the boy to me." He casts the demon out, and He tells the disciples about faith as a mustard seed. If they had it, I guess they hadn't sown it. What does *that* look like?

In Mark's version, Jesus adds this: "This kind only comes out with prayer." And all at once that paints an incredible picture. Jesus had given the disciples authority over demons in Matthew, 10 and had sent them out. For about two years, these guys had been casting out demons all over Israel in the name of Jesus. They probably felt pretty capable by now. So they said their religious words and did their religious dance, but they didn't even pray.

- They trusted their knowledge and neglected their faith.
- They trusted themselves and thought it was faith.
- They didn't sow their faith in the soil; they didn't even pray into the situation.

Faith is trust in a person, and the person is a door in the Valley of Achor, the valley of trouble, leading to another world (Hosea 2:15).

I told you, and I want to tell you again about a night several years ago. It was about 2:00 in the morning, Aram and I were praying for my good friend raised in a satanic coven. We'd cast out several demons in the past, and Jesus had transfigured the most awful memories into the most glorious pictures of grace.

This night we were praying against a very powerful demon. As we did, all at once this demon convulsed our friend's body. She went rigid, like an epileptic, and started gagging. The demon was choking her. She stopped breathing and fell over as if she were dead.

I started commanding, "In the name of Jesus by the authority of His blood shed on the cross outside Jerusalem!" etc., etc., etc. We tried every formula we could think of. We'd read the books; we'd been through the training, and still she wasn't breathing.

I looked at Aram. He looked at me. I realized we were toast. Our friend was dead. We were dead. The church was dead... two pastors in a house with a dead woman at 2:00 in the morning (the cops will understand that).

Well, I was at the end of myself when, almost unconsciously, from deep, deep within me, as if beckoned by a voice saying, "Peter, bring her to me," from within me rose the smallest little prayer. I just muttered, "Jesus, help us," and all at once, she gasped for air. We cast out the demon, and the valley was transfigured.

I think *that* was Mustard Seed Faith.

The Canaanite woman, the Roman centurion, the four friends with impressive, marvelous, mega faith... I think it was all Mustard Seed Faith, for they all had come to the end of themselves and prayed from the depths of their beings in the valley of trouble, "Help me, Jesus."

Well those stories are dramatic, but we are all engaged in the very same battle. We don't have to wait for high drama to pray, "Help me, Jesus," in faith.

- Pray it in the video store when you are tempted to rent porn.
- Pray it at the party when you are tempted to gossip.
- Pray it at your loved one's death bed.

You can gain all the religious knowledge in the world, but nothing will transfigure the valley like praying, "Help me, Jesus," in Mustard Seed Faith. And if you want your faith to grow, don't just sit around here trying to manufacture faith:

- Take the faith you've got and go sow it in the valley.
- Take the faith you've got and go love somebody in need.
- Take the faith you've got and go face your biggest fears, saying, "Help me, Jesus!"
- Take the faith you've got and go down the mountain with Jesus and let Him transfigure your world.
- Take the faith you've got and go sit on the flaming toilet of death, hanging onto your Father's neck.

My son turns 16 this Thursday. He's a sophomore at Bear Creek. I'm very proud of him. He's a great young man and loves the Lord, and he's not in the least bit afraid of the toilet. We now laugh the flaming toilet of death to scorn. For him, the entire bathroom has been transfigured. That's because twelve years ago at the end of a stinky week, I took him to the valley. He wrapped his little arms around my neck. He cried and shook in terror, but I held him to the flaming toilet of death until the deed was done. The bathroom was transfigured, and his faith in me grew.

Soon the disciples would have an experience like that. It was on a Friday, a Good Friday, yet by Sunday everything would be utterly transfigured.

Well, as I held Jon there, facing his biggest fear, his faith in me grew or my faith inside of him grew. For as he hung onto my neck in the valley of trouble it was like he fed on my faith, partook of my faith—faith that the flames would not devour him and death would not consume him. It was like he ingested my faith, and it grew in him.

Maybe this entire world is waiting to be transfigured when we trust our Father and no longer believe the lies. Maybe He takes us to the valley to grow our faith and transfigure our world. Yet we are the faithless children. So where does that Mustard Seed Faith come from in the first place?

Matthew 17: Jesus tells them about Mustard Seed Faith, and in the next verse, as they gather in Galilee, He tells them once again,

“The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

He would die and rise, like a seed sown in the ground. And their little faith would die and rise with Him.

Where does Mustard Seed Faith come from?

On the cross, Jesus destroys the lies that God is not good, and God is not trustworthy. Jesus is the heart of God and reveals God. He is the fire, and the fire is God, and the fire is good. He cleanses us and sets us free. On the cross, He not only destroys the lies about Himself, but He also bears the consequences of our believing the lies. He bears our dirt, sin, shame, death, and hell. The lies are an illusion, but the consequences of believing them are as real as the wounds in His hands and side and feet. There He bore the hell that we created.

So where does Mustard Seed Faith come from?

Jesus is the mustard seed. He is the Word preached and “faith cometh through hearing.” He is the Word made flesh. He is the Faithful One. Jesus said, “Unless you eat my body and drink my blood, you have no life in you.” We are faithless children, and He is the Faithful Son. And He really did give Himself to us.

On the night He was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, “Take and eat, this is my body,” and He took the cup saying, “Drink of it, all of you. This is the blood of my covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Come to the table. Ingest the imperishable seed into the soil of your heart where He will transfigure all things from the inside out.

If you say, “I don’t have enough faith,” you only need a grain. In Mark’s version of the story, the father prays, “I believe; help my unbelief.” That’s Mustard Seed Faith. That’s enough to not only move a mountain but to move the very heart of God, all the way to a tree on the top of a mountain where the tree and the mountain are cast into the sea, and there He finds you.

Three things Jesus was very specific about that Mustard Seed Faith can move: a tree, Mount Zion, and the Mount of Transfiguration.

So come to the table. Tear off a piece of the bread. It doesn’t need to be a big piece, it can be as small as a mustard seed.

You were lost, but now you’re found. And I believe this is why, and it’s a paradox: It’s because God took His own heart and allowed us to nail it to a tree on top of a hill. And the tree on the hill was cast into the depths of the sea, and there He found you. And that’s called faith.

So if you came to the table this morning, and you took just a little piece of the bread dipped in a little bit of the wine, and if you came with just a little bit of faith, I believe in some incredible way that piece of bread was transfigured. You swallowed just a grain of the heart of God, and He will get it back. It’s already being digested into your body and into your blood stream. What He started He will finish, and He will bring you home, and He will transfigure all things... all because you just said a little prayer, “Oh Father, I think I want to come home.”

So if you prayed that prayer, “I believe, help my unbelief,” for the first time, you need other people to help you. One of the ways He helps your unbelief is with the Church.

And now, for most of you, I imagine that you’ve been to the throne hundreds of thousands of times, and you came again this morning, you re-affirmed your faith, you ingested the seed. Now go. Go to the valley and sow the imperishable seed in the depths of the earth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity.

Matthew 10:1

And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead." . . . And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.

Matthew 17:9, 14-23

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them, and scribes arguing with them. And

immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" And one of the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Mark 9:14-29

Another parable he put before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And the Lord said, “If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Luke 17:5-6

So how does the church find the helpfulness she needs for the world? By believing God enough to pray. Why were the nine disciples unable to be of help to the father with the possessed son? Because they did not have that little mustard seed faith that moved them to prayer. “They had trusted to the quasi-magical power with which they thought themselves invested” . . . or they had mistrusted or doubted the power they had been given through the Lord’s teaching on prayer Prayerlessness is powerlessness.

Dale Bruner, Matthew the Churchbook

“Grain of mustard-seed” is used here simply to denote the smallest quantity. A particularly big faith is not needed; the largest promise applies even to the smallest faith. The question of more or less faith is set aside by the radical question whether there is faith or unbelief. If only there is

real faith its quantity is irrelevant. Faith shows itself to be such by not looking to itself but solely to God. If it will only let God work the impossible is possible for it. . . . The faith of which the logion speaks finds its expression in prayer, which entrusts all things to God.

*Claus-Hunno Hunzinger,
Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

One may, of course, be confused and one may doubt; but whoever once believes has something like a *character indelibilis*. He may take comfort of the fact that he is being upheld. Everyone who has to contend with unbelief should be advised that he ought not to take his own unbelief too seriously. Only faith is to be taken seriously; and if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, that suffices for the devil to have lost his game.

*Karl Barth.
Dogmatics in Outline*

If there is faith in us, Christ is in us. For what else says the apostle: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" [Eph 3:17]. Therefore, [my] faith in Christ is Christ himself in [my] heart.

St. Augustine

Put the world's greatest philosopher on a plank that is wider than need be: if there is a precipice below, although his reason may convince him that he is safe, his imagination will prevail. Many could not even stand the thought of it without going pale and breaking into sweat.

Blaise Pascal, Pensees

Faith is the enduring ability to imagine life in a certain way.

James Whitehead

Imagination is more important than knowledge. . . .

Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen. . . . Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

Albert Einstein

Walking down the street, I see a wild-looking character sitting on the steps of the library. His gray hair is matted. His dense beard covers the slogan on his grimy T-shirt. His small darting eyes are as volatile as a hawk's. I look once and think "drifter." I look twice and think "John the Baptist," and in that imaginative act my relationship to the man is changed.

Barbara Brown Taylor

I see His blood upon the rose,
And in the stars the glory of His eyes.
His body gleams amid eternal snows;
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice—and, carved by His power
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

*St. Patrick from
Romancing Your Child's Heart by Monte Swan*