



## Grain

“When you are filled with doubts and asking questions, you are closer to God than when you claim to have all the answers.” –*Anonymous*

“The beginning of wisdom is found in doubting; by doubting we come to the question, and by seeking we may come upon the truth.” –*Pierre Abélard*

## Field

**11** Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see. **2** The elders in the past were approved because they showed faith. **3** By faith we understand that the universe has been created by a word from God so that the visible came into existence from the invisible. **3** By faith we understand that the universe has been created by a word from God so that the visible came into existence from the invisible. **9** By faith he lived in the land he had been promised as a stranger. He lived in tents along with Isaac and Jacob, who were coheirs of the same promise. **10** He was looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. **11** By faith even Sarah received the ability to have a child, though she herself was barren and past the age for having children, because she believed that the one who promised was faithful. **12** So descendants were born from one man (and he was as good as dead). They were as many as the number of the stars in the sky and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore. **13** All these people died in faith without receiving the promises, but they saw the promises from a distance and welcomed them. They confessed that they were strangers and immigrants on earth. Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-13 [CEB]

## Thoughts by Deacon David Behling, Campus Ministry Director, Journey House, UW-River Falls

I used to teach a critical thinking course that started by defining the relationship between belief and knowledge. What the students learned was that the difference lay in the degree of certainty about truth and validity established through data collected or observed in nature. We all have beliefs that help us make sense of reality. Over time and with experiences, those beliefs become hypotheses, then theories, and then finally ideas we accept as knowledge.

This section of the course set the stage for everything we discussed the rest of the semester, but it also set the stage for understanding the relationship between belief and faith. Even though faith doesn't depend on evidence, it is not the opposite of knowledge; faith and knowledge are simply different ways that beliefs develop into something deeper and more enduring.

We cannot “prove” that a creator God expects human beings to care for creation. We have no “evidence” that we are called to love and serve our neighbors. Those beliefs are spiritual truths that have grown roots within us because they make sense as we interact with the world and each other. If we exploit creation, our world is damaged, and humans suffer. If we don't love our neighbors, our lives become barren of human relationships built on love and trust. We create a world where people with power can take whatever they want from the earth and do whatever they want to people without power.

Like us, the people listed in the book of Hebrews had a deeply rooted understanding of their relationships to God and each other; they didn't need evidence. This understanding is woven into our identities and has become a source of resilience. As we are challenged to explain why we do what we do or experience doubts, we can recognize how our faith fuels our way of living. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Deacon David