

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 106
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #15

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This will be tape number 15 of the series on the fruit of "faith," which is a part of the longer series on "The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit."

Last time, we spent a long period of that hour going through a part of the series of texts that I have on the subtopic of "What Are the Tragic Results of Faithlessness?" Faithlessness is a characteristic of human beings. Human beings simply do not have the capability—inherently, or naturally—to remain faithful. Faithfulness is a trait that demands character—consistency, a respect for the effect that we have on other people, where they are counting on us. And people count on others because there is a consistency; there is a sense of loyalty; there is a sense of urgency and purpose; and all of these things are absolutely paramount in the consideration of faithfulness.

Yet, human beings are so personally oriented. That is, they are looking to the satisfaction of the whimsical self, which says, "I'm not going to be regulated by anybody else, no matter what my commitments may be, no matter what my relationships are, no matter what the promises may have been, no matter what kind of considerations exist between the people involved. It's a matter that I am going to do my own thing." Which obviously means it is based on the emotions of the moment. If I don't like something, I am going to go the other way, regardless of what I have said or done in the past, or regardless of what my life may have committed me to in the past.

You know, there are things to which we commit ourselves even without verbalizing them. For example, how many things are personally discussed between a young man and a young woman before they marry? And, yet, when they marry, there are automatic, inherent, underlying presumptions—aren't there?—of loyalty, of

faithfulness, and of all these things that some people may say are taken for granted. Maybe that's the problem: they are taken for granted, rather than thought through, realizing that we must also commit ourselves to them. And that's why people today, when they speak of marriage, talk about a permanent commitment, versus those who are going to live a life by which they have no commitments. That's the difference between faithlessness and faithfulness. Faithfulness is a matter of commitment. It means that by circumstances, by a past relationship, by comments, by inherent circumstances, or whatever, I am expected to live up to something—to be an honor, to be exemplary, to uphold the expectation of somebody else because of how I may have impacted that life, or other lives, if more than one.

So, faithlessness is a volatile, emotional trait and characteristic of human nature which has no regard for anyone else—and above all, for God. God is our Creator, and as our Creator, He has a right to expect certain things out of us. But human beings come back and say, "I didn't ask to be created. I'm my own thing—I'm my own person. I am going to do what I think." We don't have such a right. We were never given such a right. Oh, yes, we were given the opportunity. God said that you can choose your own way, but you do not have a right to do it, because you are culpable, you are liable, you are guilty, when you go the way of the dictates of the natural self.

So, faithfulness is that ability to see that faithlessness is the taking for granted of someone else—a relationship with other people—and abusing them in that relationship. Whereas, faithfulness is thinking beyond the self: I am not so much concerned with what I am going to gain out of it, as I am with upholding the expectation of somebody else who is living with that expectation. I expect somebody to honor his commitment; I expect somebody to manifest a degree of respect, love, insight, understanding, mercy, or whatever it may be. We, as human beings have to live on the basis of a certain acceptance that other people are going to respond in a given fashion. That is, that they are going to forget themselves and think, "Well, you know, if I did this, I would sustain a loss," but because of expectation, would rather go ahead and fulfill that requirement, even at the cost to themselves. Now, the Bible speaks of that very, very broadly. And so, we are going to talk a lot more about it later on, because there are many characteristics that are involved in this matter of both faithfulness and unfaithfulness.

So, I want you to notice, now, some of the tragic consequences of faithlessness. Since we have already gone through Matthew 17, Mark 6, and even Romans 11—I covered that rather extensively last time—let's turn, now, to Hebrews the third chapter, and look at the example that God had recorded for us, which actually formed the basis of most of the Bible: the historical example of a people whom He had chosen. And God used that group—the nation of Israel—as an example in the recording of the Bible. He could have chosen a lot of other people, but not nearly as successfully, because to those people had been given the Truth. That is, He called Israel and delivered His Way of Life to them, and then He called them out of bondage and servitude, nationally—of all nations on the face of this earth—and gave them the absolute freedom of a land that was going to be totally theirs, a land in which they had the right of living the Truth that God had given to them without fear of intervention, without fear of reprisal from the outside, without fear of any problems whatsoever, because God was going to protect them. And He said they will never come inside—they cannot impose their will upon you—but even the nations themselves would favorably respond in due time.

So, God was going to protect those borders, and He was going to allow them—as a physical group of people—the privilege and the freedom to do the entire will of God, yet they never did do it because they were born with human nature, and therefore, they became the living example to show that without the aid, the assistance, the help, and the power of God in our lives, we cannot live the Truth. That, in itself, tells us that human beings by merely picking up the Bible will never be obedient to the Truth. They can't be. Ancient Israel couldn't, who just as ordinary human specimens were indubitably of greater power and greater ability than we, because we are the dregs of society. I don't care if knowledge has been increased. Knowledge does not improve character. Character was a much greater thing back at that time because we have been degrading, dissipating, the self since the day that we were created, so said the prophet Jeremiah. We've been going downhill. So, we have come to this present time, when God has called us—even the dregs of society—in these very last days, and given to us the knowledge of His profound Truth, and made known to us the very example of ancient Israel and how utterly, miserably, they failed to remain faithful to God.

So we have an example that has been given to us to show what kind of character it requires—showing us that, just humanly, we cannot do it, no matter

how great, how mighty, and how powerful we may esteem ourselves to be. We cannot live it—we cannot possibly sustain that Way of Life by our own virtue, by our own powers, by our own mental capacity. We are going to need the help of God, and that's the purpose of that example. So, brethren, we have been brought to this point to realize, as God has revealed it to us, the very purpose of that example which was given, so that we can call upon it and realize how greatly we need the help and the assistance of God. And if we do not call upon God, we are not going to remain faithful either.

So, let's trust in the faith that God revealed to us rather than to subscribe to our own whims—the mental prowess with which we think we are possessed, our ability to search the Word, to look into it, to arrive at certain explanations with the plethora of technical and reference works that we have about us. Our ability to have all of these physical things about us is not going to help us whatsoever. We already have the example of that. I don't care how many technical references you have, it can never compare to the fact that God Himself spoke into existence the very Word of God. They heard the uttering of the voice of God, yet that didn't help them to obey. They didn't do it at all.

So, we have people today who believe that if God would just thunder it out of heaven, that they would believe it. Why do we believe such stuff? We couldn't do it if we wanted to, because we are no different, since we are the children of our forefathers. We are no different than our own forefathers, and they didn't believe. So all that tells me is that human arrogance has not yet passed. What we ought to see, brethren—if we are really able to see ourselves for what we are—is how desperately we need the help of God, and we need it every day. Because it is going to take that kind of faithfulness to remain in the Way that God reveals. God gave it to ancient Israel and they changed and altered, and did everything they could at every given time to satisfy their own whims—their own orientation in life. God, then, used that as an example to show us that we would do exactly the same thing except that we recognize the need of faith—faithfulness—the need to consistently ask God to empower our minds in loyalty and faithfulness to a Way of Life, a Way of Life that God promised to deliver once again, but a way that was not retained by the vast majority. Because the Bible tells us very clearly that in the last days, the first thing they would do, in due time, would be to turn away from it. They would turn to their own minds—to their own learning—with questioning spirits, and they would turn away from the doctrine which God had given. Why don't we believe just the simple statements of God?

So, brethren, there are tragic results of faithlessness, and we need to have the faith of God—the faith that can be given by Him only, which is a fruit of God's Holy Spirit—and that faith is manifested in continuity, in the fact that we do not substantiate, whatsoever, our own mental prowess, our own expectations, our own driving desires and ambitions. But we have come to *loathe* ourselves and we do not trust them—as Paul was inspired to write, putting "no confidence in the flesh," and that includes the natural mind. "Having no confidence in the flesh." Indeed, we had better not.

We had better have confidence in what has been given to us, and it is for that reason, brethren, that I have been absolutely, adamantly reluctant to ever depart from that which was given to us. The only areas, as I have said, are those areas that were subject to question as long as I was in that body. Now, for some, who were not there, and who do not have any grasp of that, whatsoever, I guess you will either have to accept it in faith, or you are going to have to finally sort it out for yourselves, if you can find an answer. But I happen to know what I am talking about. I still have the notes from conferences that go clear on back to the beginning, and the subjects that I'm talking about were invariably involved in question. There was never an absolute, and even, in some cases, the technical aspects of the subjects themselves were admitted, and yet a judgment was made to the contrary. I happen to know that in one of the cases, specifically.

But I want to go, now, to that example, and I wish that we could just look at the examples that God has given us today. Look what has happened to every single one that has attempted to orient an organization, a group of people, or whatever they elect to call themselves, when they have pursued their own whimsical ways: they have come to naught. I do not know of one that is not first rising to some kind of recognition, and then sinking. And they are encountering all kinds of difficulties. There remains no solidarity within any of those groups that I know of. There will never remain any solidarity except in that group that remains faithful. Brethren, you had better find it, and you had better understand and be obedient to it.

So we find here, then, in Hebrews 3, and noting verse 12, but I'm going back to get this into context by starting in verse 6: "But Christ as a son over his own house . . ." So, here now we have a new house, which is the house of Christ. As opposed to what other house? Okay, let's see: ". . . whose house are we." So we

are talking about the Body of Jesus Christ. Well, the Body of Jesus Christ is a house. A house of what? It's the household of faith as Paul called it. And what is that household of faith—or the Body of Christ? It is the Church. Now, we are not going to try to put any dimensions on it whatsoever. But all I want us to notice is that it does definitely have limits. You know, you can either be inside of the house, or you can be outside of it. So, a house does not mean an indefinitely defined entity. There are doors into the house, as Christ is the door. The door into what? Into His own house. So, there are definite limits. Now, human beings have tried to say, "Well, the house encompasses all these divergent groups." Nonsense. That's all I am going to say about that. A house is one, and the doctrine is one, and the faith is one.

". . . whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The people that are going to stay in that house are those who have gained some initial confidence, and then refused to give it up. So said the Apostle Paul.

". . . if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy [Spirit] says, To day if ye will hear his voice . . ." Now, here we are going back to the historical example of ancient Israel, and they did hear His voice, didn't they? And you and I have heard it through the means that God employed in the last days, and we responded. You and I heard that voice. Now what are we supposed to do? "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation . . ."—as in the time of turmoil, in the strife, in the difficulties, that arose among the people. Those same problems—those same provocations—came upon us. Then what are we told? "Harden not your hearts" in that time. Don't turn to your own capability; don't turn to your own minds, for your own minds, your own hearts, your own natures, are the most criminal of all. They will abuse you in most unfavorable deception.

So, "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years." And so also in these last days, the Apostle Paul is saying. It was true in that day of the Apostle Paul, and if it were true then, so is it in this day in which the Truth has been given. We have been subjected to a wilderness experience—a long, long experience whereby we were tempted and proven. And then we saw the works of God.

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation . . ." In our day it is also a generation, for that Day cannot come except all these things transpire in that generation. There is a single generation in the last days that is going to experience all these things that are going to happen, as there was a generation in that day. And it shows that God gave us, even to the time limits, a total example.

". . . and said, They do alway err in their heart." Human beings are notoriously failures in their hearts and their minds. What do they do? They begin to rationalize. They begin to look at things and say, "I'll figure it out for myself." It wasn't that ancient Israel looked at it and said, "Yes, I know who God is, but I have just decided that I don't want to obey God." Oh, let's not be so naive. Ancient Israel *believed* that they were doing the thing that they *should* do. They had taken the name; they had taken the physical circumstances of God; they had appropriated all of the visible characteristics; and then, they had changed the things that God had given on the basis of their own hearts. That's what he said right here. "They do alway err in their heart." That is, they began to rationalize; they began to figure things out for themselves; they gave it a dimension that seemed appealing, palatable and acceptable to them.

". . . and they have not known my ways." Yet they were given the ways of God. Why, there are at least five hundred texts in the Bible that show you clearly that God gave His Way of Life to them. What do you mean they didn't know His ways? They had never lived them and proven them. They had never set themselves aside—their wretched minds; their rationalizing, inordinate minds; their minds of defiance and rebellion; their hearts of villainy and blackness. They had never set them aside and come to really know the Truth of God and its value. Because God said *His Truth—His Way of Life—*gives us every benefit on the face of this earth. How many people have ever really known that and really experienced it?

"So I sware in my wrath," God said, "they shall not enter into my rest." Which meant that they never were given the privilege of sitting back and confidently resting. They were always troubled inside and outside of their physical domain. They were troubled in hearts and minds; they were troubled about every conceivable situation. Whereas, God said, if they had been faithful to Him—if they had been loyal, if they had done the very thing that God expected of them—they could have had rest, both mentally and physically.

Brethren, do we want rest? Then why don't we have real faith in what God gave to us? Because the Bible tells us clearly that God *did* deliver the Truth in the last days. Those are not my words. Jesus Christ Himself said so. The Apostle Paul verified it. It is written a dozen times in God's Word. Then, to whom was that Truth given? I mean the totality of God's Truth, from the front to the back of this book we call the Bible? I don't mean that we understood all of it, but we understood the broad outline of it, and I know of no other group that has so accepted that Bible of the unchanging God as a Truth that is absolute Truth and cannot change.

But with regard to human nature, most people are just like God said. They are defiant and rebellious. "They are not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can they be," and they have all kinds of explanations. There are some who are going to argue with the Law of God on the basis of the fact that they are going to treat it partially—they know exactly how much of it they want, and they are going to reject the rest of it. But there are others who reject more of it—they are going to reject certain principles. And finally there are some who are going to reject all of it. But I find that we are not supposed to be partial in the Law of God. Why don't we accept it totally as the Word of God—the God-breathed Word?

And let's not be arguing on the basis of, "Well, are you going to keep sacrifices?" I do, but my sacrifice is Christ. But Christ was not a replacement for any Holy Day or any Law. He was the fulfillment of it, however. That is, He lived it, wholly and absolutely, and your Bible plainly and clearly shows you that. So, all it means is that it is a matter of accepting Jesus Christ as the sacrifice that had to be made, because the others were never going to free us as pertaining to conscience. They just couldn't. You had to do it every year. You had to do it consistently every time you made a mistake, and there was never going to be any real remission of sin. So we had to have the sacrifices, alright enough—the sacrifice of Christ that made it possible for us to enter into the Holy of Holies.

So He said, "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren . . ." What in the world did he mean by that? Read it and understand. "Take heed, brethren . . ." because here was a historical example, and here is what human beings did; here is the proclivity of human beings; here is the natural tendency of human beings: They are going to receive it, and then they are going to begin to orient it according to their own thinking. What did He say?

"They do alway err in their heart." That's how people err today. Dead people don't make any changes. It's only when they live—when their minds are alert and they start using them for their own advantage. Then they make mistakes. "They do alway err in their [own] heart."

Now he said, "Take heed, brethren . . ." What he means very clearly by that is: "Watch how you are thinking—watch how you are reacting." Are you doing exactly what ancient Israel did, and therefore, you are not going to enter into His rest either? Why don't we manifest some faithfulness? "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief . . ." The word "unbelief" here is the word *apistia*. It comes from this very word that is translated "faith" frequently in the Bible, and the "a" on there means the negation of that very word—or the lack of faith.

So, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of [*apistia*]"—or a lack of faith. Or an evil heart of unfaithfulness—which is exactly how it should have been translated, or, let's say, it would have made the meaning much more for us. ". . . in departing from the living God." So Paul said, on the basis of the historical example, here is what they did. He said, "Now I say to you: take heed, that the same things do not happen to you." Why could Paul use that? Because to you, as also in the days of the Apostle Paul, were the Truths revealed—given. They were given to ancient Israel—given by God; they were given in the days of Christ; they were given in the days of the Apostle Paul, for Paul himself said over, and over, and over, and over, that "the things delivered unto me, I have delivered unto the people." And even Jesus Christ said that in the last days the same Truth that He taught would be delivered to us—exactly the same Truth.

Now he said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of [unfaithfulness], in departing from the living God." You can't depart from someone if you were never placed there. You depart because you were there. But the proclivity, the natural tendency—because of the thrust of the flesh, because of the blackness of the natural heart—is to leave. Notice what he said back here: "They do alway err in their heart." The term "heart" in the Bible simply means that rational capacity, the ability to think—the emotional characteristic of the being. If we didn't have that, we would be a dead pile of dirt, that's all there is to it. But when we were made a living *nephesh*, we were given heart and mind—the

capacity to think, the capacity to rationalize. And so what we are told here is: "Brethren, *take heed* that this very capacity within you does not lead you astray." Oh, brethren, how seriously we must watch that when the Truth is delivered to us, we do not walk in the footsteps of our ancient forefathers, who received the Word of God and, because they had no faith, turned away from it. They used the logic of their own minds; they used the proclivities of their own flesh beings, and they turned from the Truth of God. "Take heed" that this does not happen to us.

"But exhort one another daily . . ." Maybe you can understand why I say what I do, as often as I do. "Exhort one another daily, while it is called To day"—while it is your time, in other words, your privilege and opportunity. People who have never seen—who have never understood—cannot be considered. It has never been delivered to them. How can we hold them accountable? How can we look to them as an example? How can we use them in any way as a comparison to our lives? But you "exhort one another"—those who know, who understand.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"—to be hardened through the natural proclivities of this heart, of this mind. And if we are going to be hardened through them, what it means is, we are going to turn away. Oh, the example that God gave to us is an example of exactly what will happen to any one of us, just like it did to ancient Israel, unless, once we have received the Truth of God, we hang on to it in faithfulness. How could I make it more clear? And, yet, brethren, we have people almost incessantly who begin to argue, and finally estrange themselves from God's Truth so that they can justify their own whimsical minds. How tragic.

So, we see, brethren, that in the 20th century it was no different than it was in, shall we say, the 15th or the 16th century B.C., for they began to rationalize. They turned to the deceitfulness of their own hearts and they turned in open defiance and rebellion away from the Truth that God gave to them, and we have a whole Bible that is a living record of it, but a record written for this generation in which you and I live. That's what Paul said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Those things were written for this generation upon whom the ends of the world are come. It is written for our group. So, if it's written for us, it means take care, brethren—take heed.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." What was your confidence initially? I don't want any arguments, brethren. I won't accept them in my own life, where I sit down and begin to rationalize, "Well, it's this, this, this and this, but how come this, and how come that, or how come something else?" No, "we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence." I ask you, brethren, how in the world you are going to apply that statement? And man is said to live "not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Then, what it is saying is that if you were called and chosen, you were given an initial confidence, and then God said, "You hang on to it in faith." Forget it if you weren't called. You will never know—at least not at this time, until you are called.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast [How long?] unto the end." It seems that we have a little ways to go yet. What we started with, we had better hang on to—the faith that was given to us. That doesn't mean that we cannot grow, because growth, in the literal, technical sense, simply means "add thereto." There is no problem with growth, but there is a problem with change—a big problem with change. Any change says that God failed. If man has to rectify it, what he is saying is that God either made a mistake when He gave the original, or that God doesn't give it in the first place, but man finds out by his own capability. And both are wrong.

"While it is said [verse 15], To day if ye will hear his voice . . ." Now, the Bible clearly says that "my sheep know my voice." I don't mean the actual, physical voice of Jesus Christ. You take the time to read how you hear the voice of Jesus Christ. It was through his servants—clearly illustrated in the Bible. We heard it, we knew it, we responded—oh, how we responded. How joyous and thrilling it was when we began to realize these things that we were hearing, and we responded, and we were baptized into it—when we wanted to lay down the old life and we accepted this new thing which we heard, and it made sense to us, and we accepted it. We heard His voice. Forget the man that was involved. All kinds of men have failed, but not God.

. . . if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned . . .

You see, God is not going to take it out on those who are faithful. He is grieved with those who manifest no faithfulness—who simply will not be loyal, who turn back to the prowess of their own natural minds, who turn back to their own presumed mental capabilities. They turn back and they begin to trust the natural mind. I hear it quite frequently: "I'll figure this thing out for myself." Oh? Well, not if I read God's Word correctly. You never will. The only time you are going to figure it out is if God gives it to you—allows you to see and understand it. And then He lays one requirement upon you: remain faithful.

"But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" There is an example of what is going to happen to any one of us, if called of God back initially, if we turn away. Remember what he said? "Holding our beginning confidence firm unto the end." So what God was requiring of ancient Israel was faithfulness—although they couldn't deliver, because they had never been given the Spirit. And so, for that reason, they wrote the physical lessons for you and me. They were never chosen; they are not going to be held accountable; you and I will be, however, because God gave that Spirit to us.

But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The word "unbelief" here is the same word, *apistia*—the same faithlessness. They entered not in because of faithlessness. They were unfaithful; they would not remain true to the call that God had given to them; they would not honor Him; they would not uphold that Way of Life; they were derelict, and God, through the Apostle Paul, gave us that very example as a circumstance that is applicable in our days. He said, "take heed," lest the same thing happen to you.

Let's turn back and look at it once again, where he said in verse 12: "Take heed, brethren [that's the reason I have taken time to read this], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [an evil heart of faithlessness], in departing from the living God." The only people who can depart from God are those who have been brought into a perfect relationship with Him. Well, maybe I shouldn't say a perfect relationship, but one that is destined to be a perfect relationship with God.

"But exhort one another daily. . ." In what do you exhort them? To go and do their own thing—to put confidence in their own mental ability—or, to manifest confidence in what they were given originally? Don't assume anything, brethren. Paul explains it: ". . . while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Don't let this nature—the wretchedness of the evil heart—dissuade you.

Here's how now: "For we are made partakers of Christ [and if you are not a partaker of Christ, you are never going to have any part with Him], if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." I need not say much more on it. I think Paul just made it beautifully clear, and he told us exactly what we must do.

Alright, point number two in the broad categories that I am using in defining this word—my subtopics, now, under the word *apistia*: When deficient in faith, what should be done? Now, we are oftentimes going to find ourselves wavering, questioning, having misgivings and doubt. If we will only recognize that those things are not of God. God is not a God of doubt; God is not a God of uncertainty; God has not faltered nor failed, because God said that He gave it to us. So, if we find ourselves in the valley of decision, in the midst of confusion—bewildered, perplexed and troubled—what should we do? Well, we need help, don't we? And we need it desperately.

I want you to notice a marvelous example here, when the disciples—before they became the apostles—recognized the proclivities of their own natures. Here in Mark the ninth chapter. We still are using this same word. Mark the ninth chapter and I'm going to begin in verse 14, although it is verse 24 that I want to emphasize. Mark 9, and beginning in verse 14, because I want to get the whole story here. It's a story that we have used many times for various reasons: "And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them." In other words, here were his disciples whom He was training, and here now were the great learned teachers of that day who were very, very upset with what these disciples were beginning to absorb—and what they were attempting to live when human nature didn't get in the way.

"And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him." What hypocrisy. You know, all they

were interested in was what they were seeing, not that they wanted to be faithful and obedient, at all. So, these salutations were due only to some more of this power that this man seemed to possess, as I hope we are going to see.

[They] were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth . . .

So here are people who are doing all kinds of things. They had their various systems and their patterns of behavior in that day, and they would take these people who had certain illnesses, and they went before certain physicians, or before certain people—and remember, the profession that we call allopathy today did not even exist in the day of these disciples. It didn't come into being until much, much later. Frankly, probably the only system that was really employed at that time is what we commonly call homeopathy. That's probably what the great, learned mentor [referring to Hippocrates] of today's medical profession believed in. But, after all, they are not really concerned with what he believed in, they have merely appropriated the name, and certain circumstances that surround the life of that individual. And so, doctors today still take the Hippocratic oath—and it is hypocritical alright enough.

And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation [O faithless generation. Well, we are going to pick that term up again, but this is not the *apistia* here], how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said [it occurred when he was a child].

And, you know, the tragic thing is, that does frequently happen, because certain families seem to be more oriented toward this—or Satan and his cohorts have oriented themselves to certain families. But there are children who are born with that proclivity. What a tragedy.

And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

"If thou canst believe . . ." There is a very distinct correlation between faith and belief—a *very* distinct correlation. I have to wait until way down the road to get into this subject of believing, but, mind you, we are going to cover it, and extensively.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe [Lord, I believe]." He knew at that particular moment that, so far as human nature would allow him, he believed, but he also recognized something else: he knew that, obviously, it was woefully inadequate. So what did he say? "[H]elp thou mine [*apistia*]." How in the world, brethren, can you and I solve our problems until we first recognize that *apistia* dominates to a very large extent in our thinking? We must recognize, as this man did, that "though I believe, and I believe with as much as my being will allow me, I recognize it as *woefully* inadequate. "Lord, help thou mine unbelief," should be our prayer. Help me to *really* believe it. Help me to have that beginning confidence and to hang on to it firm unto the end, never to sacrifice it, never to give it up, but to believe it with all the power and conviction that you gave to me from the very beginning—the spontaneity, the enthusiasm, the thrilling experiences that were mine because of the call you gave to me."

And so we find here that there are two presumptions—in this case, very favorable: First, is the recognition of unbelief. The first is the recognition of unbelief. No matter where that individual stood at that moment, he said, "Lord, I believe." That is, "I trust you as far as this nature will allow me, but I know that is not adequate; I know I need something from you." And the second is that he understood the imperative need for a measurable addition to his faith. If you and I will recognize those two things, it's going to save us, because we are not going to trust the rationalizations of our minds—we are not going to accept the questioning spirit that dominates us because of the turmoil and strife of the last days. We are going to recognize that, despite all of the terrifying things that have happened to us, spiritually, we need to get back to the confidence that was originally delivered to us and maintain that confidence with high resolve all the way to the end.

Continuing [in verse 25], he said:

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Why was it necessary, really, for them to ask, except that a lot of people are going to ask a lot of questions today because they are not going to accept the conditions of verse 24? They are not going to say, "Well, I understand, I'm just not where I should be. I don't have the faith that I should have, and I recognize that there is an awesome need in my life." But our prayer then, should be, "Lord, help Thou my unbelief. I want to be more exemplary; I want to be a greater honor to you, O God. I can't make myself what I am not, I can only recognize what I am and confess it, admit it"—which is an act of conversion. And then we ask God to fulfill what He promised to do, because He was going to give it to us. He will increase our faith. Oh, indeed He will.

"And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." If that is true for casting out a demon, could it possibly be, brethren, that it is true for you and me in restoring ourselves to complete faith and confidence in the Way of Life originally given? Think soberly on it and then do what Paul was inspired of God to say in Hebrews the third chapter, as I read it to you earlier.

Next time, brethren, we are going to cover point number three, as a subtopic: Faith cannot be achieved by natural means. I'm trying to take these in logical sequence, and I think you will see how it is building to a conclusion. So, for next time, it will be point number three.