

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 114
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #23

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This, now, is tape number 23 in the series on the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and specifically the subject of faith, and even more specifically, "the Faith" in the original—"the Faith" as it is translated from the Greek word *pistis*—p-i-s-t-i-s. We went through the definition last time, so we need not consume time in reevaluating that word.

As you will remember, we covered approximately four points in our last tape—tape number 22—on the subject of "the Faith." And within that, we covered the subtopic: "The Faith can be verbalized." And if it can be verbalized, then it must be doctrine. It is obvious that "the Faith" relates to the doctrine—the Way of Life that Jesus Christ brought. That Faith is the Faith that Jesus Christ Himself personally lived, and it is a very, very important aspect of the life and the consideration of God and of Christ. We saw that by understanding the text used in Matthew 23 and verse 23.

Then, thirdly, we saw that wrong actions—that is, sins—are resolved through Christ's sacrifice. Our way of life, which is contrary to the will of God, is the diametric opposite of *the Faith*, which is the Way of God and of Jesus Christ. So, those actions, or wrong actions, that are classified as sin in God's Word, had to be resolved through a major sacrifice, and that sacrifice was Christ. So, Christ not only paid for our errors—our sins, our wrongs of the past—but He also made something else possible, and it is that positive aspect of what Christ made possible that is most significant to us as Christians today.

Now, before we get into that part of it, we also went through the fourth subtopic, which is: "After the time of Christ, obedience was possible through *the Faith*." That is, we could now obey that which we could not obey beforehand,

through *the* Faith, because Christ is the manifestation of that Faith. Christ said that He is the Truth—the Word made flesh. He is the Way of Life that was literally personified in His own physical body. So, if Christ was *the* Faith manifested—or the Way of Life manifested, or the doctrine manifested—then Christ was the living manifestation of *the* Faith. He was, in that sense, then, the manifestation of that spiritual principle we call "faith." But not only that, He was the living manifestation of every fruit, and every characteristic, of the Spirit of God.

So, after the time of Christ, now, obedience became possible through *the* Faith. But, now, how is that possible? Christ's obedience—that is, the original obedience of Christ when He walked here on this earth—makes our obedience possible, because He obeyed perfectly, implicitly. There was no sin, no guile, no iniquity, no error found in the life of Christ. Christ *was* the Word of God made flesh, and He lived it perfectly. Now, His having lived it perfectly, we now, through a particular act required of us to be Christians—and that is the burial of the old self in the form of baptism—have the opportunity to live it. But we must lay down the old self completely—we must bury it, we must crucify it. All of those terms are used throughout the New Testament. We mortify the flesh—we crucify the flesh, we bury the old self—so that we can now live the new.

Well, what is the new? You mean we are going to turn around and live according to the dictates of the mind and of the flesh of the individual again? No. Historically, ancient Israel—called as a collective entity of God—could not obey, because they were flesh. They were motivated by their own natural minds—by their own flesh input. And so, therefore, they could not obey. We saw that, if you will remember, in Hebrews 4 and verse 2. Because there was a lack of *the* Faith, they could not obey.

Now, obedience, therefore, is required of us today. If we do not obey, then, we cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. So, obedience has to be made possible. How did God make that possible? Merely by destroying the Law so that we don't have to worry about living the Truth of God anymore? That's what a lot of people would like for us to believe: that Christ came and destroyed that which was mandatory—that is, which was obligatory upon us (obedience to the laws, the statutes and the judgments of God, the Way of Life)—and, therefore, we now are acceptable, because God imputes to us righteousness, and we don't have to do

anything. That's their crazy, iniquitous concept. That is not true, at all. God has never changed and has never altered that Way of Life. It has always been the Way of Life. It is eternal—it is Spirit—and it cannot be changed. So, how did Christ make obedience possible? We found that obedience was possible through *the* Faith, but that doesn't tell us, yet, how we're going to do it—how we can possibly obey that Faith which God made mandatory in our lives.

Let me give you some interesting texts here. I want us to notice it, because the Apostle Paul explains it here in Ephesians the third chapter. So we're going to turn, now, to Ephesians the third chapter, and I want us to note first, verse 12. Ephesians 3 and noting verse 12: "In whom . . ." Now, if you will go back you will find that there has to be an antecedent to this. "In whom" refers right back to Christ Jesus, our Lord. Notice it in verse 12: "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by *the* faith of him." Our obedience is now possible because of *the* Faith of Christ, and that Faith of Christ was translated into perfect obedience. Christ obeyed implicitly and never violated one single concept of that Way of Life—He was without guilt. So, "in whom . . ."—not outside of it. The only way you are going to have it, is if Christ is in you, or if you are in Christ Jesus—both expressions are used in the Bible. So, "in whom [if we are in Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." So, our confidence and our assurance is *the* faith of Jesus Christ.

Now, if you will remember—and you must remember what *the* Faith is—I do not want us to hearken back to the age-old concept that it is some kind of emotional, ethereal concept of mind and heart. We are talking about something that is translated into a tangible observance—that which we can see. And what is that observance—that tangible observance—that we can see? It is active obedience to the doctrine—to the words of God. Doctrine can simply be translated as the specific divisions of God's Word, since there is more than one doctrine, but there is only one Word—the Word of God, the entirety of the Word of God that we call the Bible—translated, now, into the components of doctrine. And *the* Faith *is* the doctrine.

So, if you are in Christ, or Christ is in you, then the doctrine—the Way of Life—is in you, and the boldness that you manifest, and the aggressive obedience to that Way of Life, is through the power of God's Holy Spirit, Christ living that within you. You are no longer doing it yourself. It's being done by the power of

God's Holy Spirit—by the power of Jesus Christ in you. And Christ is in us by the Spirit.

So, "in whom [that is, in Christ] we have boldness." We don't have to live with our heads hanging. That doesn't mean we live arrogantly, either. It means that we live confidently. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by *the* faith of him"—by the faith of Christ. Christ lived that perfect Faith—the Faith—and having lived it, now, when He takes up His abode within us, He continues to live it. Christ said that He was going to continue to live. He said, "I'm going to come back and take up my abode within you." So, He is living within Christians, and when Christ is living within us, He's living exactly the same life that He always lived. That is the means by which we can evaluate it.

Are you doing exactly what Christ did? The minute somebody says, "Well, no, I'm not going to do that, because Christ was back at a given time and, therefore, it is no longer valid, it is no longer applicable," you know that that man is not talking by the Spirit of God. For if it is the voice of Christ—if it is the power of God's Holy Spirit— it is going to say that it is one and the same, and that it has never changed, because that's what Jesus Christ said. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever—the immutable, unalterable Word of God that cannot change. And when you hear that, you know that it is the Spirit of God speaking. So, in Christ, then "we have boldness and access with confidence by *the* faith" of that one Who is living within—by Jesus Christ.

In verse 17 we read this: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by [the] faith." Oh, let's notice that: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by [the] faith." How do you know whether Christ is abiding within you? If you have *the* Faith. What is *the* Faith? It can be verbalized. It is the doctrine, and we're going to see a lot more application of that as we go along.

That Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by [the] faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height [and so on. So that you can see the gravity, the scope, the height, and the breadth of the purpose of Jesus Christ].

So when Christ came here and walked on this earth, He implicitly walked in faithful obedience. If He hadn't done that, you wouldn't have a Savior. He came to redeem us from the curse of the Law. The Law had a claim on our lives, and it was going to take us—and it will still take us, unless we accept, by *the* Faith, the obedience of Christ, and let Him live that faithful obedience within us. So, Christ came and walked perfectly in that obedience, and therefore, paid for our past liability. That is, He paid the price, because He did not warrant death Himself.

So He laid down His life for us, and He has paid the price that is expected, or demanded, of every one of us—providing we will accept it. But, in order to have it, we must personally, individually, voluntarily, willingly, sacrifice the old self. We've got to give it up. And so, we lay it down, and that's the meaning of baptism. When we lay it down, then, Christ said, "I will move in and take up my abode within you. I will live my life within you, now, in perfect obedience." That is what Christianity is all about. It is a matter of sacrificing the old self and allowing the new life of Christ to be lived within us. And that new life that is being lived within us is in *the* Faith of Christ. And that means the entire, implicit, perfect obedience of *the* Christ.

Now, let's notice Philippians 3 and verse 9. Philippians 3 and noting verse 9: "And be found in him . . ."—that is, in Christ, because you can go back to verse 8 and you will find that we are referring to Christ. "And be found in him, not having my own righteousness." No, we cannot achieve our own righteousness, and if you will remember, Isaiah said that man's own righteousness is as filthy rags, anyway. So, who wants his own righteousness? But now we can have the perfect, glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ—implicit and perfect obedience that is untainted, unmarred. It is without any of the wretchedness of humanity. It is pure, it is glorious. It is the magnificent righteousness of Jesus Christ, Who lived His life perfectly, and will live it within us.

So, we can "be found in him, not having mine own righteousness [the Apostle Paul writes], which is of the law. . ." That is, it is of the technical, personal obedience of the individual, because the man, himself, cannot do it. "[N]ot having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ . . ." Now, here it says "*the* faith of Christ," and actually, in the original, the "the" does not belong with the first usage of "faith" here. ". . . which is through . . . the righteousness which is of God by [the] faith."

The righteousness which is of God by *the* Faith. Righteousness before God, then, is by *the* Faith, and what is *the* Faith? *The* Faith can be verbalized. It is doctrine; it is the Word. It is not simply, strictly, solely, a matter of the emotion of mind and heart. I'm not saying that there is not an emotional characteristic. After all, all spirituality has emotion too, but that is only the manifestation—that is the result—of the abiding within us of something which is tangible, which is awesome in power and in nature. So, there is an emotional dimension. No one denies that. Joy goes with it. It is a thrilling experience. Those are emotional characteristics. Peace is an emotional characteristic, but *the* Faith is something that can be verbalized. So, it has a whole lot more to it than simply an emotional dimension. The emotional dimension is only an additive, and it comes because of the other which exists within us: the doctrine, the Truth of God, the Way of Life to which we have been called. And when Christ lives within us, then, as He said: "I am the way, the Truth . . ." Then it is the Way—the Word, the Truth—that is being lived within us, which can be verbalized, and it manifests itself, then, in emotional traits and characteristics. And so, as he said here, ". . . that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by [the] faith." Righteousness, then, which is of God is by *the* Faith—that's how it is produced—and *the* Faith is *the* doctrine, it is the Truth of God, the Word of God, the book of faith, the Way of Life.

Revelation 14 and verse 12. Revelation 14 and let's note verse 12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Let me ask you: how do you keep the Faith if it is only an emotion? Now, we know how to keep the Commandments of God, don't we? But here we are obligated also to keep the Faith of Jesus. So, the Faith of Jesus is translated into perfect obedience to the Way, to the words, to the doctrine of God, and He perfectly, implicitly obeyed it, and so, now, we are obligated, therefore, to keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. If you are going to keep the Faith, it means that you are going to walk in something—you are doing something. It is tangible. To keep it means that it is observable—you act on it. If I keep something, it means something is happening—there is some form of activity. That activity is faithful obedience to that which underscores faith. It can be verbalized, and I don't want you to forget that.

Alright, point number 6, now: "*The* Faith is a gift that now makes faithful obedience possible." There is some particular gift. What is it that makes *the* Faith

possible within our lives, right now? Can we just decide that we are going to be a part of the faithful—that we are going to abide by the Faith, that we are going to obey it? Ancient Israel couldn't, and nobody else has ever been able to do it except for Jesus Christ. Then, what is the power by which you and I are going to be faithful to God so that we can obey, so that we can honor God? There has to be a gift that makes it possible for man to obey. That gift is a special promise of Jesus Christ.

Here in 2 Corinthians 4. 2 Corinthians the fourth chapter and let's note verse 13. 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 13: "We having the same spirit of [*the*] faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." Notice, now, that we have the same Spirit of *the* Faith—and your Bible says "faith," but in the Greek it is "the Faith."

We having the same spirit of [the] faith [so, it is by the Spirit of God], according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken . . .

So, you see, it manifests itself in a verbalized form, once again. Isn't that what speaking is all about? "[A]nd therefore have I spoken; we also believe [that's an emotional trait or characteristic], and therefore speak." So, whatever we believe, we can also translate into verbal form. What is the verbal form of what we believe—the Faith? Isn't it the Way, the Truth, the Word—the indivisible Word, the unalterable Word—that has never changed? It is *the* Faith that comes through that gift of the Spirit—the Spirit that empowers us. By that Spirit, Christ lives within us, and by that Spirit we are given the power and the ability.

Is that not what we were told with regard to the gift of God's Holy Spirit, when Jesus Christ stood on that momentous day just before He was received back up into heaven, from whence He had come? He said, "I want you to tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high." And what is that power? Acts 1:8 says that "you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come." The power, then, required for faithful obedience—the power enabling us to master the self, enabling us to live the Truth of God—is the Spirit, and by that Spirit, Christ lives within us.

It isn't that it is just some spirit that comes in and motivates us, independent of Christ. No, by that Spirit, Christ comes and lives within us—Christ lives that

life within us. The Apostle Paul said over, and over, and over that he "travailed in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Remember what he said to the Galatians, in Galatians 4 and verse 19, I believe? He was troubled about it, and he was laboring so that Christ might be in them once again.

And then we find in Ephesians the second chapter that it is Christ living in us—the hope of glory. Christ is our hope, and it is Christ living in us that gives us that faith and that orientation, or direction, in life.

So, we see here, then, in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 13 that we have "the same spirit of [the] faith." Paul made it very clear that it is not a divided spirit. It is "the same spirit of [the] faith," which means that, obviously, Paul was doing some comparing here. "Same" means "identical." Now, how would you know that it is identical, unless you compare? There is a form of evaluation, and he saw, by whatever somebody was doing, that it was exactly the same as what he was doing. "We having the same spirit of faith." So, therefore, by comparison, he saw that they were doing exactly the same thing. There was no dichotomy, at all.

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

We are speaking from the premise of *the* Faith, which is the premise of Christ living within us. Is it the voice of Christ? Is it exactly the same thing that Christ lived? Is there unanimity and accord? Can it be compared to what Christ did? If you are doing exactly what Christ did, then you have within you the same Spirit of *the* Faith.

In Galatians 3 and verse 14. Galatians 3 and noting verse of 14: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through [the] faith." Once again, it just says "faith" here, but in the Greek it is the definite form: "the Faith." So, we are even going to receive the promises that were given to Abraham through *the* Faith, by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Notice it again: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles." In this case, that means all Gentiles that were called to partake of the same Body—the Body of Jesus Christ, the life of Christ—those who were called to partake of that Way of Life were to receive the

blessing. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through [the] faith." Whatever was given to Abraham contained within it the promise of the Spirit, and within that was the promise of *the* Faith. It is going to come through *the* Faith—the Faith that comes by the gift of God's Holy Spirit, which came as a result of the promise that was given to Abraham. So the very promise of everlasting life—the promise of everything that is meaningful and purposeful to you and me—was first preached to Abraham, and we are now the recipients of it through *the* Faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, point number seven: "Conviction is substantiated by action." We have already talked about that here in Galatians 3 and verse 14. It shows the action of Abraham. But, back in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 13, it was verbalized—they were talking about speaking, and what you speak is that which proceeds from mind and heart. And so, faith can be verbalized—you can give it a verbal dimension, you can talk about it—and that's why it's called doctrine, or the Word of God. It isn't just some emotional feeling in which you stand there and you look beautiful, you know, and you have that certain look. Nonsense! It is something that you can put into words—sentences. You can convey it so that there is understanding, or meaning. That's what *the* Faith is.

Now, that conviction—and faith does contain within it the emotional dimension of conviction (the Faith is a very powerfully convicting ingredient)—is translatable. It can be verbalized. So, conviction is substantiated by action. How in the world can you believe powerfully something in the mind and in the heart, and then do exactly the opposite? It is impossible. If we have a strong conviction, and a compelling motivation, then it is going to be translated into some form of action. You know, when people are lifted up by the power of God's Holy Spirit, they are moved by it—they do something on the basis of the intent and purpose of that motivation. And so it is in the case of *the* Faith. That action is obedience. Obedience is the purpose of God's Holy Spirit. It isn't going to be given to the individual that doesn't will, or elect, to obey. You come in belief that you need the assistance, or the help, of God, and you know that you have to have that faith, and that you must be able to manifest that faith. And what is the manifestation? It is the act of obedience.

So, we find the earlier apostles assuring us that the Spirit will not be given to any except those who obey—who *will* to obey. Obedience demands some form of action—you have to live it, you have to act upon the Word. Now, what is the Word you are going to act upon? Are you just going to stand around and look pretty? Or, is it a matter of doing something? And when you do something, it had better be in conformity to that which Jesus Christ initially did, because the only way you can be a Christian is if Christ is living in you, and Christ is never going to change—He said so. So, you are going to be doing exactly what Christ did, and not only that, you are going to be doing exactly what Abraham did—*exactly* what Abraham did. So, conviction is substantiated by our day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, and year-by-year activity—obedience. In Romans 4—let's turn back now to Romans the fourth chapter, very quickly, and let's note verses 19 and 20, but I'm going to take time to read verses 17 through 21. Romans the fourth chapter and let's begin in verse 17:

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations [Once again, here we are referring to the father of the faithful, Abraham.],) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

He believed it—he trusted God implicitly, despite all the physical circumstances. Paul is using this as a comparison to the fact that we are obligated to perform that which human beings cannot perform. But neither could Abraham. Abraham couldn't produce seed on his own. He was already past that. And Sarai certainly couldn't conceive because *she* was past the time of childbearing. Yet, he believed it. That's what our faith is all about. Our faith is translated into an absolute conviction, despite the physical factors involved. So, therefore, by *the* Faith, we can be obedient, despite the fact that we, humanly, find it impossible.

"And being not weak in [the] faith." Abraham was not weak in *the* Faith—that is, in the doctrine—obedience. Abraham walked in it—he believed it, he implicitly trusted, and he received the promises, because God Himself said, "I knew that he would walk in my commandments and be faithful and obedient." "And being not weak in [the] faith." That is, he never changed, he never altered,

and despite all the physical circumstances that seemed to be stacked against him, he believed in the reality and never changed his faith or his conviction.

"And being not weak in [the] faith, he considered not his own body now dead . . ." What about you and me? Do we consider ourselves, and look at ourselves, and feel that whatever we're going to do, we can accomplish on our own? Abraham knew that in his own life it was impossible. But God had promised, and Abraham knew and he believed. That's exactly what you and I have to do. Jesus Christ has promised to live that Way of Life within us, and we have to believe it.

Certainly, you have to have the right orientation of mind. It doesn't mean that I can stand back and say, "Yeah, you promised it. Let's see it now. I'm going to wait for you to pick me up by the Spirit and move me." No, there is a matter of personal will, just like Abraham had to manifest that personal will. And the child was conceived naturally, although it was promised supernaturally. Get the difference? Then, Abraham could not stand back and say, "Well, you know, I won't have any relationship with my wife. God has already promised, and what God has promised, I don't have to worry about." Abraham had a part in the fulfillment of that, didn't he? Abraham and Sarah, in the very physical manner that God had ordained, brought that son into existence, yet he was brought by supernatural means. That's exactly what's happening to you in the new conversion—the new life—that has commenced within you. It involves your total input, but it is going to be achieved by supernatural means. And that's why Abraham is our example.

And being not weak in [the] faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

You see, he didn't look around and say, "Well, it's totally impossible. We, humanly, cannot do it. If it's going to be done, God is going to have to do it by His own miraculous power, and that is completely outside of any effort on our parts." No, Abraham did not do that, and neither did Sarah. They believed, and they acted in the normal, natural manner, and the child was conceived. So, it means that you and I must believe, but we must know the power that is being conceived—the life that is being conceived—within us is now by the power of God. And by the promise of God.

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in [the] faith, giving glory to God." He was strong in the faith. He acted in faithful compliance; he acted in absolute and total obedience; he walked in that Way of Life. God had already said, "I'm going to do this because of your obedience"—because Abraham was faithful.

Now, after Abraham got the promise, he didn't say, "Okay, I don't have to be obedient anymore." He continued to receive the assurance by his continued obedience, and that continued obedience was for a period of 25 years, and he never gave up. He still walked in the commands of God; he still walked according to the integrity of his call, his purpose and his mission; he was faithful, and he was obedient.

Brethren, now that we have come to the point that we must accept *the* Faith, which is *the* Faith of Christ within us, it does not mean that we must not will to obey in the physical sense. Our obligation is still incumbent upon us, but the one thing that is going to pick us up in our weakness, and the one that is going to sustain us and support us by supernatural promise, is the power of Christ living within us through Almighty God. It is going to give us the motivation, the guidance, the conviction, and the direction, and it is going to inspire us to obey, but not until you will to do it—not until you set your mind to do it, as Abraham did. And when you set your mind to do it, by virtue of the call of God, the power is going to be provided and the direction is going to be given to you.

"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." What is the promise to us? Jesus Christ said, "I will live my life in you." That's the promise. That is a begettal, just like Isaac was begotten. It's the same comparison, but this time it is a spiritual begettal, of course. Isaac is the very type of our spiritual begettal, and when that life is begotten within us, then Jesus Christ is going to live that life within us, but we're going to walk in it, and we're going to be faithful and obedient to it, and we must be fully persuaded in our minds and our hearts in absolute, implicit and faithful obedience to that Way of Life. That has never changed, and there is not one indication in all the Bible that any of the will and the purpose of God, and the Way of Life, has ever been changed.

Only the route by which we achieve that end has been changed. We couldn't do it on our own, so a provision had to be made. Abraham couldn't do it on his own, so a provision had to be made, and the provision didn't take the responsibility away from Abraham, at all, did it? How was Isaac conceived? Was Isaac the Son of God, or was he the son of Abraham? Whom? So, Abraham still had to carry out his part, and so did Sarah. We still have to do our part, and our part is the action required with regard to the laws, the statutes, and the judgments of God—the Way of Life—and we are obligated to walk in that Way.

Now next, let's note 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 13. Remember, we're talking about the fact that "conviction is substantiated by action," and I don't know of a more classic example than that of Abraham, and that's why he is called the father of the faithful. But now, I want us to notice 1 Corinthians 16 and noting verse 13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." What do you mean "quit you like men"? Act on it. "Stand fast in the Faith"—don't be moved. You have a conviction.

We have all been called to a Way of Life, brethren, and you know, it is strange that I guess I've spent the better part of ten years talking about being faithful to the Faith that we were originally taught, and yet, there is nothing that even many of you, my dear brethren, do not challenge almost consistently. I want to tell you, and I'm going to tell you in no uncertain terms, that if I stand alone, my dear brethren, I am not going to change that Faith. None of the arguments, or anything else, is ever going to change it. I intend to be there, and I know that God gave it to us; and I know that God said that Way of Life was given to somebody, and He said, from that point on, as you have been taught, stand faithful. And I intend to do that, and I hope you are going to be there with me. But I just hope that somewhere along the line we are going to quit arguing with it and just accept it, and go on. But it seems to be a consistent, incessant argument about the Faith. But brethren, let's get back to it, and just accept it, being fully persuaded. Hang on to it.

Too many of us are coming to the conclusion that we can sit down and, technically, from the Bible, prove things one way or the other. I've also spent hours in telling you that that isn't possible. If it is, God's going to have to condemn the whole world, because, apparently, anyone can come to that understanding and they just have refused to do it. But my Bible tells me that it can

be written here, right in our presence, and yet, we do not know it, nor understand it, until it is revealed to us. And sometimes we may not understand the whys, nor the wherefores. That happened to the apostles. It happened to the patriarchs. It didn't seem to make sense to them, at the moment, but it will somewhere down the road. Brethren, let's not turn away from *the* Faith. The Bible says, "Stand fast in *the* Faith." Now, how are you going to stand fast in it if you are going to boot it all over—kick it all over—on the basis of your own study? No, words still mean something.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." It would be marvelous if we could just believe that there was a revelation given to us—to somebody in the last days—and now we are obligated to stand fast in it. That's what God has given to us as a responsibility.

2 Corinthians 1 and verse 24: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by [the] faith ye stand." God is saying here that the living evidence that you are truly standing is if you are immovable in that Faith that was originally given to you. He didn't say if you stand there and challenge it at every turn of the road. He didn't say that, at all. What He said was, "[F]or by [the] faith you stand." In other words, the living proof that you are standing is when you maintain your posture in that Faith. So we don't have dominion over it. You are going to have to come to that. We will do everything we can to instruct and to help, but you are going to have to come to that, individually, because God is not going to say, "Well, you were a part of the group." No, it is going to be because of your faith—the Faith evident in your life—and you are going to have to stand on the basis of that Faith, strong, tall and firm, and God is going to require it of you. "[F]or by [the] faith you stand." Do you? Take a good look at yourself, and don't argue with it. Just try to take a look at your life and ask, "Do I really have that faith, or am I constantly questioning various things? Do I live with frustration and doubt?" You ought to be very careful, brethren.

2 Timothy 3 and verse 10. 2 Timothy 3 and verse 10. I want to get three or four more texts in here very quickly. 2 Timothy the third chapter and noting verse 10: "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, [the] faith, longsuffering, charity, patience . . ." You have known that steadfastness, Paul said. Are you recognized by your steadfastness in the Faith? Can you look to

somebody else, or say to somebody: "You have *known* my solidarity—my immovable nature in the Faith. I will not compromise. I will not turn away from it. Are you aware of my solid conviction?" Or, would somebody look at you and say, "I stand in doubt of him. I never know where he stands, from one day to the next. He is constantly questioning. He's filled with doubts and misgivings."

That's why the Apostle Paul used the term that he did a number of times concerning these mental aberrations by which we begin to question—we live in doubt—and he called that a mental illness. I didn't say it, brethren, God did. It's a mental illness, and the reason that it is a mental illness is that it is spiritual in nature—it is a defect in your spiritual growth. Someone may come back and say, "Oh, you want us just to blindly accept?" No, I didn't say "blindly accept." Is that what you did when you accepted it? Because from that time on, the Faith was the evidence of things not seen. Now, if you want to call that blind, then call it blind, but you don't see it. It's the acceptance of something that inspired you—took a hold of you—a long time ago, and now you are being constantly clobbered by virtue of arguments, and by virtue of circumstances, and by virtue of the input from a different spirit. Because is that not what he said in 1 Timothy 4? It was a different spirit that began to precipitate questions regarding doctrine. That's the real problem in this world.

So, he said here, now, in verse 10: "But thou hast fully known my doctrine . . ." Brethren, I want to be able to walk in those footsteps, too, as he did in Christ's, and I want people to look and say, "He will not alter, he will not change." "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, [and the] faith . . ."—that unalterable Faith, where he will not move, nor allow any change in his life. The Apostle Paul said that that was an incredible honor. "You know," he said, "it is a fact that I will not change." That's what it means: the Faith—standing fast in the Faith, absolutely unwilling to compromise, or to change it. Are you known by those traits and by those characteristics? Not mine. It had better be on the Faith of Jesus Christ. Do you really believe that you were called, and God revealed His Truth to you—that you are a part of that Body that knew and that understood? If you do not believe that, how in the world, in the name of common sense, brethren, can you, then, ever manifest the Faith, unless it's something you're reaching out and taking? And, you know, that is stealing. Now, once it is given to you, you have a right to it, but it belongs to Christ, and you don't just reach out and say, "I'm going to take it," because that is against the

commandment. But He said, "I'm going to give it to you." To those that have been called, God has given that Faith. They have a right to it. But no one else does. If I give a gift to someone out here, it doesn't mean that I'm obligated to give a gift to everyone in the world, does it? And it doesn't mean that everybody in the world, then, has a right to the gift that I gave to the individual that I elected, or willed, to give it, either, does it?

Why is it that when it comes to things spiritual, we violate every cardinal, or basic, principle that we adhere to physically? We believe that we have a right to do special things for our family. We believe that we have a right to determine the number of members of that family. Yet, everybody in this world believes that Christ and God do not have any such rights. I've decided I am going to be a member of that family, and I don't care whether they like it or not. Nonsense! God makes that determination, and God has to call. And when God calls, then He gives. He loves His children and He gives to them. But it doesn't mean that He doesn't have love for the rest of the world. You know, there's a love, also, that we have for everyone else in this world, but it doesn't make them members of our family. It doesn't give them the rights of the family, does it? So, God is going to give the Faith to certain people, and then He wants them to act on that Faith—to believe it and to have trust and confidence in it.

2 Timothy 4 and let's note verse 7. 2 Timothy 4 and verse 7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Oh, it's something you can keep. "I have kept the faith." Have we? Have we fought that fight of the Faith, or do we sometimes cater to the whims of our carnal minds? We need to be very, very careful, brethren, because sometimes our approach is not in conformity with the concept of faith, it is more in conformity with the concept of my right, and my own capability, and my choice. And those are wrong. Let's believe in the Faith which God gave to us, and trust it implicitly, and fight that fight of faith all the way to the conclusion. "I have fought a good fight," said the Apostle Paul. "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Do you want to look back, after you have come to your point of departure, and say, with the Apostle Paul, "I have never compromised. I have never questioned. I have kept the Faith as originally delivered"?

Then in James 2, very quickly now. James the second chapter and I'm going to amplify this next time, but I want to get it in because it's under this particular

thought concept: "Conviction is substantiated by action"—and that is in the form of obedience. Let's notice James 2, now, and verse 17: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Even so *the* Faith. Here, it is the absolute form in the Greek: "Even so [the] faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Verse 22: "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works [speaking of Abraham. Remember the fourth chapter of Romans?], and by works was faith made perfect?" Oh yes, it takes action—it takes obedience. And so we find it in both places, here, in verse 22. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" So, the Faith of Jesus Christ is made perfect by the works of the individual.

Verse 26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." I don't know how much clearer James could have made it. Let's understand, brethren, that *the* Faith can be verbalized, and it must be manifested by works in our lives.

Next time, we're going to pick up other concepts on "the Faith."