

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 123
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #32

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This is the continuation, now, of the long series on the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, specifically now the fruit of "faith." Obviously, on the basis of the number of tapes that have been made, the significance of this particular subject of "faith" becomes rather well-understood. Faith is the subject of all subjects in the Bible, because the Bible clearly shows us that the just shall live by faith—faith is foundational to our hope of everlasting life.

Now, obviously when we deal with the subject of faith we are dealing with a word—a specific word, at that. There are several words, however, in the Greek, and in the Hebrew, that mean "faith," just the same as we have various words today that carry the same connotation. But I don't want you to think in terms of words, I want you to think in terms of its significance. It is an awesomely important subject. It is a subject that cannot be over-done, and usually, those that have difficulty grasping and understanding the significance of a particular subject are those who find the most trouble accepting it *as* a subject.

Faith is awesomely important, my dear brethren. There cannot be too much said about it, because you and I have not developed the faith that we need—the faith that is essential. It is an absolute, vital ingredient, and when we have faith, even as the grain of a mustard seed, we can receive the petitions of our hearts—whatsoever we ask—even the removing of a mountain. And I haven't seen any of you, including yours truly, moving any mountains yet. So we haven't quite arrived at that level of faith that we really need.

Why, then, are we so distraught and troubled with the concept of faith? Because of our insufficiency—our inadequacy. We are troubled with anything that strikes at the root of that which adversely affects us. What we really need to do is to

turn around and look at ourselves and ask, "Why, old man, are you troubled and perplexed? Maybe you need to hear more significantly—maybe you need to begin to appeal to God for a more dynamic, and more aggressive, manifestation of that fruit, or that characteristic, in your life." And if we were to do that, brethren, we would find the subject enthralling—we would find it inspirational—rather than a drag, and a problem.

So we need to take a good, long look at ourselves and see why we respond as we do. Remember, we can never finger-point at anybody. The Truth of God is still the Truth of God. The words of God are the words of God, and they ought to be inspirational, no matter what, when, where or how they come, and we need to allow those words to take deep root into our lives, and we can, if we don't throw up barriers. Our problem is that we are constantly throwing up our own mental barriers, and therefore, we do not receive—we do not hear.

I have delivered sermons in times past on certain subjects that seem to be almost self-evident, yet are not at all. Like the word "hear." How many of us really hear? You know, like when we train children—and I hear parents do this frequently: They will turn and say, "Did you hear me?" Now, so far as the words are concerned, or so far as the voice is concerned, the child heard it. There isn't any question about it. But did the child really hear? No, because, probably, it turned the meaning off—it didn't want to respond. Children are born with those traits and those characteristics, and we don't lose them just simply because we grow up to 21. We can turn things off very quickly, because we throw up mental barriers, and when we throw up mental barriers, because of our own likes and dislikes, our own feelings, our own past circumstances, our own agitations, our own carnality, or whatever it may be, when we throw these things up, obviously, we are not going to gain anything, because we don't hear—we didn't really receive it.

So what I am saying, brethren, is that I readily recognize that we have covered many, many tapes on this subject of faith, but what I also recognize is that none of us have yet arrived. Why? Maybe we are not hearing as well as we should. Maybe we are not applying it as we ought. Maybe we are not really digging and asking God, "Please don't ever remove this from me, until I learn." Because we would rather satisfy the whims of our own carnality and our own minds. It's fine if we can get what we want—we like to hear prophecy, or we like

this, or we like that. Why do we like it? Because we are deliberately circumventing a problem that affects us.

Do you know why people want to hear prophecy? Because it doesn't instruct them—it doesn't cut. It appeals to the natural, quizzical, futuristic concepts of the human mind. Even the Apostle Paul said there is arrogance that goes with that. Remember what he said in 1 Corinthians 13? All of those things are going to come to a conclusion, but one thing is going to remain, and that one thing is your character—if you effect the change. That character is awesomely important, and that character involves faith. If you don't really have faith—if you don't really believe it with everything that is within you—you are not going to effect the necessary changes. If you are not absolutely convinced that God means exactly what He says, then, unless you overcome, and you master that, and you do this or you do that, you are not going to make the necessary changes.

How many of us really see tomorrow for what it is? "Where there is no vision, the people perish." We are not able to see tomorrow as we ought, and because of that, we still allow ourselves to say, to do, and to think the things that we want to—we still cater to the whims of the self.

Now, brethren, with that as a background, let's think again in terms of this matter of faith. Faith is terribly important—awesome. It is the foundational ingredient by which you are going to make it into the Kingdom of God: "The just shall live by faith," and "without faith, it is impossible to please God." How do you have faith? It is not a natural trait—it is not a natural characteristic. It does not come because you have just decided that you are going to believe, and you are going to trust tomorrow. It is a gift of God's Holy Spirit, and you get that because of obedience—you get it because there is a will (an intent and a purpose).

So, let's take a look at this thing on faith, once again. We have covered many, many tapes up to this point—many, many texts regarding the subject of faith. We have just a few more texts, and I want you to bear with me, but I want them to take deep root in your lives—I want you to think soberly and seriously about them—because faith is what is going to see you through, and if, somehow, you become distraught and upset with me because of my agitation on this thing, fine, if you will just achieve what is meaningful in the Bible. If you make it, I'll be satisfied anyway, regardless. That is what I am interested in.

The subject of faith, now, is this Greek word *pistis*—p-I-s-t-I-s. It is the most significant of all of the words—that is, numerically, by number, at least. That faith has been defined in many, many ways up to this point. At the present time, however, we are thinking of it in terms of "view." Faith that not only looks back, but it also looks forward. It not only looks forward, but it looks back. It is a present condition, it is a past condition, and it is a future condition. Faith covers every view of mankind: it covers where he stands today; it covers his past, in confidence, and it covers his hope for the future. Let's take a good, long look at that, now, and see how it applies.

Let's think in terms of that faith, now, as it applies to our past, specifically with regard to justification. Here in Romans 3, verses 27 and 28. Romans 3, verses 27 and 28. It says: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." There is a law of faith. Now, boasting is not going to come on the basis of what you and I have done. Does it come by the law of works, that is, by our own machinations? By our own endeavors? By what we put into it? Nay. In other words, it isn't going to come from your study; it isn't going to come from all of your capabilities; it isn't going to come from anything that you put into it. It is going to come by the law of faith, and faith is a gift from God, and faith will come only if you fulfill what is required of you—and that is to bury the self. You have to crucify the old self—you have to lay it down.

Our problem is that we are trying to develop the fruits and the characteristics of God by undergirding them with the powers and the influences of our own carnal natures. *We* are going to study it out—it is *our* achievement, it is *our* greatness. No, it will never come that way. You have to destroy the self. That means to crucify—to mortify, to kill—the old self, entirely, to root it out, root and all. And then you can have that faith which God will provide, and that faith—as we see here—has nothing to do with the endeavor of you and me. It has nothing to do with our actions. It only follows an action that you and I must take, and that is to crucify the old self.

Now let's notice verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified . . ." Now, this shows that we are not looking to the future, whatsoever, because we don't believe in the old Johann Tetzl principle: that is, that we can buy indulgences—we can go out and pay a sum of money, and then we can go out and sin, because we have already taken care of the sin. Not at all.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified . . ." And if you will just go back up here to verse 25, you will see that justification has to do with sins which are past. That is, they have already come and gone. "Therefore we conclude that a man is [freed of his past guilt] by faith without the deeds of the law." That is, any action you perform in relationship to the Law of God has nothing to do with the elimination of that past guilt. For, if you kept the Law perfectly today—and you can't go beyond that—that is the requirement for the day. What are you going to do to take care of yesterday? Only the shed, spilled blood of Jesus Christ will take care of that. So we are looking back, now, almost two thousand years to the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and we are having faith and confidence. We must manifest faith in that. We must *believe* that He was sacrificed for a purpose—we must believe that our sins are obliterated.

Oh, I know, human beings with a flick of the wrist—a form of flippancy—say, "Oh, sure, I believe that," and yet, their behavior belies it. Do we really believe that Christ died for our sins? In the first place, we have to recognize what our sins are, and then we have to confess them. How many of us really recognize the depth, the gravity, of our sins—you know, just our thinking, our speaking, our hearing, and the things that we say and do?

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [that is, of all of his past guilt] by faith without the deeds of the law." By our present day action, we cannot take care of the past, whatsoever, Paul says. That is a matter of accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the acceptance of Jesus Christ is predicated upon the rejection of self. When we reject the self completely, then we can accept Christ. But you cannot reject what you do not see. So you are going to have to see the self for what it is, and then you can reject it. Then, with confession, there is a real opportunity afforded, because you can have the forgiveness if you will confess your sins. But you can't confess what you don't see and what you won't admit. So, you have to see it, then you have to confess it, and then you can have the forgiveness of your sins. So, we are looking back, now, to the obliteration of past sins, and the justification of the self. It has nothing to do with what we are going to do in the future. That we will see later on.

Romans 4 and verse 5. Romans 4 and verse 5: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." There it is: "that worketh not." Does that mean that I should not

keep God's Law? Does that mean that I should not be obedient to anything that God says? Does that mean that I have no responsibility, and there is not a thing on the face of this earth for me to do? "But to him that worketh not . . ." If you take that at literal, face value, does that mean that I should sit down and do absolutely nothing, and then if I do that, and just believe, that I can be justified? No, what he is talking about here are works that relate to the past. You see, what we are talking about are sins that have already come and gone. We are not talking about a view of the future, we are talking about the past, and there is absolutely nothing you can do, physically, that is going to take care of that past. You have already done all that you are going to do, and that is why you have to have the sacrifice of your Savior, Jesus Christ. By doing what you wanted to do, you needed that Savior. Now, by doing what you want to do at the present time, it isn't going to take care of that past. It will probably only require further justification in the future. That's the problem with human beings.

So, "to him that worketh not . . ." He isn't trying to work out some program by which his past can be forgiven. There isn't anything he can do about that. Why don't we just recognize that the past is the past? We are living in the present, and you and I cannot affect that past in anything that we do—we cannot change it, we cannot alter it. There is not one thing on the face of this earth that you and I can do about it.

Then, how in the world are we going to influence that past guilt? That past has a claim on our lives, and it is going to take us in the future. So, how in the world are we going to rid ourselves of that past? "To him that worketh not . . ." He is not trying to improve himself—whatever he considers that to be—on the basis of his past, that liability. Not at all. But he has faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—that Christ paid for those past sins.

Now, who in the world is going to get that sacrifice of Jesus Christ in order to obliterate the past? The one who is going to turn around and do exactly the same thing again? No, you see, Paul is not addressing that right now, but I can show you many, many texts in the Bible that tell you that if you build again the same things that you are attempting to destroy, you make Christ the minister of sin. So, why in the world should you ask Christ for His shed blood—His spilled blood—to wipe out a past that you are going to turn right around and do again? You have already made up your mind you are going to do exactly the same thing

again—like breaking the Sabbath, or any of the other Holy Days, or any of the other Commandments of God. You cannot go into it with the idea that you can eliminate the past, and then you can do as you blank please from this point on.

So, "him that worketh not . . ." You and I cannot work out the forgiveness of our past obligations. There is nothing we can do. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him"—we have trust, and faith, and confidence in Christ who has already paid for those past sins, if we just accept it. Now, we have to see what the conditions are—by, and under which, Christ will forgive us of our past sins—but he isn't addressing that here at all.

"[B]ut believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." So, his faith, then, points to that past forgiveness, and it is counted to him for righteousness, up to that point. Now what is he going to do? Well, we will see that later on.

Romans 5 and verse 1: "Therefore being justified by faith . . ." Justification has to do with our past sins. It has nothing to do with the future. You do not buy indulgences—you *cannot* buy indulgences—that is a human design, a machination. We are justified, and justification has to do with our past sins. We are justified by faith, faith in Jesus Christ—the sacrifice that was made for those past sins, as we were told in Romans 3 and verse 25.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, now we have peace because we are no longer at odds with Him, we are in harmony. And why is it that we have peace? Well, if you will remember over here in Romans 8 and verse 7, it says: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Why do we have peace with God, now? Because we are no longer at odds with God—we are not opposed to the Law of God. We now have peace because we now accept it. Why do we accept it? Not because of our carnal minds—the carnal mind is enmity against the Law of God—but because there has been a change of mind. The mind of Jesus Christ now resides within us—a mind that is in harmony with the Law, the statutes and the judgments of God.

So, " being justified by faith"—that is, having the past obliterated—"we [now] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Because there has

been a complete change of mind and heart so that we are no longer in opposition to God—we are no longer warlike, we are no longer fighting. If we are still struggling—if we are fighting, if we are filled with contempt, if we are filled with unhappiness, and disagreeable spirits and attitudes—we are talking about that which does not belong to God. It is not of God. If we have those traits and those characteristics, it is the living proof that we either are not in a proper relationship with God, or we certainly have turned around and are fast making our exit out. "By their fruits you shall know them." The people of God are contented—they are happy, they are joyous, they are enthusiastic. I didn't say it, brethren. Don't blame me. God Almighty said that the people of God, who have the Spirit of God, are filled with joy, and with thrills, and excitement, and the abundant life. Are we experiencing those things? If we are, then the Spirit indeed is working within us, but if we are agitated—if we are filled with strife and contempt, if we are troubled and perplexed—those are the fruits of the flesh, and they are in opposition to God.

In Romans 9. Romans the ninth chapter, and let's notice verses 30 through 32. "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." So, there is a righteousness which is of faith. That is, the past has been obliterated, now, and as we read earlier, we have been made right with God.

Now notice: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness . . ." What were they doing? They were creating their own physical endeavors, and how many of us are doing that—we use our own minds and we set up our own standards?

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith . . .

You see, we have to come, believing in God, and to believe in God requires, first and foremost, the crucifixion of the old self, and then the recognition of our pasts, with candid confession. We know what we are, have been, and still are, and we call out mightily to God to have those things rooted out. We recognized it because we have sought it by faith—we believe it, and we know that that sacrifice was made for purpose.

"Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." And I want to tell you, brethren, we have too many today who still are trying to do it from a physical perspective. That doesn't mean that we are not to bring ourselves into alignment with God, in perfect obedience to His laws, but we have set up our own standards—we have set up our own conceptions—and we are trying desperately, like ancient Israel did, to create dos and don'ts, and so on, and we want to bring ourselves, personally, into conformity to the wretchednesses of our own minds. *We* set up our standards.

You see, God gave the laws, the statutes and the judgments. He gave them to Moses; He gave them to Israel; He gave them to the prophets; and He sent them through Jesus Christ; and He delivered them to the apostles; and, as we are also told, He delivered them to His servants in the last days. And yet, we have people who are contending with that, consistently. Brethren, you can't do it. You are going to seek it out on your own? If you still have that belief, you are walking in the footsteps of ancient Israel, and you are going to be just as frustrated as ancient Israel was. Why don't you believe it in faith? If it has been delivered to us, let's believe it. Let's quit all of the agitation and let's just believe it—let's trust it and have that faith and that confidence in God. Let's quit using our own minds to determine the things that *we* are going to do, and let's trust that which was given to us.

That doesn't mean that we do not have an obligation to read and to study, but the purpose of that is to support that which has been delivered to us. How many of us have been deliberately reading and studying to substantiate our faith, and that which was given to us? No, we read in order to question, and that is not acceptable in the sight of God—that is not acceptable in the sight of God. So, brethren, you are either going to seek it by faith, or you are going to do it by the works of the law—you are going to attempt to do it by your own endeavors: you are going to read the laws, and you are going to analyze the words of God, and you are going to come up with your own explanations, just like human beings have been doing for, lo, these thousands of years. They are still doing it today, and everyone differs from everyone else. Where is the harmony in that?

You know, there is a way of harmony, and that is when we submit to the divinely-revealed Truth of God. You may ask, "Well, how do I know it is the Truth?" You knew when you were called—you knew when you were called.

There is no way that I can tell you how to regain it, unless in fear, trust and respect, you eliminate all of the retching of your own natural minds, and you just go back and pick it up in confidence, once again. That is all you can do. I can't prove it to you. Then, if I start proving it to you, I'm doing exactly the same thing you are doing. I don't have that faith to deliver. I can only receive it. But I willed not to lose it, and I am doing my level best to hang on to that faith and that conviction. I cannot substantiate it for you. I cannot give you verbal proof. Faith is an intangible. The Spirit of God is not seen, it is not something that I can say, "Here, let me show it to you in the Bible." The Bible is the written, recorded Word of God, but God's Word is not this book. This is only the recorded form of it. The Words are Spirit, this book is so much paper. God's Words, they are Spirit and they are Life. Oh, they are much more powerful than merely a physical recording—a tangible recording. They are a lot more than merely what we ascertain in carnal, fleshly minds.

What happens when we finally recognize what we must do, and we submit ourselves wholly and completely, is that God says He will then write them upon our minds and our hearts. If He is doing the writing, and He is writing there with the finger of God, what does that have to do with your study? Or is He doing it on the basis of your study, and as you study it out, then He writes it in your mind? Then, I want to know, if that is the case, why He is writing something different in your mind than He is in my mind, or in the minds of ten thousand others? Because they all differ. And yet, God is the same yesterday, today and forever. There is no shadow of change in Him. We need to stop and think of that very seriously and soberly. There is a faith that has been delivered to us, brethren, and God says you must hew to it, and hang on to it. It is the best that you have. If you have not been called—if your faith is not *the* faith of God—then you don't have anything to worry about. Your day is coming. But if it is God's faith, and you falter and turn away from it, there is no further hope—no further hope.

So he said here, then, noticing it once again in verses 30 through 32: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness . . ." In other words, they were out there doing their own thing, and what is the Gentile way of life? Make no mistake about it, brethren, it is merely human beings doing what their minds dictate. That's what makes a Gentile. It is not some kind of an evil term. A Gentile is one that is pursuing the natural mind—he is doing that which seems right to him. An Israelite, on the other hand, is one called of

God—to whom the Truth was given. That's what made him an Israelite—called of God. Oh, sure, I know there is a physical birth, but we are not talking about the physical birth, we are talking about its counterpart, which is the spiritual birth. In this case, the Gentile was doing exactly what his nature dictated, whereas the Israelite was the one who was obedient to God in that Way of Life given to him. Today, spiritually, it just simply is manifested in the broader dimension of anybody who has not received the Truth of God. That is a Gentile. An Israelite, then, is one chosen of God—that has that faith and that conviction.

Now what does he say? "That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness [they attained it], even the righteousness which is of faith." You see, they were never called—they never had it, physically. They didn't write a physical example, whatsoever. They never did have the Law of God, yet they obtained it because it is an element of faith—and that faith had to have been delivered to them.

"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness . . ." And here is the reason why I say that sometimes, when we are called and chosen, we make greater mistakes than those outside. You see, once we have been called, and we have come into the confines of God's Truth, we begin to trust our own physical minds again, and that's what Israel did. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness . . ." Here they were, down in Egypt, doing their own thing, until finally God called them, through Moses—they heard the words of God, they were called out—and then they began to question it, and then they began to set and determine their own concepts concerning the meaning of God's laws, and they added immeasurably to the truths of God. By their own traditions, they rejected the commands of God. So they took the commands of God, but now they began to develop their own ritualistic code. And do you know that the people in the church begin to do exactly the same thing—exactly the same thing?

Why is it that a new party—a Gentile out here, who has never known—never comes in with a lot of fetishes in his own mind? He is easily teachable, easily entreated, he has a beautiful spirit, a beautiful attitude, but as they come along in God's Truth, and they have been there twenty or twenty-five years, they all of a sudden lose it, because now they begin to revert to the natural mind and they manifest many of the carnal traits and characteristics, again. That's exactly what Israel did.

So, here is what Paul is defining: how the Gentiles, with great ease, came in, but the Israelites who had had the Truth—who felt themselves to be something, now—began to trust themselves, and they began to establish their own traditions. Now what did he say? Verse 32: "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith . . ." They didn't go back to that beginning—they didn't remember what God had given to them, they didn't trust it.

"Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." They began to trust in their own studies—they began to trust their own interpretations. They didn't go back to the original faith that was given to them—the confidence and the conviction under which God had called them. They trusted themselves.

"For they stumbled at that stumblingstone"—that is, at Jesus Christ. And what is Christ but the Word of God? So they began to stumble at the Truth of God—they stumbled at the very Word of God, and isn't that what human beings do today? And how quickly they will do it, under the guise of "study."

Alright next, I want us to notice Romans 10 and verse 6. Romans 10 and verse 6:

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth . . .

What is faith? It is that which was given to you—it is nigh. Can't we just reach back and get it—reassure ourselves in faith and confidence, and know that God delivered it to us? And our responsibility, now, is to study, yes—read, yes (let me encourage you with all that is within me to pray and to study daily)—but with what orientation? A questioning spirit? No, but for the substantiation of the Truth of God, that which was delivered to you, that faith which God automatically gave to you, initially—that trust and that confidence that God gave to you.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." It was the Truth which was

originally delivered to us—when we heard, we responded, we were faithful, and we were obedient. And I want to tell you, brethren, *that* is the Faith that I still proclaim, and I will proclaim it as long as God gives me breath, regardless of what anybody else says. And because other people who cannot know, and do not know, are using their own orientation, and so on, that is not a problem to me. That's *their* problem, but I happen to know what was delivered, and I know what we were taught from the beginning, and I have willed to give that to you. If there are those who take exception with it, let them pay their own price.

Alright, next, "What is the basis of Christian faith for the future?" Now, we have looked into the past—and we are going to look a little more into the past just a little later, here—but now what about the future? You see, I said that faith looks both backward and forward. What is the basis, then, of the Christian faith for the future? In Acts 17 and verse 31. Acts 17 and let us note verse 31:

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

What is the assurance? Faith in the fact that Christ was resurrected from the dead. So you see, even our future faith in the fact that He is going to come back, and that He is going to carry out a significant responsibility here, is predicated upon our faith in the past. Christ died, was buried, and was resurrected. You can have no future faith if it is not predicated on a foundational past faith. That past faith is in the fact that Christ came—and I don't mean that He came merely spouting out so many words. Do we really believe that Christ walked on this earth—that it was the Word of God Who was back there, that He died, that He was buried, that He was resurrected, and that He is at the right hand of God now? Do we really believe that?

I'll tell you, it is very easy to take a good look at our lives and compare ourselves by one introspective examination: put yourself back two thousand years ago and see if you could have accepted a man that came and walked upon the very *terra firma* on which you have walked many times. He ate just like you do; He looked just like any other human being, because He could hide Himself in a multitude; and He was out there working in masonry—carpentry. Put yourself in

that position, and then He turns around and says, "My Father is in heaven. I'm the Son of God, born supernaturally. I'm going to be here for just a limited period of time. I'm going to be resurrected and I'm going back to God, the Father." Could you have believed it? What if somebody came today? You may say, "Well now, that is easy, because I have already accepted the one in the past." In a sense, brethren, that is kind of a cop out, yet, it is true—there isn't any question about it—but if somebody showed up on the scene today, right now, and said, "I am Christ, the living Son of God that was promised from the foundation of the world, the Lamb that was to be slain," how easy would it be for you to accept that? How easy?

I'll tell you, I think about those things, and I have pretty significant feelings for those who had grave doubts—very deep feelings—not because many of them manifested a lack of faith out of contempt and hate, I'm sure, but probably out of fear. They just didn't want to be wrong—they didn't want to do the wrong thing—and yet, in not wanting to do the wrong thing, they did exactly that which was wrong. But why did they do it? Because God hadn't called them. You see, God doesn't hold anyone accountable until he sees. Remember what He said to the Jews? He said: "You say you see, therefore, your sins remain." When we come to recognize it—when we have accepted it and we have seen the fruits thereof, which all of us have (we walked in that Way of Life and we saw the fruits)—but then we turn and start agitating, we are creators of strife and unusual difficulties among others, and then is when we are going to pay our own price. But, brethren, to say that you believe in Christ today is relatively insignificant, unless you believe in that Christ who came of old, and the foundation of your faith, and your conviction, and your belief today is the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the fact that He is going to come back, once again. It's an awesome thing, but it is an absolute thing.

Acts 20 and verse 21. Acts 20 and verse 21: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Why faith toward Christ? Faith in the sacrifice that He made, in His resurrection, and in the fact that He is coming again—faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. You've got to go back. Who is this Christ? Christ is the one who was born. He is Immanuel—God among us—the man who walked on this earth two thousand years ago, approximately. That's the Christ you have to come to accept. Have we accepted that Christ? Do we have faith and

confidence in Him? So, the faith of the future is predicated on your acceptance of that literal Son of God who was born of a woman, and who lived through all of the trying circumstances which He did, and who paid with the supreme sacrifice, was buried, was resurrected, and ascended back to the Father.

In Acts 26 and verse 18. Acts 26 and let's note verse 18:

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

What is the call of God, then? It is for the purpose of turning us from the hardness of our natural state—the hardness of our Gentile relationship. Out here in the world, we don't trust anything. We are troubled with fear, perplexed and frustrated. Now God says that the call is to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness. What is darkness? Darkness is that way which seems right to us. Darkness is the pursuit of our own natural conceptions—our own natural orientation in life. God, then, has purposed that we should be called from that innate darkness, and we are then turned to light from the power of Satan—Satan who is the god of this world, who is the god of the darkness that has encompassed mankind.

"[T]hat they may receive forgiveness of sins." How do we receive forgiveness of sins? By the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Then the acceptance of Christ—having been given for that very purpose two thousand years ago—is an obvious manifestation of faith. The acceptance of Christ, then, for the "forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." There is only one faith. If Paul had it, and there is only one faith, it is the same faith that you and I must have—faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in the acceptance of that Way of Life, the Way of Life that was delivered to the Apostle Paul. As he said, he taught it, and we had to accept it also because it was given to somebody in the last days, and that party in the last days taught it, and you and I received it.

And so, faith, then, is essential. Faith in that past gift is essential for the opening of our eyes, and to turn us to light from darkness and from the power of

Satan. And if we don't have that faith, we are still going to be held under the sway—held under the bondage and servitude—of our own natural trust in our own natural minds, and that is darkness, the darkness of the Gentiles.

Romans 3 and verse 22. Romans 3 and let's note verse 22: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." Notice it: "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." Christ lived that faith. He came and actually walked in that conception—He lived that faith, that trust. He was born of a human being—born of a woman—and then became the recipient of the Truth of God, by a call of God, for the very purpose for which He was given. He lived in faithful obedience to the laws of God—because righteousness is the Law of God—and Christ trusted that and believed in it. It is unto all, and upon all, that believe—every one of us who accepts that and believes it—for there is no difference. It makes no difference whether it is a Gentile by nature, or an Israelite by nature, God has called both, and they all must manifest that faith in Jesus Christ.

So, we are looking back to that now, and in this case, we are also looking forward into the future for the hope of our inheritance and the fulfillment of that purpose—the fulfillment of our beliefs, our trust, our confidence, our hopes, and our aspirations. Because we certainly are not doing this for nought. We believe that there is some reward yet to come, and that reward which we look forward to is predicated upon a belief and trust in the past—the Faith of Jesus Christ.

You don't see Christ in you. Then how do you know that Christ is in you? If Christ is in you, He has faith in that past—in the elimination of the self, and the acceptance of Christ Himself. You cannot have Christ in you as long as you have the natural mind. You have to empty that mind out—you have to get rid of this natural mind—and then Christ will take up His abode within you, and when Christ takes up His abode within you, He has implicit faith in that past, because Christ knows it. You can't do it, brethren. You can't do it. It isn't a matter of your own endeavor—it isn't a matter of your working it out. It is a matter of a gift that Christ is going to give to you, because He did it—He lived it—and when He lives within you, He has confidence in that which was performed back in His own day. So we have faith, then, in Jesus Christ, and that is the faith that is in Christ. That faith is a gift of God—you cannot have it otherwise.

Romans 3 and verse 26, now: "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." That believeth in Jesus. Now, many, many people believe that involves only pronouncing the name, or making some kind of a statement: "Oh yes, I believe in Jesus." How do you know you believe in Jesus? What's the proof of it? The only way that you are going to believe in Jesus is if you get out of the way. You can't believe it. If you could do it yourself, then you wouldn't have to have any help. What you have to do is crucify the self, and when you crucify it, then Christ will take up His abode within you, and Christ *does* believe it. Then you can have that trust, that confidence and that faith—you will believe it, you will have absolute faith in it, because it is the gift of Jesus Christ.

Now, the basis for future faith, then, is the acceptance of the life of Christ—the fact that Christ lived; the fact that Christ fulfilled the entire purpose of God; the fact that Christ died for the forgiveness of our sins; the fact that Christ was resurrected for our hope of everlasting life. It is the acceptance of Christ. So, we are looking back to what Christ did two thousand years ago. Now, why is that going to help you and me? Because if we will crucify ourselves today, that Being with all that faith, who fulfilled all of those purposes, will live in you and me. He already knows it—He is going live that faith and that confidence. It isn't something you and I can conjure up—it isn't something we have to come to somehow build for ourselves. Faith is a gift of God, and you must receive it at the hands of God; and you will receive it at the hands of God only if you come to recognize the self; and you can only recognize the self if God has given you the ability, through the power of the Spirit, to see yourselves for what you are, and then you crucify—mortify—the old self. Then that new life can be lived within you. He will come in and take up His abode there, and then we become truly the workmanship of Jesus Christ. He is going to do it within us by His power, His faith and His confidence.

But what we have tried to do is to turn it all the way around. We won't work on the self. We are not going to crucify the old self, we are going to try to find out what's right for ourselves—we are doing the wrong thing, we are struggling for the wrong thing. That doesn't mean we are not supposed to read. I'm not saying that. I am emphasizing a point at this time, and the point is that we have turned it around because of the arrogance of our human minds—we want to do the part of God, *we* want to fulfill what Christ will do within us instead of doing our part.

And our part is to get rid of the self, and then God and Christ say, "We will take up our abode in them." Do you want to be successful? Just start working on that self—just bring it under control—and you will be successful. And you will not do that unless you have faith, and that faith looks backward and forward in confidence.

More coming in the future.