

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 126
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #35

Raymond C. Cole
Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This is now the continuation of the long subject on the fruits of God's Holy Spirit—this one specifically dealing with the fruit of "faith." It is extremely difficult for me to over-emphasize the need of faith, for the Bible tells us very clearly that faith is the vital ingredient for the hope—the receipt—of salvation. By faith shall we enter into the Kingdom of God. Faith is the absolute, vital ingredient—the vital, essential characteristic—required for everlasting life. There's no possibility of my over-emphasizing that particular requirement. If it is cardinal—if it is basic—as Jesus Christ said, and also we find in a number of other areas through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit itself, then it is the vital ingredient of everlasting life, and we as human beings cannot overplay it.

So I've taken plenty of time, and I have done so deliberately, to cover this subject of faith, because if it is so vital, then obviously it is not an indigenous characteristic of human beings. Men are created with sometimes self-confidence, but there is a vast difference between self-confidence and faith. That will show up in due time, because self-confidence is shattered and broken very quickly as a result of trials and difficulties encountered. Whereas faith—if it is true faith—is only bolstered. That is, with trials it grows and develops, and becomes more awesome in its manifestation in our lives, and even more so with difficult trials. So faith is not impeded, blocked or obstructed by difficulty, trial and experience, but it is enhanced thereby. So self-confidence will be shown for what it is, in all of its arrogance and its conceit, whereas faith will also be manifested by the same difficulties and trials. Because if it is the true faith of God—the absolute faith required for everlasting life—it will be bolstered by our experiences, the difficulties which we undergo. But man's own confidence, which he drums up for himself—his own conceit, his own arrogance, his own pride—will come crashing down under such experiences.

In this regard, I think it's necessary for me to mention to you that I'm going to have to capitalize on this element of faith today and deeply rely on it as a result of a prayer which I uttered as I was driving over to the studio this morning: For the last week I have had a very bad case of the flu, which has very, very severely affected my ability to speak. You are probably going to note that there is not the usual routine in the speaking that I normally manifest when I deliver these tapes. So I'm going to have to capitalize on that faith to get through this subject—this tape—today. It won't do you any good to pray about it. We will do that right now, because by the time you hear it, it will long ago have been accomplished. But your prayers, of course, routinely, will matter a great deal because they are what make it possible for me to do the things that I do, and for all of us to accomplish what we need to do out here. So we certainly appreciate them. And faith is so vital—it is so important—and I'm going to count on God for that faith and that intervention today despite the physical condition that prevails, and the thing that would obviously disrupt, if it were not for the powerful intervention of God and the power of His Holy Spirit. So I will count on that today.

Now, continuing the subject. This will be tape number 35, and it hopefully will be the concluding tape for this particular word. I do have one more word that I want to cover, and some very significant parts within that word, but I do want and hope to cover the remainder of the material on this word *pistis*—p-i-s-t-i-s (or o-s, whichever the case may be), which actually means "faith" or "belief."

We will continue now with the subtopics by which I have evaluated the subject, and I don't say that they are inspired of God—maybe they are if God has done it. Why, fine. But it is my analyzation of the material, and I assume personally all of the defects. All of the glory that goes in it, goes to God, totally, and the inspiration is His.

So we have come down to point number 33: What is the basic cause of man's failure to receive his petitions uttered to God? You know, there are millions of people who go to God and, as we have in the past commonly referred to it, they have the "give me's"—or in a shortened version it's the "gimmes." In other words, they are always asking God, "Please give me this. Please do this for me. Please do something else for me." And I'm not even sure that they say "please"—it's "give me, give me, give me, give me." But they don't want to do anything for it, of course—no act of obedience, no responsibility on their part. They just want God

to intervene in their lives, and they want God to carry out whatever they ask of Him. And then many of them are shattered, and distressed, and troubled because they don't get what they are asking for.

Now, why do they not get what they asked for? Many of us don't get it, and we need to take a good look at the reasons for that. Now, very specifically, one of the reasons is the fact that we just don't have any faith. We really don't believe—we doubt the very thing that we ask. You know, it's like the old statement that I heard years ago, which said, "Well, I would ask God if I really thought that I was going to get it." And I've heard it many, many times. People are willing to ask God if they really think they are going to get it. Well, now that is a subject of analyzation itself. Number one, is it merely a lack of faith for the receipt of something that they should really have, or are they asking for something that they shouldn't have in the first place? If they are asking for something that is contrary to the will of God, they are not going to get it, I don't care how much faith they have. So, as the Bible clearly says, we receive not because we believe not, or because we ask amiss. So there are two basic reasons for which we do not receive the petitions of our hearts or our minds.

Now, what is the essence of the first reason—which means that we don't really believe it? That is, we go before God and we think we are talking somehow to the ceiling, or to the four walls. It's a kind of a nebulous thing, you know, and we do so because we don't really know God. God is not a reality for us—God is not real. Even though we can't see Him—God is invisible—He is up in the third heavens, and so on, but also He encompasses the entire universe. He is everywhere. He is about us, if we only knew it—if we could only sense it and realize it. But we do not sense it—we do not realize it—except by the divine revelation of God. God has to reveal Himself to us through Jesus Christ. And when God is revealed, we come to know Him.

Well, now if God is only a figment of imagination that we give dimension to out of the chambers of our own minds and our own hearts—that is, *we* add the dimension of what God is—then we are not going to realize the petitions of our hearts, because God is not made up out of the configuration of men's hearts and minds. There are plenty of gods that are, but those gods don't hear—they can't respond, they are inanimate, they don't have any power and they don't have any ability. And it is those gods that are addressed by the vast majority of human

beings. Now, if we come to the true God—the one and the only God—which means that we have come knowing who He is and what He is, then we are going to receive the petitions of our hearts, if we really believe it.

So here in Matthew the 21st chapter, and I want us to notice verse 21. Matthew the 21st chapter, and noting verse 21, but reading also verse 22: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not . . ." In other words, it's a two-edged sword. You have to have faith, but you can't say, "Well, I believe it, maybe." That won't work. You have to know it—it must be believed emphatically and absolutely.

If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing [that is, if you really have faith], ye shall receive.

Now obviously, there are conditions. Can you go ask to take over the rulership of God—to dump Him, to remove Him from His throne? Well, Satan has already tried that, and that made the Devil out of him. Can you go just ask anything that you want to? No. So, the "whatsoever you ask" is conditioned on basic understanding—the understanding of what is good for you, what is right for you, and what is acceptable in the sight of God.

So this is a good lesson on terms within the Bible. "Whatsoever" doesn't mean anything that you can conjure up in your hearts or in your minds. It is "whatsoever" is right and acceptable and pleasing in the sight of God. You can have it. So if there is some situation in life, you know, that you would like to have altered and changed, or something that you have desperate need of, and God looks down upon you as His benevolent, marvelous children whom He loves and admires and respects, you can have it, if you believe. But you must believe it.

Now in James 1 and verse 6 we also read a comparable statement. Here in James chapter 1 and noting verse 6. He said: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." That means we change with circumstances. Now, what that is telling us also is that sometimes your faith is going to be tried by circumstances, and if those

circumstances are going to change you and you are going to be driven by those circumstances, you didn't have faith in the first place. Then, what it means is that real faith weathers the storms of trial, condition and circumstance. It stands tall and firm, even if you have to wait years to get the response. It doesn't change, because no matter what happens, you still know and you believe, and you don't change. You just simply, in patience, allow God to exercise whatever He wills and at the time that He deems necessary.

So the basic cause of man's failure to receive his petitions which he asks of God is the fact that he doubts—that *he* determines times, that *he* dictates and is not willing for his faith to be tried and subjected to the acid test. But God wants to know. Because only by a true faith—an unalterable, unchanging faith—are we ever going to inherit the Kingdom of God. God is going to have the kind of faithful individuals who never doubt. And when you have that kind of faith—when you have that kind of conviction, that belief, that positive orientation in life—it makes you, then, truly a child of God.

You see, God has no doubts. When He speaks, it happens. He uses all of the forces of this universe—and I can't even tell you all the means by which God can bring things to pass. What are the forces and the powers that God employs? I know it is by the Spirit, because He said so, but obviously, there are many things that we do not even remotely comprehend. So God merely spoke and He brought galaxies and the universe into existence. By a mere spoken word. You and I can't do that, and yet, the kind of faith that God requires of us is the faith that undergirds such commands—commands within our own limited area at the present time.

So, one of the essential ingredients for real obedience to God is the acceptance of our present station—the confession of what we are, the admission of what we are. We are limited—awesomely limited—and empowered only to the scope and to the extent intended and purposed by God. And so sometimes there are those who are given greater faith than others. Is that not what Paul said there to the Corinthians, when he said some have the gift of faith? So God obviously has given them a greater element of it than He has to the average individual, and the sensible man is going to recognize that difference. He doesn't look at it and say, "Well, if you can exercise that kind of faith, I can too. You are no better than I am." That kind of comparison will get us no place, because God won't accept it,

but the acceptance of our station in life—of what we are by birth, as well as what we are by the call of God, as well as what God has intended and willed—is the vital ingredient of achieving, in faith, what we ask of God. Then when we ask, we can have our petitions.

Now, the next point. Point number 34: "What earmarks the truly chosen of God?" This is going to be a very interesting statement, and it is one that I have been hammering on now for twelve years, and yet people find it so incredibly hard to believe. What is the real manifestation of the continuity of a faith that God originally gave? Oh, it has something to do with doctrine, and it is awesomely important.

How do you know whether you still really have faith or not? I don't mean a nebulous, ambiguous nothingness, because you can't see faith, can you? It is not a nebulous nothingness that people call faith. I don't mean that at all. I mean a faith that God has to give, which is a gift from God. What is the manifestation of that faith, and how do you know that you have it? How do you know that you are continuing in that Faith that God originally gave?

Here in Acts 14 and verse 27, now. Acts 14 and let's note verse 27. We read this:

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Well now, why was it that He had to open a door of faith to the Gentiles? Because that door of faith was the belief of something, and what was it that God wanted the Gentiles to believe? The same Gospel—the same Way of Life—that had been given to the Jews and to the Israelites earlier. So God gave to them, now, the opportunity to believe that same thing.

So the obvious manifestation, then, of the continuity of the faith of these Gentiles—after that door of faith had been opened up to them—was the continuation of the belief of the very things that they had been taught and which they had received. That was the door of faith that was open to them—the door to believe the Gospel that was to be proclaimed unto them—and the proof of the

continuity of that faith was in the practice of that Gospel from that time on. That was the living proof of it. So how, then, did the Gentiles prove that the door of faith had been opened to them? Carrying out the very things which they had heard and which they had received. That was the proof that the door had been opened to them.

In 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 5. 1 Corinthians 2 and noting verse 5, but we are going to read verses 6 through 14 because it is essential. 1 Corinthians 2, beginning with verse 5, and reading through verse 14: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men . . ." What in the world is the Apostle Paul saying here? He is saying exactly what has happened today: Most people's faith today stands only in what they—with their own minds—think they have proven to themselves. But faith does not stand in the wisdom of men. The wisdom of men is intellectual capacity, isn't it—the ability of analyzation, and using material to come to certain deductions? Isn't that what wisdom is? But faith does not stand in such operations of human minds, but in the power of God.

So the real faith of God does not stand by what men prove at all. Here is what I have been trying desperately, brethren, to get across to all of us for all these many years. If we cannot, if we do not, accept the past as the gift of God—the Truth of God and the continuity of it, based on our faith (the faith that God opened up to us [that knowledge, the door of faith, that was given to us initially, as it was to the Gentiles]—and if it is not predicated upon that faith and that confidence, we, then, are trusting our own native, natural mental abilities, and that has nothing to do with the ascertaining of the invisible Truth of God. You cannot demonstrate it—you cannot prove it—by human prowess or ability. It is a gift of God.

God gave it to us, and we had our faith shattered by the very circumstances that should have built it. Faith should have been shored up by all of the events that occurred within the church, because God said very clearly that that day could not come except there would be an apostasy, or a falling away. So, when we saw these things happen, we should have had our faith shored up, but rather, people began to question everything, and they turned away from it. So he said:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world [not the wisdom of human

minds. It is the wisdom of God which we have accepted by faith.], nor of the princes of this world [It isn't even based on the knowledge of those who presumably, at least, think they know what's going on in this world.], that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

What we are proclaiming to you is a wisdom that was originally revealed to us, that cannot be proven by the prowess of the human mind, but it is the wisdom of the ages, and that has been revealed as a mystery of God. It was revealed—uncovered—in our time by the will and the purpose of God.

"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Neither would those who have a lack of this faith persecute those who are walking in the same Spirit and with the same mind today. And as Christ said, "If they have persecuted me, they are going to persecute you." Why did they persecute Him? Because they didn't know who He was. Why do people take broad exception with those who manifest the absolute faith today? Because they don't know who Christ is. How are they going to know Him? They know Him if they have accepted Him, and He is the Word of life that has never changed. How do you know you have Christ, then? You know because you have accepted an uncompromising Way of Life—the doctrine, the Truth of God—that cannot change.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen . . ." Now we can understand this. The eye doesn't see faith, does it? The eye doesn't see spiritual things. It can't. So our eye of understanding, our ear of comprehension, cannot grasp these things, whatsoever. They are accepted on faith. And if we cannot accept that kind of faith, my dear brethren, I'll tell you, we are hopelessly lost.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.

Sure He did, and the continuity of that faith, as we read back up here in verse 5, is found in consistent belief in that doctrine, for otherwise you are going to go right back, and your confidence will be in yourself, and in the wisdom of

men. You are going to think of it in terms of what you have found from your own mind.

Oh sure, I know that they are going to claim that it comes through this Spirit of God, yet they will deny every concept in the Bible concerning that Spirit—the very concept that the Truth always comes through a chosen ministry. It never comes—has never been given—through individuals. Never. And yet, look at how many people are going to believe that. They believe that they have the Spirit of God and they are going to find out for themselves. It is a form of human arrogance. It does not happen that way, brethren.

How does the Spirit operate? It gives the Truth to the ministry—it reveals it to the ministry—who are then held accountable for proclaiming that Way of Life. You hear it, and then you are held accountable for maintaining it by faith. There is no other way. That's what Paul said, and he said it more than once—and so did the other apostles, and so did Jesus Christ.

How did the Truth come to the original apostles? Through Christ. Because Christ decided? No, but because the Father had sent Him and given Him the Truth. Then, Christ took no credit unto Himself, whatsoever. It was a gift to Him. But He was a true minister of God.

How, then, did the apostles receive it? Because Christ gave it to them, and they were then the ministers of God who went out and taught it. How about following that? There was a ministry that followed Christ, even down into the last days, and that ministry has been used as the means by which the Truth of God has been proclaimed, and our acceptance of it is a matter of faith, and the continuity of that faith is manifested in maintaining the loyalty that we should to that very doctrine which we received. So it says:

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak [Who is the "we" here? The

ministry.], not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy [Spirit] teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.

Now, what we are told very clearly, then, is this: Somebody chosen of God—the "we," the ministry, as it was in the case of the Apostle Paul and the other apostles and Jesus Christ, and so also in our own time—is going to proclaim that Truth, but it is going to be rejected by all of those who are relying on the natural mind. Why will they reject it? Because they are going to attempt to prove it by man's wisdom. They are going to use what they think is their own capability. Sure, they are going to claim that they have the Spirit, but if they had the real Spirit of God, then they would recognize Christ, because Christ is the Word manifested. They didn't recognize Him in His own day when He was right there. They don't recognize Him today because they lack that faith, and that trust and that confidence.

What earmarks, then, the truly chosen of God? By faith they still believe it. They don't take any accolades to themselves. They don't say, "I've proven this for myself." They accept it by faith, and they know it. And they believe it by faith. Does that mean that it cannot be corroborated by the technicalities of God's Word? No, but you certainly cannot turn it around. You are not going to *prove* it by the technicalities of God's Word, I'll tell you that. Why do I say that? Because that's exactly what every one of the servants of God said who formed a part of this very Word of God. You cannot do it. You can substantiate it by your reading, but you cannot prove it thereby.

2 Thessalonians 2, now. 2 Thessalonians 2 and let's note verse 13. I'd like for you to take the time to read verses 7 on through 15, but I won't take time to read that. I just want to get to verse 13 here. 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 13:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Here we see, then, the word "belief"—that is the confidence of that Truth which was given. It's the same word—"faith" in that which was given. "Because

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and faith in that truth," which was given. This is a last-day prophecy. Somebody, then, received that faith—the Truth of God that was given in the last days—and we are going to have to maintain it by continuity of that belief. That's the manifestation of it.

Now, even if somebody wants to argue technicalities, he is going to have to find somebody whom he accepted as the ministry of God in the last days, who proclaimed that Truth, and then it is essential for him to maintain that faith. Otherwise, he is denying the very Word here.

Now, we may not want to believe that our past affiliation was it. A lot of people find that very obnoxious. They just don't want to do it. Then tell me which one was proclaiming that Truth where there was an apostasy within, and it now is our duty to hang on to it. No, they don't do that. They come around, and what they are doing is catering to the whimsical nature of their own minds. *They* pick up the Bible. *They* are going to do the studying. *They* are going to ascertain it. There is nothing farther from the actual means of obtaining Truth than that very concept. It is a gift of God, and you are going to continue it, then, in faith.

Hebrews 6 and verse 12. Hebrews 6 and noting verse 12: "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." There must be a continuity of faith. Faith is not merely saying, "Yes, I trust Christ." That is not what I'm talking about. That is not the manifestation of faith, whatsoever. What *is* that Christ that he accepts or she accepts? You see, they always leave that nebulous and unanswered. Who is this Christ? That Christ is the Word of God made manifest, and He was not only manifested in His own life as the Word of God—because He spoke it into existence, and because He lived it and walked in it in His own physical body—but it is also manifested in our days. Who, then, manifested the life of Christ, in whom you have faith and confidence in the Truth of God received? Oh, how many things they violate to substantiate the whim of their own minds.

What did he say in verse 12? "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Faith is manifested in continuity of belief. That is what really makes it visible. Christ was the visible manifestation of the Word of God. They saw it walking on His own two legs.

They didn't believe it. They saw it, however, and it is still manifested today, and people even see it, physically, but they do not comprehend it spiritually. And many of them have lost it because they no longer trust that which was delivered. So says the Bible.

James 2 and verse 5. James 2 and noting verse 5:

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith [rich in active obedience, walking in that faith], and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

I don't mean somebody that has a nebulous concept. I mean somebody who *knows* what *the* faith is and is walking in it. I don't mean somebody who says, "I think I know." I mean somebody who *knows*. When God reveals, it is a matter of knowing. Who is it that is going to inherit everlasting life? John 17 and verse 4 says, "if we *know* God." It doesn't say, "if we think we do." Now, how do you know God—how do you know Christ? Christ is the Word of God manifested. Then you know Christ because you know the Word—you see it, and in faith you believe it. Then, it means anybody who says "I think" or "maybe" is not even on the road—not even on the road. Those called of God know, and faith is the manifestation of that knowledge. They walk in that Way—they know what they received and they believe it. They are not always up in the air. They are not there at all. They know it was delivered.

The next point: "The ministry cannot control the faith of the called." It is not our duty. Here in 2 Corinthians 1 and verse 24—a text that we have given so many times, but I want to re-emphasize it here. 2 Corinthians 1 and noting verse 24: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith." Now, faith is what? Well, if Christ were faith personified, and He was the manifestation of God's Word, then your faith manifested today is the doctrine you believe. And what is doctrine, but the Way—the Word, the things that you believe? It's the way that you think, it's the way that you react, it's the way that you do things, because it is a Way of Life. Christ said, "I am the way and I am the truth." The Word is the Truth. Christ was the Word, and Christ was faith manifested.

Now, "not for that we have dominion over your" action upon God's Word. We don't have dominion over that, but you had better have dominion over it yourself, because God has given you a responsibility. It is the ministerial duty to preach it, and, brethren, I have told you before that I am going to do that with all that is within me. But I am not going to rule in your lives. That was a gigantic mistake. Oh, don't ever make any mistake about the fact that we will preach it. We are going to preach it powerfully, and those who really believe are going to act upon it. It will depend upon the level of your faith.

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith [the same word, *pistis*], but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand." What Paul is saying is that if you do it because we demand it as a letter application, it isn't predicated on your faith, at all. The one thing I want more than anything else, brethren, is action predicated upon faith because you believe it, and no matter what happens to any human being, you can never be distraught or troubled—you could never have things torn up again, because your faith is going to stand on your conviction, not on the demand for a letter application from a ministry. Brethren, what I want you to do is to live it. I'm not talking about the value of the Truth. It is our duty to preach that, yes, but what I am talking about is your living it because you believe it, not because you are afraid of excommunication or some other physical behavior on our part. No, the ministry cannot control the faith of the called. You do that. It is your responsibility.

Now, what is a ministerial responsibility? That's the next concept here. In Acts 14 and verse 9. Acts 14 and let's note verse 9. We do want to hasten right along, because, as I said, I want to complete this. Acts 14 and verse 9: "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet." In other words, sometimes the ministerial responsibility is to recognize the faith of an individual. Now, the problem is that a lot of people believe that they have faith when the ministry knows that they do not have faith. Now, if we were to say to you, "Well, you don't really have the faith," you wouldn't like it, would you? So there are many times when it is better just not to come right out and tell them what we know, but to encourage them, and to help them to come on.

The matter of healing is one of those areas. People get so upset. As if it is our duty to go out there and tell you that you can go to the hospital, or that you

can't go. I cannot even remotely grasp why it is that we cannot understand what real faith is. Because somebody goes into the hospital, and because I go and anoint them, and manifest real compassion and understanding for them in their crisis, or in their time of illness, does not mean that I condone a lack of faith. If I am going to demand perfect faith before I will ever have anything to do with them, I wouldn't have anything to do with anybody, including yours truly. Then, if I'm going to make a choice regarding at what level I'll have something to do with him, I have become a judge, and not a human being who still needs the help of God. It is not my responsibility to judge the level of faith of an individual. That has been appointed to Christ. It is not my charge.

So, because I help out somebody—I show compassion and I leave them within the church—does that mean I condone their choice? You know, we are always looking at a physical body. They ask, "Why are you leaving them in the church?" Well, the Church is a spiritual entity anyway, and even as ancient Israel came out with a lot of people that were not Israelites, so there probably are a lot of people in the physical body today that don't belong in the spiritual one, period. But that's not my duty to determine. I don't make those choices—I don't make those judgments. When, my dear brethren, will we understand it? I want us to stand on the level of faith. I'm not worried about sitting with somebody who is not quite as perfect as I am, because who said that I was more perfect anyway? Wouldn't that be the arrogance of my own mind? You know, it just might be. I'm not worried about that, because Christ sat with sinners. He loved the world, and so I give all of my love for all people, and I don't make any difference. But that doesn't mean that I have accepted one and rejected somebody else. I don't even know, and neither do you. There are many who think they do, because they are only looking at the physical circumstances, but Christ said you can't read the hearts. I can't, anyway, and I know they can't either.

You know, I know of some people who committed some sins that have never been a problem for me and their spirit and attitude of mind are vastly superior to most people I know. They hated the sin with a passion, but it was like an albatross around their necks—they could not get rid of it. I felt sorry for them. Do you suppose that Christ in that day—in the Judgment—is going to say, out of mercy and kindness: "Their attitude was perfect"? When given the power and the ability, those individual are going to live far better than some others who thought they were, as we say in the vernacular, the cat's meow, but who lived far less righteously before God because they had a wrong spirit and a wrong attitude.

Brethren, let's come to recognize our own levels of responsibility. It is my duty to preach God's Truth. I am not judging people. I don't for one minute believe that all who attach themselves to our little fuddling operation are, by virtue of that alone, going to inherit everlasting life. I don't know. I know that every mortal I know has need of time to grow, and that includes the one you are listening to. And I know that I need to manifest all the love in the world, because I need it. And I know that those who have a self-righteous and arrogant attitude have more need of it than they even remotely realize. Oh, to God that they could come to recognize it and find what real, true joy and happiness is, because happiness is not in a critical spirit and attitude toward others, but in the recognition of the inadequacy of us all, and our great need for the mercy, the compassion, the tolerance, the patience, the forbearance and the kindness of God, and of Christ. And what a joy that is.

The ministerial responsibility is what? Notice it again in verse 9: It is to sometimes perceive that there is not sufficient faith for whatever they may be asking, and then it becomes our necessity to help them to grow in that faith. In 1 Timothy 2 and verse 7. 1 Timothy 2 and verse 7:

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith [believing what is taught] and verity.

Brethren, I think I have demonstrated, without doubt, the fact that I really believe what I am proclaiming to you. I have certainly tried to act upon it. For any deficiency or inadequacy, I humbly beg pardon from any mortal, as well as from God or Christ. I'm not perfect, but I'll tell you, I do believe it—I always have believed it—and I trust God. So, it is our duty to believe it and to preach these things in faith. I don't want to be a hypocrite. I know the penalty.

Hebrews 13 and verse 7. Hebrews 13 and noting verse 7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow." And there are a lot of people who say, "I will never follow a minister again." Well, I don't know, I guess they are going to violate a part of the Word of God. What it is saying is that God Almighty must keep, then, a faithful ministry. Could it be your duty to find it?

So he said, "whose faith follow, considering the end of their [conduct]." I hope that our conduct has been indicative of our faith and our conviction—and our love and affection for the people of God.

The next one—point number 37: Can you know who you are? Galatians 3, verses 7 and 9. Galatians 3—the third chapter here in the book of Galatians—and verses 7 through 9: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Those who are of faith. I have defined that faith. How do you know whether or not you really believe that faith? The one living proof, as all the apostles mentioned, is if you recognize the faith initially. It is a faith shattered on the part of some because of an apostasy that occurred, but maintained absolutely on the part of those who are faithful, and they walk in that doctrine or that Way of Life. That's the proof of it. Do you have that faith—the faith, the conviction—that was initially delivered?

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed [that's when the Gospel began to be preached]. So then they which be of faith [*pistis*] are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Is that our faith? Do we trust—do we really believe—that we were given that Gospel? Our faith is manifested if we believe that what we are practicing today is the same faith that was given to Abraham, and that was also delivered in our day through the ministry that God chose for our time—a faith that became shattered on the part of some because they started looking to human beings, and conditions and circumstances, rather than to the Truth which they had been given.

Very close relationships result from real faith. That's point number 38. In 1 Timothy 1 and noting verse 2. 1 Timothy 1 and noting verse 2: "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith [here is a father/son relationship in the faith]: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." And you know, I think I can understand exactly what the Apostle Paul is talking about, because for those who manifest that kind of love, affinity, affection and regard for the Truth that was given to them, there is a very close endearment.

In Titus 1 and verse 4. Titus 1 and noting verse 4: "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith." A close bond of father/son, son/daughter, daughter/son, or a filial relationship, spiritually, develops. What a close affinity. It is not a figment of imagination—it is not so many words—I mean a feeling of the heart. What love and affection—what affinity—exists if we really have that kind of faith, and trust, and belief.

What are the classic examples of faith? They are found in the chapter on faith—Hebrews 11. That is a sermon in its own right, and I'm not even going to go into it here, yet, but the word is repeatedly used throughout Hebrews 11, verses four, five, six and seven. The same word is used just all the way, repeatedly. And these are classic examples. Men can believe when that Spirit of faith is given to them.

Now a final warning: Familiarity breeds contempt and a lack of faith. Real love and affection—a spiritual, filial relationship—breeds very close regard and respect for one another, but familiarity breeds contempt. In Matthew 8 and verse 10. Matthew 8 and noting verse 10, but we are going to read verses 5 through 12:

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed [What an attitude—what an attitude]. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Who is he talking about? This man knew that Christ had control over all these things. He merely had to speak the word, he didn't need any personal appearance. He said, "I don't have to go there personally. I merely speak the word, and I know that that is all Christ has to do."

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.

You know, the closer they come, they start looking to human defects, just like many of these people: "Who is this man? He was born of fornication. We know the background there." Whereas, the people who were removed did not have those doubts.

"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." And so, sometimes, when we get close to people, we begin to nitpick. We cannot see ourselves. That's why we do it. It's the age-old story of the mote and the beam.

[T]here shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth [and indeed there will be, because some couldn't get their eyes above other human defects]. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour [We would have the petitions of our hearts, if we likewise believed].

So it is, brethren, that we have come to the conclusion of the word *pistis*. There is one more which is the Greek word *pistos*—p-i-s-t-o-s—which means "faithful," and it is used in many, many respects, but I am going to take a limited approach to it when I cover it in future tapes.