

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 131
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #40

Raymond C. Cole
Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This is now the continuation of the subject, "faith"—that long series on the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. This is tape number forty in the series on the specific fruit of "faith," and it is my hope and plan to complete the entire subject of faith today.

In the last tape, by way of synopsis or review, we covered approximately three points. Number one of those was, "How human beings can be faithful." And that is by the mercy of God—the fact that God Himself, through His mercy (that is, unmerited pardon, so far as we are concerned), overlooks our problems and our difficulties. When there is a change of spirit, or a change of attitude, when we become convicted in heart and mind, and we come to see ourselves for what we really are, and we turn to God with a truly repentant spirit and attitude, then God tenders mercy to us. And, by that mercy, we are afforded the opportunity of faithfulness—that is, to be acceptable in the sight of God, and the privilege of daily repenting and turning back to God, and maintaining our relationship with God.

Then we saw, secondly, a long series of examples on what implicit faithfulness is. That is, that God Himself is faithful. And also, God then set in motion the entire celestial realm—the astrobodies—as we see them: the sun, the moon, the stars and the various other interrelated objects within that celestial realm. And within that we see the manifestation of faithfulness. That is, the sun comes up absolutely regularly, because it is appointed by God. The moon performs exactly as God designated, and so do all of the stars. These things are doing exactly what God ordained, and exactly what God decreed, within the structure of that physical realm. They do what they were told to do.

The only object of the creation of God that does not faithfully fulfill the purpose of God is man. Man was given a mind, and the ability to use that mind, and

he has used it in opposition to God. God made man, and if you will recall, in Ephesians, Paul wrote that we are, by nature, the children of wrath. But in Romans 8 and verse 7 we find that we are in opposition to the Law of God—that is, in opposition to God. We are in opposition to anything that is restrictive. We throw off all bounds and restraints because we want to do the thing that we want to do. We are unconcerned about the fulfillment of responsibility, or of maintaining order, symmetry, and design. We are going to be our own beings, and you will hear that very frequently expressed.

Now, the moon does not do what it pleases; it does what it was ordained to do. The sun does not do what it wills to do; it does exactly what God appointed. But men are defiant and rebellious. They will not be obedient to law. Now, they have a myriad justifications: "Christ did away with this," and "Paul made this clear and new," and "something else happened." You know, they have all kinds of explanations, because they are deceivers. They are liars to themselves—"deceiving and being deceived," the Apostle Paul said. So men do not come out overtly and admit their wretchedness, and their defiant spirits and their attitudes, they find all the justifications in the world for them. But nonetheless, they are defiant and rebellious beings. Whereas, the astro, or celestial, bodies in all of the celestial realm are faithful and obedient. Even animals do what they were created to do. But men, who are created with a capacity for love and understanding, have sunk to the level of some animals, even as the Apostle Paul was inspired to write: they became beasts at Ephesus. So, human beings can become beasts in defiance and rebellion—they manifest animalistic traits and characteristics. I guess that is because they want to be animals, and they have become animals, because they know no bounds and no limits, and they will not restrain themselves.

So God gave us examples. He Himself is absolutely faithful. Jesus Christ became the image of perfection—the same yesterday, today and forever—and He has demanded that we finally put on this same nature, the same mind, the same Spirit. And yet, we find it extremely difficult because of the nature of defiance and rebellion which was built right directly into us.

And then, thirdly, by way of review, we find the implicit instruction of God that "there should be no relationship between the faithful and the unfaithful"—or, that is, the infidel. And yet, how tragic that many of us in this world will try to

find ways of courting, assisting and thinking that we are acting in a Christian manner when we interact with these other people who are defiant and rebellious. Now, that doesn't mean that we are to treat them with a wretched spirit and a wretched attitude. It does not mean that, at all, but it does mean that we will not listen to that which is contrary to what was delivered. And yet, we find it extremely difficult to really live up to that. We feel that we can handle anything, or more particularly, what we will do is to reinterpret on the basis of what *we think* was delivered. And it just simply is not true. But, nonetheless, we will do it because we will not subscribe to an absolute, faithful image, and do those things that are ordained of God. So, we become contentious, we become defiant and rebellious, and we become individualized, because that is the way we see it, and we want our way. Whereas, God has given us the responsibility of developing that oneness. That means our primary obligation ought to be the struggling against the self and our circumstances of life, and bringing ourselves into a perfect, harmonious relationship one with another. Yet we find it extremely difficult and hard to perform that very responsibility.

So, we have seen, then, that there is no relationship with the unfaithful. Christ Himself said that Satan, who is the god of this world, was going to come, and He said that "he has no part in me"—or "I have no part in him." So, in other words, there is no correlation; there is no harmony; there is no mutual agreement there, whatsoever. They don't get along at all, because the one is in total opposition to the other.

Now we come to the first point of today: "Who are the faithful?" Who are the faithful? Here in Galatians 3 and verse 9, we read this: "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Now, who in the world are these which be of faith?

Let's turn, now, to one of the very significant texts in all of the Bible. Here in Hebrews 11 and verse 1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." So, it is the proof of the intangible—that which we cannot demonstrate, that which we cannot, in any mechanical, physical, or ordinary manner known to science, or to the human mind, prove. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and it is the substance of things hoped for. *That* is faith.

Now, let's turn back to Galatians 3 and verse 8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham." So here was Abraham, as one of the first recipients of the Gospel of God, and certainly the one who became the type of all faithful beings.

God "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." In thee shall all nations be blessed. In other words, what Paul is saying here is that by the very promise that was given back in Genesis the twelfth chapter, and also in Genesis 17 (and you will find it repeated over, and over, and over), was that in Abraham all nations were going to be blessed. Therein was the preaching of the Gospel—the same Gospel that was given later to Moses, and then subsequently given, from time to time, to the prophets, and then finally given to Christ. For He said that the very Gospel which He taught was that which was given to Moses. "If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me," He said. So what Moses taught is exactly what Jesus Christ taught, and what Jesus Christ taught, He said is that which He, in turn, at various times in the history of mankind, was going to give to called servants, and especially in the last days, because we find a particular emphasis laid upon the fact that what Christ had taught, He was also going to give to somebody in the last days—the one-and-the-same Gospel.

Now, let's notice: He "preached before [that] gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." That is, if you and I have faith and confidence in that which cannot be demonstrated, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, then we can be the children of Abraham. Isn't that what he said? "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Now that is the definition—the length and the breadth—of the real faithful. If we, then, are children of faith, then we belong to Abraham, and we, then, are subscribing to the same Gospel that was preached to Abraham and was later given to Moses.

In Ephesians the first chapter, now. Ephesians the first chapter, and noticing verse 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." We see, then, that we are blessed with faithful Abraham, if we have faith, but we are also in Christ. Why would we be in Christ? Simply because Christ is of that Seed. Remember

what he said back in Galatians—that it was "not as to seeds, as of many, but as to one seed, which is Christ"? So the promise, then, of that Seed that was to come through Abraham was the promise of Christ, and that was the proclamation of the Gospel. So the Gospel, then, has something to do with the faithful. For we are of the faithful if we believe in that Gospel which was delivered to Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets, to Jesus Christ, and to those in the last days. It is one and the same. So then, we are a part of the faithful, and we are in Christ Jesus. There is no other way. If we are not in Christ, then we are none of His—there is no hope. Our hope is in Christ Jesus. He is the hope of anybody who believes and who trusts. And if we are in Christ, then we are a part of the faithful. And who are the faithful? That seed of Abraham. Isn't that what he said back here in Galatians?

Once again, let's notice it, now. Galatians 3 and verse 9: "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." So, if we, then, have faith, we will be saved. The Bible tells us clearly, over, and over, and over, that there is no other way given. The faithful shall be saved. "By faith are you saved." There is no other way. So then, if we have that faith, we are blessed with faithful Abraham, because we are partakers of the promise that was given to Abraham, and that promise was the one Seed. So we are in Christ. The faithful are in Christ, and the recipients of the promise initially given to Abraham. There is no separation from any one of them. So, then, if we belong to Christ, we belong to Abraham, or if we belong to Abraham, we belong to Christ, because if, then, we are the faithful ones fulfilling the purpose of God, we are blessed with faithful Abraham because we are in that faith. We have that faith, and we are in Christ.

Alright, who else? Colossians 1 and verse 2. Colossians 1 and verse 2. We read this: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse." Now, what he is doing is specifically detailing their location—these which are at Colossae. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." So, they are in Christ, as we saw earlier.

In Colossians 4 and verse 9. Colossians 4 and let's note verse 9: "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here." So we are, then, brothers in Christ—brothers and sisters. The faithful, then, are brothers and sisters of one another. That is, they are begotten of God's Holy Spirit, because there is no other

way of achieving it—the power by which we can crucify the self. And we become, then, begotten into the hope of tomorrow, and in Christ, then, we possess that hope, and we become brothers and sisters, one of another. So Onesimus, then, was a faithful and beloved brother. It is a fraternity—it is a family—that is what brothers and sisters are. So the faithful, then, are brothers and sisters of one common family—the whole family of heaven and earth.

Now, the next point is this: "Some ministers are deemed to be faithful." But then we saw, much earlier, that there are those who were not faithful. But in this case, we are only going to look at those that God classified as faithful. I read these things, and with longing expectation, I look for the day when all of us can hear the same words—when they are going to be written about us: "my faithful servants" of the United States, or of Europe, or of Canada, or of any other part of this world, wherever they may be. When God is going to say: "I knew so-and-so, my faithful servants in such-and-such an area," or by name, even. Do we look for that day with longing expectation, and with absolute control over our lives?

In Ephesians the sixth chapter. Ephesians the sixth chapter, and let's note verse 21, just so that we can cover all of this. He said here in chapter 6 and verse 21: "But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother [that is, of that fraternity—that household, or that family] and faithful minister in the Lord . . ." He was not only a brother, but in this case, Tychicus was also a faithful minister in the Lord. There is no one who is a faithful servant that is outside of Christ. Our only hope is in Christ.

But notice, he said: ". . . a faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." And the Apostle Paul also said here in verse 22: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose." So here, Tychicus was one called subsequent to the ordination and the appointment of the Apostle Paul, when he was sent out as a servant to the Gentiles, and then God ordained under him a number of others who bore responsibility under the Apostle Paul. And the Apostle Paul sent them—he commissioned them—under his tutelage, his responsibilities, which God had given to him. And then he said of Tychicus: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose." So, men can be sent, and they can fulfill a purpose. Now, that purpose, therefore, dictates. What if the Apostle Paul had gone astray? What should Tychicus have done? Followed Paul? All of us can see it when we look back in retrospect, or historically. We would say, "Obviously, no, don't follow the

Apostle Paul. You follow the Truth." But we can never see it, apparently, in our own time, because what we do is that we turn right around and follow an organization or men, or else what we will do, more particularly, is that we will begin to follow ourselves—our own dictates, our own minds. And that is a tragedy.

There were those chosen of God—as there were in the days of the Apostle Paul—and when they were chosen, they were chosen to understand the Truth. The Apostle Paul made it clear that he didn't want anybody following him, except as he remained faithful to Christ. And no person should follow anyone who departs from the Truth. And God said that the very organization through which the Truth was preached in the last days—that very organization—would go apostate. That isn't my statement. It is very specific in the Bible. It says so, clearly. We always knew and understood that. It says that the body would go apostate, and then God said that you must remain faithful to that call which was given to you. You must remain faithful to the Truth of God; you don't remain faithful to an organization, or to a man, you remain faithful to the Truth, but you follow the man if he remains faithful to the Truth, because God holds him responsible—chargeable—as the Bible clearly shows.

And then the Apostle Paul said: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts." So, in other words, he wanted Tychicus to go over here and to make known what they were doing and the various circumstances of their lives, that they might find comfort in that.

In Colossians 1 and verse 7, now. Colossians 1 and verse 7. Here we find another one who was considered a faithful servant: "As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ"—a *faithful* minister of Christ. He didn't say, "He was faithful to me." He was faithful to the Apostle Paul only as the Apostle Paul remained faithful. But he was faithful to Christ, and Christ is that Word: "I am the Word, the Way, the Life, and the Truth," He said. He was in Christ, the unchanging Way of Life. He was a faithful minister to an unchanging Way of Life—to Christ.

In Colossians 4 and verse 7, we read also of a faithful minister. This is, once again, the statement of the Apostle Paul concerning Tychicus: "All my state

shall Tychicus declare unto you." So obviously, he is writing concerning some of the same situations that had troubled others—remember, earlier in Ephesians 6 and verse 21, where he had told the Ephesian church that he was going to send Tychicus to let them know of the state of affairs that surrounded the Apostle Paul? So here he is, now, writing to the church at Colossae: "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord."

1 Timothy 1 and verse 12. In 1 Timothy 1 and verse 12, we read this: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." So, the Apostle Paul remained faithful. "[H]e counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." So the Apostle Paul was faithful.

That is quite a contrast to what we have read before, where somebody in the last days was not going to remain faithful. We know what was written in the book of Acts, even: "Of your own selves shall some arise, speaking these perverse things," and so on. Oh, it is easy to always point a finger at somebody else, but there is a classic way of determining that, because God said, very clearly, that the time was going to come when they would not endure sound doctrine. Now, logic is very emphatic and absolute: the sound doctrine preceded the time of departure. You can't have it any other way. Logic won't allow it. So, you first had the sound doctrine, and then you had the apostasy—they turned away from it. So obviously, then, those who turned away, as we found in Acts 20 and verse 28, are those who turned apostate—they turned away from the Truth. They would not remain faithful. They did not remain absolutely, solidly convinced of the Truth which God had originally given to them, but for various reasons they turned away from it.

Now, in this case, the Apostle Paul wrote to his beloved fellow servant Timothy at that time and said, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me [that is, by the power of the Spirit, by the help of God, the Apostle Paul was enabled], for that he counted me faithful [He knew that he would remain absolutely faithful—that he was not going to turn away from it], putting me into the ministry."

But then, as I said, we found somebody else in the latter days who turned away from it. *Somebody* did, at least. In 2 Timothy 2 and verse 2. 2 Timothy 2

and noting verse 2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men." One of the things that is absolutely imperative in ordaining men under the responsibility of a chosen servant of God is to see within them the absolute manifestation of consistency—faithfulness. It is one of the giant mistakes we made in times past. For if a man is not faithful in circumstances in this world, how is he going to be faithful to the true riches? We should have looked at the background of human beings when they were unconverted. How did they treat responsibility? Their families? How did they handle their relationships with others? Were they faithful? Were they consistent? Were they trustworthy? Did they manifest those qualities—those traits, those characteristics—that are absolutely essential to the fulfillment of a spiritual purpose? I am afraid there were colossal mistakes made in times past—colossal mistakes—because people, young people, moved all over the ladder, all over the stage, to achieve certain purposes. They showed no experience. They showed no consistency. They manifested, rather, the willingness to change on the basis of personal advantage. That is a tragic thing.

Here, the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said: "And the things that thou hast heard of me . . ." So here the Apostle Paul is laying down, now, the fabric for the selection of assistants to help in the growth of the church. There would not be added others who are specifically chosen or called to carry out some gigantic responsibilities, such as an apostle who is sent out to do a specific work. Christ was an apostle. He chose twelve that were commissioned, and He later called them apostles. The Apostle Paul was an apostle because he was divinely commissioned. And whether it should be, or should not be, is not for me to determine. Yet, the Bible specifically shows that in the fabric of the way by which God was going to assist—to aid, to instruct, to help—the Body throughout the ages, that apostles, pastors and various ones were going to be ordained until the fulfilment of the purposes of God. Go and read it in Ephesians the fourth chapter, beginning in about verse 10, down to about verse 14. You cannot do away with the fact that God Almighty said that this structure was ordained, and was going to continue unto the coming of Jesus Christ.

But no one should have ever taken the title to himself. No one should have ever taken that. Is it necessary for me to go around and say that I am so-and-so? Why not just do the work? But, you know, many, many people want titles for the sake of glory, and for the sake of mention. In other words, they like to say, "I am

this, or I am that." It isn't a matter of saying it, it is a matter of performing. We don't have to tell anybody, if we just go out and serve. Then we don't have to say, "Well, I am this, or I am that." It doesn't need to be done. Anybody, basically, who says it, you must question. He is suspect. So, if somebody comes and says, "I am an apostle," you had better know that there is a 99 and 44 one-hundredths percent chance that he isn't. There may be just a small chance—because the Apostle Paul did, in one case, say that he was an apostle (and apparently for reason), but other than that, you find no mention of it, whatsoever. Christ never once called Himself an apostle. Only later did the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit say that he was the apostle of our faith. Christ never said it. You can't find it. I cannot find where the twelve initial apostles ever called themselves apostles, and the Apostle Paul never did, except in one circumstance, and that for reason, apparently. So if anybody ever says that he is, or even remotely implies it, it is almost a one hundred percent chance that he isn't. You can take that as absolute dogma. For the one who really is, makes no mention of it. He doesn't have to. He is merely serving. The other is, for the purpose of control, whipping people into alignment by the usage of fear. But perfect love casts out fear. They are not of God. They are not right in the sight of God. The one who is really the servant, is a servant. He is really, simply trying to carry out the will of God in teaching, aiding, assisting and helping others. That is all that is essential.

Now, what does he say here in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 2? "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses . . ." You see, the Apostle Paul was called, and he was commissioned by God, and he taught many people. Now he is saying that "the things you heard from me, which you were taught by me"—and there are many witnesses to that fact—"the same commit thou to faithful men." Whatever you have heard me teach—and there are all kinds of people that have heard it, he said. There are all kinds of people who have heard that. They know it. There is a living witness out there. Whatever you have heard me say, there are witnesses who have heard it. You know, I am just thinking here, as I read this, that in a sense, what Mr. Clark and I have been saying is oftentimes questioned. There are literally hundreds of witnesses out there who know it, and who know that this is exactly what happened. I wonder why the individuals, then, are standing there in defiance against all of those witnesses who heard it, and who know it?

"[T]he same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." In this case, and for reason, we have not elected to ordain, or to take any authority to ourselves for the expansion of that ministry at the present time. If God wants it done, He can do it. Every man that we have at the present time was accepted exactly as he was within his former affiliation, because it was ordained under the auspices, the right and the privilege, yea, far beyond that, the commission, of the one under whom we learned that Truth. Therefore we have accepted them as they are, and every man is, to that extent, ordained in the sight of God. We have accepted them on that basis. So these things have been committed to them—to faithful men—and these are the faithful men whom we know, and we have record of their faithfulness. Those men are the ones God has kept faithful to that Way of Life. It is interesting how miraculously God kept them alive—even ordaining them in the midst of the chaos of the last days of our former affiliation. Faithful are Jean Aviolat, George Leeman and John Mitchell, along with the two of us here in Eugene. Those are the faithful ministers. Others were given the privilege—given the opportunity—but they wouldn't remain faithful. Oh, I know they have their rationales, but I will let God judge that. If they were right-hearted, and if they were faithful to God, and if they knew and understood the purpose of God, why are they not still with us and faithful to that Truth?

So, "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men." Then, it is our duty, if we bear that kind of a responsibility, to seek out those who are faithful—"faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Otherwise, if they do not manifest that type of trait and characteristic, they are not usable instruments in the sight of God.

Now, here in Hebrews 3 and verse 5. Hebrews 3, and noting verse 5: "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house." I can't think of a statement under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit that could be more awe-inspiring and rewarding than to have God Himself, through that very means, say that "this person is faithful." Here, the Holy Spirit, years after the time of Moses, says through the Apostle Paul: "Moses verily was faithful in all his house." Will this be said of you and me? How can it be, if we have changed everything that has been given to us? To be faithful means to hold on to something we were given. That is what the word means. I can be faithful to an organization, or to a man, or to a physical thing here, changing all over like a corkscrew in order to achieve my objective, but I am talking about, as the Bible is, faithfulness to a Way of Life. And so, I have to

ask, at what time, then, do we come to that point where we are going to be absolutely faithful? And God is going to judge us on that faithfulness. He judged concerning these. He gave the message to Moses and said, years later—Moses never said it to himself, it was written of Moses: "[V]erily [he] was faithful in all his house." I hope, dear brethren, that this same statement is going to be said of you and me—that we have been faithful to God, as servants.

"[F]or a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after." In other words, as a witness. Will our faithfulness also be a witness? Certainly, they are observing us—they are aware of us. They know our convictions and our beliefs. Are we living up to them? Are we absolutely faithful? Are we loyal? Are we subjugating the self and making ourselves subservient to the will and the purpose of God? Or are we allowing the very nature of our minds and our hearts to surface? We must be masters—we must evidence the spiritual traits and characteristics, the divine nature, of God. That is what we are called to perform. Are we the lights—the examples—that we must be? That is what faithfulness is. Faithfulness is the brilliance of the light—the integrity of the example. It is the purpose of the will and the call of God. Will we, then, be faithful? But notice what it says here:

[F]or a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast [this is synonymous with faithfulness in the house of Moses] the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Dropping down to verse 14, it tells you who these real faithful are: "For we are made partakers of Christ." Oh, remember, this faithfulness was in Christ, wasn't it? "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." If this Bible is written for you and me—and "man is going to live not by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God," and this is it, right here—how in the world, my dear brethren, can I apply verse 14 unless I believe that I received the Truth of God, and that it is my duty to hang on to it? Otherwise, it has no application. And if I am not called and converted, somebody else who *is* called and converted must be doing the same thing, then. But it must be an organization in which an apostasy occurred, and the people who were going to remain faithful stood fast and refused to turn from it. Words still mean something. Let's take them at face value. So, Moses was faithful in his house, even as we must remain faithful in Christ. And that makes us, then,

the children of Abraham by faith. "The children of Abraham," remember it back in Galatians 3 and verse 9?

Now, quickly, we have just three more texts to pick up here. The next point is: "Wives of deacons must be faithful in all things also." God has laid a very stern responsibility upon them. Let's turn back now to 1 Timothy 3 and verse 11. 1 Timothy 3, and noting verse 11, but beginning in verse 8. It says: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued." That is, they must not have a forked tongue. "The deacons must be grave." And this word "deacon" simply means a servant. Sure, he is a deacon, but we don't go around saying, "I am a deacon," or whatever. We are merely servants. That manifests itself by what we do—the actions that we take, the service that we render. And as I have said so many times, the door is wide open for anybody to get out and to serve. If we want to take that charge—if we want to do it, if we want to be responsible—it is there: deacons that are constantly looking to the welfare of the older women in the church, those who are infirm, and those who need assistance and need help. There are all kinds of things to do. They do the physical tasks in the times of meetings, they set up, and they do all kinds of things. They are there and they are ready—they move. They don't have to ask for particular functions or responsibilities. Service is wide open, just go out and do it, and then God recognizes it. So he said here:

Likewise must the deacons be grave [in other words, this is a word that merely means "servant"], not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience [that is, not compromising].

"Holding the mystery of the faith." We have found out what that faith is: confidence in that Way delivered, unto the end.

"And let these also first be proved." Well, we find this is in contrast to something else. And if you go back, you will find the other is concerning a bishop, or one who has a higher responsibility of service.

"Then let them use the office of a [servant—that is, a "deacon," if you want to call it that], being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers." It must be that, on the basis of what the Holy Spirit says here, wives can and do tend to be slanderous.

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." It absolutely is required of them. So, faithfulness is a very, very strong responsibility, and it requires the complete subjugation of self. That is the most difficult thing to achieve. How can you be faithful to something that is outside of the self, unless you empty out the self and receive the other? You can't be faithful to a way of life unless you empty out what you are. You are a way—you have a tendency; you have a nature. We are, by nature, the children of wrath. We are going to pursue certain things that we want, and God says that we have to empty ourselves out from that, altogether, and then we must receive something else.

You know, you can only put a quart of milk in a quart bottle, and if that quart bottle represents your nature, and it is filled with your nature, how are you going to put any of the nature of God in there? So it is necessary, first, to empty out the nature—our nature—and then to be filled with the nature of God. Now, once we have the nature of God, it is necessary for us to be faithful to it. That is, we do not vacillate—compromise. We are not moving back and forth, we are consistent. That is what God is looking for—the nature of God, the same yesterday, today and forever. Pardon me for emphasizing it, but it is absolutely imperative.

Alright, then, the final point—point number 12—which completes this Greek word *pistos*. It is this: "What is the definition of faithfulness?" Here in 1 Timothy 4 and verse 3. 1 Timothy 4, and noticing verse 3, we read: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received." We find a situation here in which someone is going to depart, because notice, it says up here in verse 1: "[I]n the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of [demons]." Now let's notice verse 3: "Forbidding to marry." That is, the term "forbidding" is far better translated "hindering" marriage, and let me tell you, I don't know of anything that has become more rampant than the hindering of marriage. They break them up; they do all kinds of things. Marriage is for life. It is ordained of God. It is an absolute, and our words must stand for something. But here they are hindering marriage, "and commanding." And this word "commanding" is italicized, which means that it is not in the original. And I don't know whether it is absolutely right, or not. This is the one text that has been the most difficult for me to understand. "[C]ommanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received." Now, I have not actually seen that occur, but perhaps somewhere on down the road it will—or it has, and we are not cognizant of it.

. . . commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Let me see, very quickly. I may have actually taken the wrong text down here, but I am going to see. 2 Timothy 4 and verse 3. Oh, yes, alright, this is exactly the same thing that I wanted. I put this in because it is a different word: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." So, he shows a condition, or a set of circumstances.

Now, let's go back to chapter 4 and verse 3 [of 1 Timothy], and here is the word "believe," because we are speaking of exactly the same thing here, and that is why I have this other text down with it: "[C]ommanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which *believe* and know the truth." The word "believe" here is the word for "faithfulness." They are *faithful* because they know the Truth, in contrast to what? Those who departed. What are we talking about?

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding [or, that is, hindering marriage,] and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe [or who are faithful].

The word "believe" here is the word "faithful"—the word *pistos*. Those who are *faithful*, then, because they know the Truth. Then the faithful ones of the last days are those who resist the apostasy, who remain faithful to that which was given, and refuse to turn away from it.

Now you will notice exactly the same thing, once again, here in 2 Timothy 4 and verse 3. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching

ears." And people are going to follow these things because it seems to have some physical or personal advantage.

Now, 3 John and verse 5, and we are going to read verses 4 and 5. 3 John 5, and let's notice, beginning in verse 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Now, what is Truth? Christ said, "I am the Truth"—the Word of God, it is Truth, and it is Spirit. Christ said that He is the Word made flesh. What are we talking about, then? Christ is the epitome of Truth, the Word, and the Way of Life. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in [Christ]." How? Faithfully. Remember, we read about it. They were faithful in Christ—in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Beloved, " he continues, "thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers"—in other words, the conduct of our lives; how we assist and aid others; the manner in which we carry out our spiritual responsibilities; faithfulness to the call; faithfulness to that which we were taught; faithfulness in the discharge of responsibility. And every one of us has the responsibility of living that Truth faithfully—that is, carrying it out, acting on it, being kind, not compromising, but manifesting love and affection, and regard for others. John said that in the fact that you are doing these things, you are faithful toward the brethren, first and foremost, and then to strangers. These are the faithful. Those, then, who abide by the principles that God gave to us initially—as we saw here in 1 Timothy 4 and verse 3, and 2 Timothy 4 and verse 3—and who are living it in their behavior, are the faithful of the last days. Are we a part of them? Are we the servants of God? Are our lights brilliant? Is our example absolute, or is it clouded? How are we living? Faithfully or unfaithfully? Or are we in some way compromising? It is imperative that we walk in that faith and that confidence.

Now, next, brethren, let's turn very quickly, for our next series, back to Galatians the fifth chapter, and let's notice the fruits, once again. Beginning in verse 22, it says: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love [which we have covered], joy [which we have covered], peace [which we have covered], longsuffering [and we had a series on that], gentleness [which we covered], goodness, [and finally] faith." We did forty tapes on "faith" alone. The next one is "meekness." So, next time, we are going to start into the subject of "meekness" as a fruit of God's Holy Spirit.