

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 98 The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #7

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This, now, will be tape number seven on that very, very significant subject of faith. In the last tape, we completed one of the major words, *ehmoonah*—the feminine form of a Hebrew word meaning "faith," or generally speaking, translated as "truth" and in a number of other corollary ways. Faith, of course, has a great deal to do with truth. There is no way that you can be faithful and be outside of the truth. Real faith—as God defines it—distinctly relates to truth. Therefore, "faithfulness" is the manifestation of obedience to truth. Now having completed the word *ehmoonah*—which is that feminine form—we want to go to the root word from which *ehmoon* and *ehmoonah* are derived. That root word is the word *ahman*—a-h-m-a-n. *Ahman*, according to *Strong's Concordance*, is:

. . . a primitive root; properly, to build up or support; to foster as a parent or nurse; figuratively to render (or be) firm or faithful . . .

In other words, it is talking about a support—as in a foundation. And when you understand, really, the pictographic purpose of words, we are talking about something that represents an actual foundation—it is a firm, solid, unmovable foundation. It is just like massive concrete that is poured and absolutely unmovable. Oftentimes it is translated as a "rock," and we find that Christ is a Rock. Well, what is meant by "a rock"? Does it mean that He is obdurate—hard? No, He is compassionate and He is merciful, and yet, He is called "the Rock." A rock is an immovable object—it's something that is firm and absolute.

Well, all of these words derive from that same foundation—*ahman*. It means something that is fundamental; it means something that is absolute—it is immovable, it cannot change—because truth is an absolute. If it is truth in the sense that God defines truth, it is not a relative term. It is the same today as it was yesterday. It is

the same today as was ten million years ago and it will always be the same because it is an absolute. And that is what human beings seem unable to really comprehend. When God calls it "truth," whatever He calls truth remains truth. It will always be truth—it cannot change. It is an absolute, fundamental principle.

So this word *ahman* is a primitive root. It means that which is foundational. It is as a rock—as a firm, concrete foundation that is absolutely unmovable, you can't crack it, you can't break it down. So it translates into that which we can "trust or believe." If you trust it, it means that it doesn't change. To put trust in something means that whatever the agreement, the foundational purpose for that contract between two human beings will not change. In other words, if you agree with another party for the purchase of something, and you go home with the item, the other party has a very definite confidence in you, and you have a confidence in the other individual, in fulfilling those terms. Those are relative terms because human beings are changing entities. But their relationships are dependent upon factors that remain unalterable during the tenure of that responsibility. God's terms are eternal—that's the difference. Men are here today and gone tomorrow, so they make relative agreements and arrangements. God's agreements are eternal in nature—they can never be changed, they are absolute—so that we can implicitly trust God.

Can you imagine how Adam is going to feel, how Enoch is going to feel, how Noah is going to feel, how Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses and many of these people from the Old Testament are going to feel if they come up and find that Christ—which is the very God that they knew in the Old Testament, because He is the one that spoke with them—the Christ, according to concept of people today, has changed completely and doesn't even believe the things He told them? Can you imagine how Abraham is going to respond to that—how he is going to feel? "Why, I had implicit confidence in Him. I believed Him when He told me certain things and that they were going to last forever." And he comes up and finds out—supposedly, because I am predicating this on the conception of people today—that this God changed completely and He doesn't even believe what He did before. I'll tell you, it would be shattering to those men because you get the image, if you really read the Old Testament with this perspective in mind, that those men stood in awe of the immovable nature and character of God. David spoke of it so often. Why did he speak of it as often as he did? Because he was absolutely awestruck by it. It really insinuated itself into the mind and heart of David as an integral part of him.

So here we are talking, now, about a word that, according to *Strong's Concordance*, fundamentally means something you can "trust or believe," and that it is not going to change on you. It means "to be permanent." Do we understand the term "permanent"? "To be permanent or quiet"—meaning that it is something that is not always agitating. It isn't here today and somewhere else tomorrow. Quiet means "in position."

. . . morally to be true or certain." It's translated as "assurance, believe, bring up, establish, [to] be faithful (of long continuance, steadfast, sure, surely, trusty, verified) [and to] trust."

Those are the ways in which that word *ahman* is translated. Let's get right into the word, now, and see it in its very, very comprehensive usage. I want us to first notice it in its literal sense of "obedience." So, let's pick it up now in the sense of obedience with regard to certain of the servants of God. Here in Second Samuel 20 and let's note verse 19. II Samuel 20 and let's begin in verse 16:

Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter [So, here is someone obviously motivated by a very strong feeling concerning a situation that had occurred in ancient Israel]. I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

So here, then, is the assurance of the party involved of someone who was faithful in Israel, meaning that he had carried out his charge or his responsibility. So, it is a word that can be applied to a human being in carrying out a *faithful* responsibility, meaning to hue to the line—you don't pervert it, you don't alter it. It's the manifestation, or the actual application, of an old principle that we've heard of so many times: "Can you carry a letter to Garcia?" Meaning, can you be given a responsibility and, even if you are out of sight and maybe clear out of the country where no one is ever going to see you, you bear that element of

responsibility, morally, emotionally, and you will fight through thick and thin, through rubbish, through jungles, through whatever, to achieve that objective. You know that the other party cannot literally see you but there is an emotional stimuli involving yourself, and you do not want to be a failure. And so you are going to carry that letter to Garcia—you are going to fulfill your responsibility even if there is not another human being about. You are going to do what is required and you are going to be faithful to a charge. That is what we are really talking about: somebody who listens, who hears, and who responds, even though there is no one there to prod and to constantly remind the individual of the agreement. You care—you carry, you bear that responsibility.

How many people are there today that the minute the boss turns his back, they will sit down—the minute they are no longer under observation, they will take little opportunities here and there to do their own thing? You know, this ability to bear responsibility, or to literally be *ahman*, is unique. It is extremely unique. Somebody who senses that and who would not allow an army, or anybody else, to dissuade or to turn his head from that responsibility, is very rare.

You see, that's what God is looking for. When we get down to it, God must call us. He gives us a commission; He calls us and ordains us to life. And, you know, He is not sitting right at the doorstep every day saying, "Well, how did you do today?" Every minute He is looking right at you and saying, "Stay on the job." No, we are relatively free out there, and sometimes we think we get by with things because we somehow feel that—since God is not seen, or is not visible—maybe we can fool around a little bit. We are not right on the job, we are not diligent, we are not aggressive in the pursuit of that which is our responsibility. Many, many human being are like that. This world is made up of that kind of thing now.

Are we self-starters? Are we aggressive and are we powerful in the responsibility that has been given to us? I don't care whether it's a family; I don't care whether it's a job you have; I don't care whether it's a civic responsibility, a communal responsibility, or whatever it is, can we legitimately and faithfully carry them out—whatever those responsibilities are? You see, that is what God is talking about, and *truth* has everything in the world to do with those factors. Truth has a great deal to do with how you carry out your routine responsibility before your family, before your community, in your job, or wherever it is. How can you say, "Well, I believe the Truth," and, yet, at the same time you practice

something altogether different in some physical charge you bear on the face of this earth? You can't. Words don't mean anything; it's actions. The Bible clearly tells us to act on the Word. It doesn't say merely to read it and comprehend it and to make a profession. You don't believe the Truth until you act on it and you really carry it out.

So, this word *ahman* has to do with, not only that foundational principle of that which is immovable, but it also has to do with how we faithfully respond to that foundational principle. So it involves both our response and the premise of that response. So, as this gentleman said: "I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel." Can we say the same thing? We are, today, chosen of God, given a commission—a responsibility—and we can look at anybody and say, "I am one that is faithful in *spiritual* Israel today." We must be able to do that, and I don't mean because we have emotionally deceived ourselves. How many today are deceiving and being deceived? We want to be very careful that we properly examine ourselves, which means to interrogate ourselves so that we do not lie to ourselves, hypocritically—that we really look at ourselves and say, "Yes, I believe," and we act on it, because our very actions speak much more loudly than our words.

Now I want you to notice Numbers the twelfth chapter. Numbers 12 and let's read verses 6 through 7, noting specifically, verse 7. Numbers the twelfth chapter and beginning in verse 6:

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Here God is addressing Miriam and Aaron because they had gotten a little out of hand, and they had started looking at things and thinking of them from the human perspective, and they said, "Well, wait a minute, is God with Moses only? Isn't He also with us? You know, we've been around here awhile too, don't we have a little responsibility? And how about letting us get our say-so in?" So God came down and said, "Listen, you two, I want you to get straightened out on one thing right quick like":

Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision [I'm the one, and I'll make myself known unto him], and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

Here is Moses, and the word "faithful" is the word *ahman*—a-h-m-a-n—the very root word from which we found *ehmoonah* and *ehmoon*, both of them. And, I'll tell you, I can't think of anything that would give a greater sense of encouragement than to have God Himself utter it and say, "My servant is faithful." What approbation. "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house." God put His approbation on His servant Moses and said, "He is faithful in all my house." That meant that he was absolutely obedient to the charge which was given to him. And, remember, the charge was not merely to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. That charge also included the distinct responsibility of conveying the message that God Almighty gave. How many times did He say, "Moses, these are my words. You go deliver them"? You see, Moses bore a tremendous responsibility to proclaim the literal words of God, and God said of that servant, "He is faithful in all my house." That is, he not only proclaimed the Word, he lived it—he was absolute in the house of God.

In First Samuel 2 and verse 35, now, we notice this, picking up a few of these texts dealing with specific examples of obedience. First Samuel 2 and let's note verse 35 where the word is used a couple of times. Here it says: "And I will raise me up a faithful priest . . ." Here God, through Samuel, is instructing Eli at this time who had become *unfaithful*. You see, Eli had allowed physical pressures of 1) family—because remember what he did with respect to his own sons? And 2) his fear of the people in Israel. And those two are very strong fears. You see, we are going to cater to family for one reason, or we are going to cater to the environment in which we live, one or the other. But not Samuel—Samuel was a different individual altogether. But Eli did it because it just looked sensible to him to effect a few compromises here and there with respect to his charge—the responsibility that God had given to him—because it was advantageous both family-wise and in his community. But God said, "I will raise me up a faithful priest"—that is, a priest who believes in *ahman*. "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind." Not as Eli thought—not that which was in Eli's mind.

And how many people are there today that think what they are doing is from God? You know, *they* are trying to determine the mind of God. But, I'll tell you, you cannot determine the mind of God, only God can give you that mind. And when God gives you that mind, you, then, are capable of evaluating your relationship to that mind, as long as you keep that gift alive. But the minute you allow the image of that mind—which God has given to you—to become blurred, or clouded, or obscured, in some way, the first thing that happens is that you will become incapable of properly evaluating yourself. And then you will begin to return to your own rationalizations—that high mind that you must bring down, as God says. But it is going to exalt itself, and you will start looking to that mind. There will be a rationalization that goes on and, first thing you know, you will start evaluating the Word of God. Then what you have done is to set up a one-hundred-eighty-degree dichotomy. In other words, it should have been the mind that God gave to you by which you evaluate yourself, instead of allowing the mind with which you were born to reassert itself and you begin to evaluate God. And there are thousands of human beings doing that right now. What a tragic experience.

He said, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house." That doesn't mean that he had a cedar house, or a brick house, it meant the house of Samuel—his posterity, and the responsibility that Samuel bore. "I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." The word "sure"—"I will build him [an *ahman*] house." "Sure"—that is, it is in place; it's absolute; it's firm; it's immovable. If you talk about something that is *sure*, it is certified, it is absolute, and God has built this type of image and responsibility for certain people. Well, at first He did it for Abel; then He did it for Abraham; He did exactly the same thing for Moses; He did exactly the same thing for Eli; but He also did it for David. Every one of those had the promise of God that there was going to be a sure foundation laid down, which means that God Himself is still viewing the responsibility that was given to Samuel. Now, I can't say how that is literally going to manifest itself, but God gave a promise to Samuel, and let me assure you that it does exist, and God hasn't forgotten it. So Samuel is still going to be the recipient of that responsibility, or whatever it is, that will still be carried out somewhere on down the road—wherever it is and whatever it is. So, He said, "I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." So there is some tremendous responsibility that was given to Samuel that still

remains intact and Samuel is going to see that once again someday, because he remembers it—he knows what agreement God made with him, and here is a certification that God gave it to him and Samuel remained faithful to God. He did not alter or turn away from it. Not at all. So, therefore, Samuel, when he is resurrected, is going to be cognizant of that and aware of it; just like David is going to remember the promises that God gave to him; just like Abraham is going to remember those promises.

And I ask you once again, what do you think those men are going to think if they find out that everything they were told was all wrong and has been done away? I tell you, that idea makes God a sickly being. Thank God that we do not serve that kind of created being. We serve a God that has never changed, and when God pronounces something into existence, it remains absolute. Oh, what a joy it is to remember that when we keep any of the laws and statutes of God, we are doing what God set in motion and that which is absolute and eternal and will never change.

Now, the only thing that I find that God changed are those things which are carnal—the carnal ordinances. Well, if I understand the word "carnal"—which I am sure I do—it means "things of flesh." And I have never yet seen a Holy Day that looks like a piece of flesh, but I have seen animals—you know, lambs, birds, turtledoves and whatever. They are carnal, they are flesh, they are of physical substance. Those things passed away, but all other things are eternal. Those things which are invisible are eternal, and only those things which are visible are temporal. So physical things are temporal, I grant you that. But God's Holy Days were never temporal. How in the world can you call them temporal when a Holy Day is a law of God, it's a statute of God—something God breathed? Whereas these other things were carnal—sacrifices—something that God instituted for a time, for a reason, in anticipation of Somebody else who was not the very image, but who also became a sacrifice: Jesus Christ. Christ was not the fulfillment—well, yes He was, in a sense, because He was the Word made flesh. So Christ was actually a dual representation when He was here: He was literally the full manifestation of the Word of God in the flesh, but at that same time, He was the literal sacrificial manifestation. But there is a distinct line of demarcation between His office of responsibility as a sacrificial offering versus the fulfillment of the Word of God, because when Christ lives within us today, when He is living what He Himself was, that is the totality of the Word of which He became flesh.

So, if we are going to say, then, that because He did become the Word made flesh it therefore passed out of existence because He became the sacrifice, then we cannot say that there is one single law that is still binding then. You cannot even say that there is any part of God's Word that is still binding, because being a sacrifice, as the Word made flesh, neutralized the Word because He was that sacrifice. Then it means that in one fell swoop, we have done away with the entirety of God's Word—there is not a thing that is valid or binding.

Or, now, if we start picking and choosing, all we are doing is resorting to our own human minds, and *that* God will not accept. It is either all or none, and frankly, my brethren, it is all. That means every bit of it because God's Word is absolutely binding; it is eternal; it can never change; it is that *sure* Word of God that we talked about so many times with that previous word. Do you remember *ehmoonah*? "Sure" was used many times. It means that it is an unmovable Word. David knew that; all the servants knew it; Jesus Christ Himself knew it—who Himself became that house foreshadowed by the house of Moses. Remember Paul's explanation in the Book of Hebrews. So, God was going to raise up a faithful priest, and He did so in Samuel.

Now in First Samuel 22 and verse 14. I Samuel 22 and verse 14. I want us to think about that word today—this matter of faithfulness—as something tremendously beyond, very greatly beyond, just the concept of "faith" as some kind of spiritual, ethereal configuration of mind. It is a manifested action in our lives. Faith is not a dead, inanimate thing. Even James knew and understood that. He said, "Well, you can talk about your faith as some ethereal concept, but I prove my faith by my works"—meaning by the things that he did, by certain physical manifestations, the only way that you can prove that you have any faith. It doesn't mean the physical things *are* the actions, it means that they are the proof of that indwelling faith—the Spirit of God. That is, if you keep the Holy Days—if you keep all of God's laws and so on—there is a physical manifestation of that heart and spirit of "sureness" that proceeds from God, or the basis of this very Word, *ahman*. That *sure* conviction; that *sure* word that God has given to us. It's written deeply into our very minds, and it manifests itself, then, in these actions or these behavioral patterns. I Samuel 22 and verse 14. Let us notice:

Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

So here was even a Gentile king that recognized the loyalty, the faithfulness, the steadiness, of the son-in-law of King Saul—David. David was a responsible individual who never sought ways around, nor elements of compromise. Never. He bore responsibility beautifully and he carried it out. How many classic examples do we have of that in God's Word? He never took any liberties when he could have done so. He never did it once. He was always the epitome of faithfulness, of honesty, and responsibility well-borne. David was a classic example. Is it any wonder, then, that God said he was "a man after mine own heart"? David. It would be marvelous to walk in those footsteps or to emulate that being. Well, rather, yet, it's a whole lot better for us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus because those are the same footsteps that David walked in. So, "who is so [ahman] faithful among all thy servants as David." David was a faithful servant of God.

First Samuel 25 and verse 28. First Samuel 25 and let's note verse 28:

I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

So here is a statement made concerning David, and this was Abigail. So she recognized that David was a faithful being. You know, his reputation must have really gotten out, and they saw it and understood it in all Israel. That man had to have been exemplary. You and I know that you can live in the peace and quietude of your own home rather exclusively. You can remain there and perform a beautiful responsibility in the quietude of your own home, but not much of a reputation is going to get out. Yet, here was somebody who must have been extremely active in the community—in faithfulness and loyalty, carrying out his responsibility. And the knowledge of his faithfulness got all over the place. Well, it is somewhat characteristic of what happens oftentimes within the confines of a group. Certain people are models, and people will look at it and say, "Oh, if I could just be like he is," or "she is." You know, we do recognize certain things because they manifest certain features or characteristics, and we see them as something very marvelous and something that we would like to emulate. Well, Abigail obviously had heard of David and she knew of his tremendous character, and she knew that it proceeded from his relationship with God. They recognized that because human beings are simply not capable of producing that on their own.

So, when human beings see these traits or these characteristics, they have to know, way down deep inside of them, that they come from something outside of that human being. Because other human beings don't do it. Then what is it that produces this fine character—something that is extremely marvelous and wonderful? What is it that produces that kind of character? Other people don't have it, and yet, sometimes you will see it. You have to know that it is somebody who is responding to an outside influence and who really does genuinely admire and respect some specific instruction from the Word of God.

There are times when even people of the letter can do that, for they are a law unto themselves. They can't go on unto perfection, no. They never could. But even in the flesh, they can be a law unto themselves. They can live a certain way because they can will it in their lives—they are determined to live that way. And some people have just enough character in the flesh to live that kind of a life—to will it that way. Well, how much more ought we to do when we possess God's Holy Spirit? So we have to master ourselves and manifest the character of *ahman*—trustworthiness, sureness, solidarity, faithfulness. We are not going to boil up in an instant and create havoc, and hurt and injure other people. We are going to have a settled existence, but a firm resolve, and we are absolutely, implicitly trustworthy. What a feature and characteristic.

Now, let's notice Nehemiah 9 and verse 8. We're still dealing with this topic of examples of obedience. Here in Nehemiah chapter 9 and noting verse 8. Well, let's go back to the end of verse 7 because here Nehemiah is writing about Abraham: ". . . and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee." That is, something that proceeded not just from the surface carnality of man, but something that came right out of the heart. That means something that was residual—a quality of life in Abraham. It was a whole lot more than a flash in the pan that is here today and gone tomorrow. When he said He found his heart faithful before Him, he is talking about something that was residual—something that is written down deep in the heart of that man. So Abraham, as a physical being himself, must have developed some form of basic honesty and integrity. He must have been a man of some respect—worthy of certain respect and honor in times past—even before God ever called him, because God looked down and said, "Well, there is a man of character." And He willed to call him and then He gave him, of course, a whole lot beyond that.

And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous.

So God looked down and found this kind of a man. Well, now, if we can be found equally faithful by the help of God's Holy Spirit, imagine what responsibility God is going to give to us. Because we will be able, in that sense, to carry the letters to Garcia. We're going to be found faithful. We are going to carry with dignity our responsibility—the charge of life that has been given to us. We are not like a petal that is first in the air and then blown with the wind. Not at all. But we are going to manifest solidarity; we are going to manifest conviction; we are going to manifest firmness of resolve, because there is no human being that does not grasp, in a technical sense, if not beyond that, what a true Christian ought to be. Oh, there are people in this world that can tell you very quickly what you should be, but they won't live up to it. They know—they know what is there. Then, when we make a profession of being a servant of God, it means that we must manifest the will and the determination to live it, because others are going to see it. And every time we make a mistake, we besmirch the character of God because we are, now, the image—the express image—of Jesus Christ. We are members in particular of that Body, are we not? And when we are, we have been called to carry with dignity, and with purpose, and with resolve, and with determination, the responsibility given. That's what that word means. And that is innately involved in the definition of faith. When we say "the just shall live by faith", we are talking about a whole lot more than some nebulous concept up here that people warp and twist to suit their own mental fancy. We are talking about a concept that gets down to the very basic resolves of life. It goes right down to the heart and core element of our purpose, our orientation, our consistency, and the character with which we control our lives. That's what we are talking about.

Now, we must be very careful when we talk about our faith, because I am not sure exactly how broad, how extensive, and how deep our faith really is. Only through trials and the difficulties that we encounter do we manifest the depth and the breadth of our faith. How do we respond to the difficulties of life? Do we respond in faith—that faith as we have been defining it? That is, with purpose—counting it all a joy? Do we look at it and say, as David did, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"? We must have that confidence in God. We

must know who we are. The called of God know who they are, unless they have allowed their vision to be obscured because of doubt—misgiving—or because they have taken their attention off of God and have placed it on human beings, or organizations, or something else.

That doesn't mean, brethren, that we should not be united. How in the world can we convoke before God if we decide and will not to have anything to do with anybody else? You tell me how I can literally fulfill the commands of God when it says we must *convoke* before God? When I come up with a conclusion like, "Well, I don't want anything to do with organized religion," or "I don't want anything to do with anybody else. I am going to do it on my own"—any of that type of thing is a rationalization, because the command to convoke and to "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together," is an absolute command of God and it is just as absolute and basically required as anything else. If we are not going to do that, why do we do anything else? So we must be faithful to God. It means we *have* to convoke before God. The Body of Jesus Christ is not destroyed. It is not scattered all over the place in the sense that we have no relationship one with another—not at all. Oh, certainly, I understand that there are scattered people, but in mind and heart they are still there. They just do not have the technical or the physical opportunity. That's all. But, I tell you, if they were where they could convoke, they *would* be present, because the will, the heart, the mind, they are all there.

So, we find that God looked down and He found the heart of His servant Abraham faithful before Him. How about our hearts? Or does God find within us a lot of physical rationalizations—you know, the II Corinthians 10:3–5 mind—the mind that is lifted up in arrogance? God said we must fight against that mind and bring it into total captivity to Jesus Christ. That's what faith is all about. Faith is a very, very vital principle of God's Holy Spirit—a gift or a fruit thereof.

Nehemiah 13 and noting verse 13. Nehemiah 13 and let's note verse 13:

And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful . . .

What a marvelous thing it is to see finally in printed form, from God Himself—inspired by the very Holy Spirit—that God said these were faithful men. How marvelous. "[T]hey were counted faithful [that is, *ahman*] and their office was to distribute unto their brethren." They were given a responsibility and they bore it with dignity. They carried it out with love and affection and they took no personal advantage. They found that their responsibility—their office—was to distribute unto the brethren, not to themselves. It didn't say that they were to take advantage. God obviously gave them whatever He had willed for them to receive, but they bore a responsibility to distribute to the brethren, and the Bible says they were faithful. Well, I know of some who were given the responsibility, but they took care of themselves first, and if there was anything left over, they gave it to others. That isn't exactly what I read in the Bible. God wants us to be faithful, and when we are given a charge, it means to give it back. Brethren, I don't want to be guilty of tooting our own horn, but I want to say that with all that lies within me, I have struggled now for eight years solidly to give back to you what has been given to us. And I want to give it back because God requires it. And we have tried to give to you everything we can—our lives—and we have tried to give you everything it takes to serve you. And what a privilege it is to serve. If we could only begin to recognize that as the very example of Jesus Christ as is so well illustrated in Matthew the twentieth chapter. He came not to be served, catered to, He came to serve—to give His life not only as a ransom, but long before that in actually serving people, in proclaiming the Word, in healing, in helping, in being an encouragement and a help in every conceivable way. That's what we ought to be.

Now, obviously, we have offices of responsibility and we must bear those offices of responsibility. Here is an example of it, because God established them in an office and it says they were faithful in that office. It's a part of the Bible. Well, God has given us our varying responsibilities—each one of us. And if we begin to look at somebody else covetously, and if we begin to exact or demand a part of somebody else's responsibility—we want to be heard, or whatever it is—we may have to pay a price for it. Let us bear our individual charges and responsibilities and bear them with dignity, and let's be faithful to God, because that's what faith is all about.

Then, if you are not cognizant of your charge in life—your responsibility, the office of responsibility that God has given to you—how in the world can you

say, "I have faith"? You can't. Faith is manifested in the carrying out of the office of responsibility which has been given to you. So you have to know what that responsibility is. Now, the office of responsibility can start out with, say, your own home. It can be as a member within the Body of Jesus Christ—and every member has a certain function or a charge. Remember I Corinthians the twelfth chapter? They all are welded together into a complete Body. And the knee cannot say to the elbow, "I don't have any need of you." I've never seen a knee, yet, that can carry out the responsibility of an elbow. It just can't do it. Neither can an eye say that it has no need of the ear, nor the ear of the tongue, nor the tongue of the nose. It takes all of them, but God is tempering that Body together as He pleases, according to His will.

So He is establishing us in our varying responsibilities and He is giving them to us. Are we faithfully carrying them out? Or are we, at times, trying to assume a responsibility that we cannot carry out because, as a member particularly classified by God, we have not been designed to do it? You know, if God called me and made me the little finger, it would be awfully hard for me to carry out the responsibility of the foot. The little finger just can't do it—it was never designed to do it, it's not equipped to do it. And if the little finger begins to assume the responsibility of the foot, it is going to find itself attempting to do something in which it is going to fail miserably and it is going to be manifested in all kinds of discouragement, disillusionment, and every other problem. But because of arrogance, it may demand it. But that doesn't mean it can carry it out, because it has never been equipped to do it. Well, neither can the foot carry out the responsibility of the little finger. Now, who in the world is going to say that one is more important than the other? You see, it's only human beings that sit down and start comparing and they think, "Well, his office is more important than mine." And when we start doing that we haven't even begun to be where we should be. We need to recognize offices of responsibility because when we carry out that office of responsibility, we are really, technically, manifesting the real essence of faith. That's what faith is all about.

Now we can begin to understand why God said that "the just shall live by faith." It means that element of faith, when it is written down deeply within us—that *ahman*, that very root word, when it is an integral part of us—manifests itself in absolute loyalty and faithfulness to responsibility. It means that we are dedicated to our charge and we are very gloriously happy in carrying out that responsibility. That's what we are after. That is the meaning of faith.

But that faith is predicated firmly on that solid foundation—that unmovable conviction, that absoluteness—which we call truth. So truth, then, becomes foundational and is manifested in the fruit of faith, which is, in turn, manifested in active, aggressive obedience to charge and to responsibility. Oh, what a beautiful picture it is when we really understand what these characteristics are. But as long as we are going to view these fundamental traits of God's Holy Spirit—that is, the fruits of God's Holy Spirit—as some nebulous, weird, ethereal concept, we are never going to see ourselves for what we ought to be. We are never going to realize the very premise on which we can base our minds and our overt thrusts in life. We just can't do it. So how in the world can we properly examine ourselves and look down into our lives unless we can really see the very fabric by which we are supposed to evaluate ourselves, and then see ourselves in distinct relationship thereto? We couldn't do it.

So I am talking about, then, my dear brethren, the ability to see ourselves for what we are—looking right down to our own very basic natures, our minds, our features, or characteristics, that is, as manifestations—and then to see them in distinct relationship to what those fruits really are. Those fruits—and in this case, the fruit of faith—the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. And that faith is manifested in loyalty to office and to responsibility—a dedication to our charge, the call that God gave to us. And when God called us, He didn't call us and leave us in some nebulous state. We were called and made a member in particular of a Body, and when we were made a particular member of that Body, we were given a charge—a responsibility—because God didn't call us and set us as spare parts out here in some cauldron. You know, just in case a little finger fails, why, I've got another one over here so I can attach it. No, God calls us and adds us to that Body, and when God adds us to the Body, it obviously implies that the charge was inherent in the call, because you were made a part of it. God put you there and He intended for you to carry it out and to be faithful and loyal to it. And when you are—when you are faithful and loyal to it—then you are manifesting faith. And the just—that is, those who have been justified from their past wrongs, those that are now pure and clean before God—shall live by that solid conviction, that unalterable principle, that foundational concept: the Rock which is unchanging. It is an absolute. We know our station, we know our responsibility, and we will not change or alter. That's the meaning of this word *ahman*.

Let's look at it once again: "a primitive root; properly, to build up or support." It didn't say to tear down, to alter or to change. Whatever the charge is, it means to build it, it means to put a support under it—a firm resolve, a firm foundation. "To foster as a parent or nurse." That is, to undergird the development. What would a parent or a nurse do with regard to a child? What do you do with that child? What you do is to have a fundamental purpose in bringing that child on up to full maturation—to full adulthood. You feed it, you take care of it that it may fulfill its responsibility. It means, "figuratively to render (or be) firm or faithful." It means to be absolute—unmovable. ". . . to trust or believe . . ." And trust and belief are entirely dependent upon those unalterable features or characteristics. So it is translated in all of those ways—*ahman*, faith, or truth, the solidarity of that absolute conviction. Let's make sure that *ahman* rules supreme in our lives.

Then, next time, brethren, we are going into the next concept, which is, "Generally, men turn from *ahman* to base traits." Why? They turn away from the spiritual to the carnal—back to themselves—rationalizing with their own minds and lusts of the flesh. But we will explain that next time.