

**Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 108**  
**The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit**

**Faith #17**

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. Once again, another of the tapes on the Fruits of God's Holy Spirit. This one is on the subject of Faith, tape number seventeen. As you will recall, in the last tape that I gave, we completed one of the Greek words out of the several that are used regarding faith and its negative counterpart. So we have now come to the word *apistos*—a-p-i-s-t-o-s. We are beginning that word today.

By way of definition, the "a" on the word *pistos*, negates it—that means it is the exact opposite of the meaning of the word *pistos*, which is the principle word for "faith." So, if the "a" negates it, it means "faithlessness." That is, not having, or manifesting, faith, confidence, conviction, or trust in God. So, the "a" is the first letter of the alphabet—the Greek alphabet, as also in the English—and it is added to the word *pistos*. The word *pistos* means "trustworthy," "trustful," "believing." The "a" makes the word, as I said, a negative, meaning "disbelieving," that is, without Christian faith, specifically one who is a heathen, that is, an infidel. As we shall later see, when we get all of the words put together, the many Greek words that mean "faithlessness," are sometimes translated "infidel," and the word "infidel" also means "heathen." So, in the passive sense, it means one who is untrustworthy, one that you cannot count on, one who does not manifest the kind of consistency, loyalty, or faithfulness required as a servant—whether this is a servant for another human being, or, as all of us are, servants of the Eternal God.

*Apistos* is also translated as "one that believeth not," "faithless," or "an incredible thing," meaning that, in some cases, where there is a manifestation of untrustworthiness, it is indeed incredible, because of the things that have happened.

Just like it is an incredible thing that ancient Israel could have so soon departed from the principles of the living God, for they had seen all of the awesome

miracles that God had performed to lead them up out of their land of servitude, Egypt. They had gone through the great sheer walls in the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. Now, you know, that doesn't happen every day. And here they walked through, and not only did they walk through, but it was on dry ground. There was not even a muddy, marshy bottom there, but they walked through on dry ground. And they got out on the other side, and then they saw the Egyptian armies coming through—who were a manifestation of presumptuousness, because, "after all," they must have thought, "if the children of Israel can walk through there, then so can we." And so they presumed to act in a form of confidence that had no substance to it, and they got caught in it, as anybody who presumes to manifest faith that is shallow and foundationless, will find himself without a foundation. He is a sinking individual who is destroyed by his very presumptuousness. And so, Egypt was destroyed.

So, it means "an incredible thing," or "infidel." Yes, it is this very word *apistos*. The very word that we are talking about here is translated in the Bible as "infidel." Or, it is also translated as "unbeliever," or "one who is unbelieving." So, it is the word, then, that renders negative, the principle word for faith, *pistos*.

Now, let's get into its actual usage, because we have a number of things that we would like to cover, and, if at all possible, I would certainly like to complete this word today. So let's get into the first subtopic—and of course, these are not subtopics necessarily designed by God, they are merely my evaluation of the words as they are used in the Bible, and I am putting them under certain categories because they explain certain fundamental principles or questions. In this case, the subtopic is a question: What are the tragic results of faithlessness? Let's notice now what faithlessness will do to those that do not manifest, or are not capable of manifesting, the spiritual ingredient of faith—a fruit of God's Holy Spirit. Because there are tragic results. There is a horrible, horrible aftermath—or a horrible result—that must be experienced.

Let's notice it now, here in Luke the ninth chapter and verse 41, but we are going to start in verse 37 so that we can get it in context. Luke 9 and beginning in verse 37. Here it is: "And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him." Obviously this is a situation in which Christ and the disciples had separated themselves from the multitudes and had previously gone up into the mountains, I guess, in this case, because they had then come down.

And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out.

In other words, here is a child that, at one moment, could seem to be natural, although he did not manifest the functional characteristics of a normal human being, yet he did not manifest, overtly, the indwelling presence, or the manipulative presence—if it happened to be an external consideration—of another spirit, or another power. For here we find, "[For] lo, a spirit taketh him." So, whether it merely manifested itself at a given moment, or externally it merely took over, it doesn't say.

"[A]nd he suddenly crieth out." So, when this spirit seizes that very being, some kind of wrenching thing takes place inside and it will cry out, whether it is for pain, or whether it is the spirit just taking over the vocal mechanism of that body, I am not sure—the Bible doesn't indicate which, specifically, in each one of these cases. Yet, we do know that these events can happen.

So, "[the] spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again." So there was a wretched, physical manifestation involved in the life of this young son when that spirit became dominant.

"[A]nd bruising him hardly departeth from him." In other words, apparently in this case, it was an in-and-out situation in which it came in at will, and it departed at will, abusing the young boy in the process.

"And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation . . ." And I've heard this quoted so many times to imply a deficiency on the part of the disciples. Well, indeed it was, but that is not what Christ said. What Christ said is that the problem involved the entire generation—*all* of the people that were there, including even the father, and including the disciples. It was the fact that this was a generation that had so long ago departed from the Way of God that they didn't even know what it was to have any confidence in Him, or to believe in any specific promise He had made.

Now, how many times are any of us affected by that type of thing? We get so far away from God, and a real spiritual orientation to God, that we, ourselves, individually, become affected by it. We don't have that confidence. We stand troubled, perplexed, and bewildered. We cannot confront a situation with absolute confidence. How many of us are involved in such circumstances on a day-by-day basis? We can become so involved economically; we can become so involved in the matter of health; we can become so involved in other matters of life, and we stand in doubt because we are not that close to God at that time, and we are troubled. We are just as perverse and as faithless as they were. Well, maybe not just as perverse, because maybe we have not sunk as far, but let's say, relatively speaking, we are still in the same category, and we see it, day by day, unless we have some kind of exalted opinion of our relationship with God, our hold on faith—our hold on the Spirit of God—and we delude ourselves, and we forget the text that says of those in the last days that they are not only "being deceived, but deceiving." So we are "deceived and being deceived"—meaning that there is a terrible, wretched tendency in our lives to deceive ourselves into believing that we are a whole lot better, more successful, a better example of Christianity, and a better example of faith than we really are. We just don't like to accept what we really are. You know, if we, as individuals, could see ourselves for what we really are, it would be kind of a raw picture, and we just don't like to look at it. So it's a whole lot better to draw the shade down, and we draw pretty pictures of what we think we are. But, God looks on the heart. He knows exactly what we are, and you know, He really has respect for us when we can come right out and admit what we are—to be honest, in other words. And that takes real faith. We have to have absolute faith to do that. So, not only will faith help us in overcoming the problem that we are experiencing, but it is the only ingredient that is going to help us to see ourselves for what we are, and then to candidly admit it.

So here we find an example, and Christ just plainly looked at it and said, "O faithless and perverse generation." Now, this last generation is also a faithless and perverse generation. Are we going to get caught in it in any way, or do we know what it is to really have faith in God? Maybe what I need to do before I complete this subject is to thoroughly define what a faithful individual is, and then we can compare ourselves to that. There is none outside of Jesus Christ—I can tell you that. *None* outside of Christ. We haven't made it, and we are not going to make it without the help of God. It's going to be given to us in the last day, and it's going to be given to us because we have come to accept the fact that we cannot do it in

our own right. We don't accept ourselves, we accept the fact that we are what we are and that we need, awesomely, the help and the power, and the strength of God. Oh, the cleverness of the nature, and the minds, with which we were created. They are enormously deceptive, and we are only going to create problems for ourselves until we see our minds for what they are, and what they do to us. They are just not trustworthy. These minds are not trustworthy at all, and I'll tell you one thing: this old human being is beginning to understand that more, and more, and more, day by day.

So we need to recognize that we have one being upon which we need to work, and that is the self. It's the only one you are ever going to be able to change. It's the only one that, by the changes that take place within it, is ever going to be able to see the true reality of tomorrow. We are no longer obstructed by some kind of vain image that we have of ourselves. Or, let me just illustrate it by the example that Christ gave, and He didn't define it on the basis of individuals, but He set up a set of circumstances: you will remember that one had the mote, and the other one had the great beam, or the log, in his eye. Any time the individual who speaks and attempts to evaluate somebody else, that's the individual who has the log. But that whole circumstance might turn around, and if you have two individuals and they are locking horns with one another, the one who has the log is the one who is attempting to instruct or to accuse the other one. Then the minute the other one takes over and attempts to accuse the first, he is the one that has the log. It's amazing how that log and beam can switch back and forth so rapidly, but that's exactly what this parable illustrates. So, we need to be extremely careful, because we become involved as part of this perverse and faithless generation when we become involved in those circumstances.

Now, Christ continued by saying here: "O faithless [that is, *apistos*] and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" How long is God going to tolerate these circumstances? Well, we know that as long as we are faithful in seeing ourselves for what we are, and making a diligent effort to master those traits and characteristics, He is going to stay with us until the Day of perfection.

Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

So we see that some of the tragic results of faithlessness involve our own sordid circumstances. Don't finger point at somebody else and say, "Aha." It shows you that even the ministry is defective. What Christ said here is that it was a whole generation. So the father himself was involved, and so were the disciples. All of them were involved. They were a faithless and perverse generation that had not learned what it was to really trust God. Well, the disciples hadn't. They were still under training, and they had not gotten there yet, but they were ultimately to realize a certain element of success. I don't mean perfection, because I am sure they were not perfect in it, but the element that was essential for them to be usable instruments in the sight of God was there, because I'll tell you, after their real conversion and commission by Jesus Christ, when they finally went out to preach exactly the same Gospel that Christ Himself taught—and Christ taught exactly the same one that was taught by Moses—God *did* back them up in some marvelous miracles that were the obvious manifestation of faith and conviction. So, here was a time that they were under training, and all of us are, to some extent, under training yet, and in the appointed time when God wills, and God wants to so do, He *will* powerfully intervene—and I mean powerfully intervene—and great and marvelous things will happen.

Now, I want us to notice next, Luke 12, Luke the twelfth chapter and verse 46, but let's begin in verse 41. Luke 12 and beginning in verse 41:

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

So here He is merely analyzing: Who is it that is going to be faithful? Who is it that is going to be a faithful steward—that is, to discharge and carry out a responsibility faithfully and acceptably? Whom, then, shall his Lord make ruler, or give the responsibility of rulership? Rulership can involve every level of responsibility in life. It doesn't mean just the ministry, it means everyone, because *all* people bear responsibility. Husbands bear responsibility in their homes and they are supposed to rule those homes. How? Tyrannically? Not at all, but as paying special deference to those over whom God has given them responsibility.

Remember the one thing that God said to ancient Israel, and He stressed it over, and over, when they came up out of the land of Egypt? He said, I want you to remember that you were servants down there. I want you to remember what you went through. Now, why did He tell them so many times that He wanted them to remember that? Because the human tendency is that as soon as they gain the ascendancy—they gain position and responsibility—they are going to use it for their own personal advantage. It is the human tendency. It is the tendency of husbands; it is the tendency of parents to do this to children—to take advantage of them, or to use them—not to fulfill the purpose for which they are called: to train them to exercise responsibility in life, and so on. But oftentimes, they abuse children. Oh, yes they do. There is no question about it, because even the Apostle Paul warned fathers not to create animosity in their children. Now, does that mean that we should then forsake our parental responsibility to teach and to guide them, and to require of them certain actions and behaviors? Not at all. God is going to hold us accountable for doing that, but we must do it objectively because we are concerned for their future. We want them to understand what it is to bear responsibility; we want them to understand what it is to be under control—to live within a home where they are under control—so that when their day comes, they are going to remember how to act, then, toward others over whom they may have a responsibility, from children to those over whom they may have a responsibility in work. That's the reason for it. So, there is a constant ebb and flow in that responsibility, and God wants us to understand it. So He called His own children out—"My son" as He said of ancient Israel—and He said, "I want you to remember, now, that you were a slave down there. Don't you forget it."

Alright, so we, then, have to remember that when we are given responsibility—stewardship—whether it is in a family relationship, a charge within the church, or a duty within the world, it doesn't make any difference—when you are made a ruler, you bear responsibility over a household, or as minister over the entire household of God, He says, "I want you to be a faithful and wise steward." We have to show those proclivities, or those capabilities, before God is going to give us that office or that responsibility, and then, once it is given to us, that doesn't mean we can't change. Oh, it happened many times, and then they lost—at God's discretion, of course—that responsibility.

Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

But what about the other one? You see, the very fact that he pronounced a blessing upon the servant who did it shows that there was a possibility that the servant wasn't going to do it. Then what's going to happen?

Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens. . .

That is, he begins to take advantage of those people over whom he was given a charge. Then God says you had better watch out. Some strange thing is going to happen.

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder [cut him asunder], and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Here, now, is an illustration by Jesus Christ of one who was called as a servant of God. Let's not finger point. It's very easy for us to just point at somebody else. But, remember, any one of us can bear a responsibility given by God, and when that responsibility is given to us—the responsibility of lordship, rulership, the responsibility to take charge over a family, or other people, or over the church, or whatever the area, or domain, of responsibility may be—we can, then, also fail in that responsibility. We can be lifted up in pride and arrogance of heart, and we ourselves can turn away from the charge that God has given to us, and in that Day—at the coming of Jesus Christ, who is really going to read the hearts and minds of human beings—He will then appoint us our portion with the unbelievers—the *apistos*. The unbelievers—that is, those who do not really believe, who do not have that faith and that confidence. So it says:

The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder [that is, by judgment and by circumstances, he is going to have endless difficulties], and will appoint him his portion [that is, his ultimate reward] with the unbelievers [the *apistos*]. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself . . .

That's anybody who bears responsibility, and tell me somebody who doesn't. It's all a matter of relevance. Every human being bears responsibility in some area, and God expects us to discharge that responsibility faithfully—effectively. And what is faithfulness, as defined by effectiveness? It is based upon God's Word wholly and absolutely.

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes . . .

That is, who did not understand the responsibility. Or, in this case, we are obviously talking about one of two classes of people: one who never knew, nor understood, because he was not called, or one who had not grown to that level of responsibility and to whom that particular principle had never been revealed. In other words, anyone from a babe up to youth, let's say, in the Truth of God, who certainly was not mature in the understanding in the Truth of God. Here is a text that shows God weighs on the basis of the time that we have been in the church, and the rapidity, or speed, with which we grow.

Alright, He says, "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." In other words, even though we don't know—we commit sins in ignorance—yet we are still going to have to pay a price for them. You know, if I jump off the top of a scaffold, or something else, and I am not aware of the pull of gravity, I'm afraid I'm still going to have to pay the price at the bottom—it's just an inevitable thing. Or, like an old chum from school—when I was in high school—used to say about the one-hundred foot fall, you know: "It isn't the first ninety-nine feet, or even the hundredth foot, that bothers me, it's that sudden stop." So, the problem with man is not the full hundred-foot fall—the time that he lives through it and thinks he is getting

by—it's when he reaps the consequences of his previous actions. It's that sudden stop that's going to get us, and that one will always cause great consternation, suffering, anxiety and pain.

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." So even when it is within our human relationships, when a man is given a greater responsibility, a whole lot more is required out of him. I mean, he has to live a better example—the image has to be there, because it is expected of him. Now, when we fall into certain categories, we are simply going to have to live up to that standard, and God requires it.

Now, we are talking about faithlessness here, but the opposite of that is when we have that faith and that conviction, we try to live up to that standard—we become as Israel was to become: a model to the whole world, and we do not take advantage of the world. You see, once again, what happened with ancient Israel was that she thought it was because of her inherent goodness that God gave her the blessings of the world, and so she took advantage of them—she exploited Gentiles, she exploited everyone over whom she was given a charge and a responsibility. I know of no area in these last days where Israel—the people of God who inherited the blessings of Abraham—have not exploited them. They have taken advantage. Now, that doesn't mean they weren't Israel. They were Israel, but they did not carry out the charge that God gave to them when He said, "I want you to remember what you were like. I want you to remember what it was to be a servant down there—to have your necks chopped off, to be put in straightjackets in one way or the other. And I want you to remember the kind of beatings, and the servitude they put you through. Now, when you gain the ascendancy, out of the blessings for obedience to that Way of Life that I give to you, I want you to remember that, and don't you treat anybody else like that." And yet, I have scarcely ever seen anyone who gained office and responsibility who does not make those mistakes—even those who hated those abuses before they gained the office. We are just born humanly—that's all—and it takes us a long time to come out of that and to finally manifest that kind of faith and confidence.

You know, people took Christ to be a weakling, but I want to tell you, when you come to understand what real strength—strength of character—is, He's the only one that ever manifested it, because He restrained Himself. Here, look at

God, with all the power in the universe, and yet He restrained Himself from stepping in and intervening in the life of His own Son when that life was threatened. Now, what would you and I do if one of our children were threatened? Why, we would turn the world upside down. And yet, God, knowing the purpose, restrained Himself. Yet, because of His great love for mankind, He gave up the life of His own Son. Don't think that didn't require something on the part of God, who was a Father—who said that He loved His Son with love that transcends anything you and I can understand, even. And, yet, He restrained Himself and never allowed Himself to intervene, even with all the power He possessed, because there was a purpose involved in it.

Do we begin to understand what real faithfulness is—real faithfulness? We are getting down to something that requires a whole lot more than the effort you and I can put forth. It requires something from the awesome power of God's Holy Spirit. "For with men, this is impossible," said Jesus Christ. It isn't possible. You and I couldn't live that kind of life if we wanted to, even humanly. We couldn't even approximate it, because we are going to live the natural inclinations of the flesh—they are going to dominate in our lives.

But the tragic result, when we live that kind of life, is to be appointed our portion with the unbelievers. So we have to come to recognize ourselves, to recognize what we are—the weaknesses, the frailties of the flesh in which we live. We have to recognize that truly we are but dust of this earth. As God said, He knows our frame—He knows we are but dust. But have we recognized that? Do we know that is all we are—in all of the weaknesses that are inherent in our lives? And, then, from there, we must call out mightily for the help of God and the faith essential to be born into the Family of God. That's what faith is all about. Now, if we don't come to manifest that kind of faith, then we are going to pay the terrible price that I have just mentioned, because I know one thing, brethren: I know that we were called, and God has given us that Truth. God gave us a Way of Life, and He expects us, now, to live that Way of Life in absolute faithfulness—not faithlessness.

Alright, secondly, then, God wants those called to have faith. He doesn't want us to live this faithless—this tragic—experience up here. So, when He calls us, He wants us to live in faith—the exact opposite of *apistos*. What He wants us to live is *pistos*—faithfulness.

Let's turn to John the twentieth chapter. Here is a classic example. Remember the circumstance of doubting Thomas? He said, "I'm not going to believe it unless I can see it." And, you know, there are a lot of human beings just like that today. "I'm not going to believe unless I see," and they don't mean in the mind's eye, by faith, either. You see, many of us are like Abraham—or, I hope we are like Abraham—who never saw the City of God, at all, but in vision, saw it afar off. That is, by faith he saw it. He never saw the reality of it. He was not like Thomas. He didn't say, "Okay, God, I'll accept your promise that I'm going to have a son, and that I'm going to be the father of many nations, and that I'm finally going to be the epitome of those which are born into your own glorious Divine Family, but I'll believe it when I see it." Not at all. That's not why Abraham became the father of the faithful. He became the father of the faithful because he saw himself for what he was, and then he saw the future for what God intended it to be. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

If you and I, through faith, can look off into the future and recognize what it is, in relationship to what we are at the present time, *then* we can make that goal. But if you don't know where you are, and you don't know where you are going, how are you going to get there? You have to know both points. Now, I can't possibly get to a designated point, even on a map, if I don't know where I am. Somebody can tell me that my destination is Chicago, but there would be little possibility—the odds would be astronomical—that I could make it to Chicago if I didn't know where I was at the present time. The only way is to know those two absolute points. I have to know that I am in Eugene, Oregon, and that Chicago is where it is. Then I can look at a map and get there. You cannot get to where God wants you to be, spiritually, if you don't know where you are, physically. It just can't be done. So you are going to have to see yourself truly for what you are, or you will never be able to make it.

So, here was a classic example of it, in the case of Thomas. Let's notice it in John 20 and verse 27, but let's begin in verse 26:

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas [You see, Thomas thought he had said it to himself, and maybe to a few friends. He didn't know that Christ had ears that could pick up on

anything that was said, wherever He was.], Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless [*apistos*], but believing.

"I don't want you consistently to be an unbeliever; I don't want you to stand out there and demand constantly to be allowed to see things before you believe them." For, you remember, that's what Thomas had said. I didn't go back and read the earlier part of the story where Thomas said, "I am not going to believe unless I see it." And Christ heard that. And so He came into their midst—He suddenly appeared there—and He said, "Come over here, Thomas." He said, "I know what you said, but I've called you and I want to make you a believer. I know it's going to be hard, and I know that you are a tough nut to crack, but I want you to see, and I want you to comprehend, because I'm going to send you out to preach this Truth, and you can't do it unless you are a believer." So He said, "Come on over here. I want you to thrust your hand into my side."

. . . and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God.

"Oh no, I don't need to do that. No, no, no, no. That's not necessary now." In other words, Thomas was not true to himself. How many of us, the minute we are caught in a given situation, all of a sudden we begin to hedge. We are never honest and straightforward. I've seen that so many times, I'll tell you, it's the most revolting and disgusting thing. And as I have said so many times, we try to walk through the cracks, and we hope we can hide. Well, we should, because we are probably about this tall at that time.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." How many of us are going to have to go through the college of hard knocks and be brought all the way down to where the only way we can look, is up? That's the only thing left to do. And then we can say, "Yes, Lord, I believe." But how much better would it be for us to accept it in faith and believe it?

And I'm going to tell you, brethren, if I understand the Bible at all today, there are a lot of people out there who have recoiled on the basis of the traumatic experiences of the past, who are going to have to learn through the college of hard

knocks. And I tell you, they are going to learn, because God Almighty said, "I have a desire for the workmanship of my hands." If God called them, and God truly was working with them in times past, and they have bolted because of their experiences within that church, they are going to learn through the hardest experiences human beings can go through. They are going to learn. But, tragically, it will be through terrifying experiences. Wouldn't it be better for us to manifest a little faith in God? Not in a human being, not in a man, not in an organization—although there was a man, and an organization to whom God gave that Truth. But don't look to that. You look to the Truth. The Truth is what orients you, and the Truth is what we understood. We knew, and we practiced, and we believed it, or we could not have been the people of God in times past. It was the means by which we were chosen and called, and now God said, even though we cannot lay our hands on it today—even though we cannot tangibly, physically, technically lay our hands on all the proofs that we would like to have—we must continue to believe that Truth which was given to us. And that is the very basis of our faith and our confidence, and I'll tell you, my dear brethren, there are going to be thousands of people who will learn through horrifying, and I mean horrifying, experiences—terrible, terrible experiences, so my Bible tells me.

Wouldn't it be better if we could be a little less like Thomas and not have to see all of this in order to believe—to accept—but to really maintain our confidence and our conviction? And then I hear people come back every once in a while and say, "Well, what if?" Well, now, a "what if" is hypothetical, and certainly is not the manifestation of any faith. If it is a "what if," then you don't have the faith in the first place. Now let me turn it around and say, *what if* you are wrong in what you're doing now? What I'm saying, brethren, is that there was a time when we knew. We didn't say, "what if" then. We really believed it—we accepted it, we were gung-ho for it.

So the only reason for the "what ifs" today is the experiences and the troubles that were generated. And I don't justify those troubles; I don't justify the behavioral pattern of anybody. I'll tell you, it's almost that I am incessantly supposed to uphold the wretched character of a man. I am not upholding the wretched character of the man, I am upholding the Truth that was taught, and that's my firm belief—it's the absolute in this whole situation.

Now, if somebody says, "Well, such a man could never have been used to reveal the Truth." Oh? Maybe you had better go back and read the Bible again. Rather, maybe you had better take a look at yourself. What we don't understand is how bad *we* really are. Why, any time we take swipes like that, all we are doing is saying, "I am so much superior to somebody else. I would never do anything like that." Yet, the very people who are doing that are involved in sin and guilt that are equally as bad.

Where does God classify sin? I don't find it anywhere, except in the one thing that Jesus Christ said when He was asked which commandment was the great commandment, and He classified them as one and two. So, obviously, the first four cannot be isolated in order to say that one is more significant than the other, unless you just say the numerical order has some meaning. And maybe that's true, because God is the one who wrote them down. So I would assume that He deliberately intended number one to be number one: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." So that sin must be the worst one of all. But when Jesus Christ classified them, the only prioritization that He gave was that the first four were lumped into one, which is love toward God, and the last six are, then, lumped together as love toward man. So there is a "first and second" relationship there. And that's the only classification that I know of regarding the laws of God. And that being the case, then, the first four are a whole lot more significant than any of those relationships involved in the last six. And I am not minimizing, now, the problems in the violation of the last six. What I am trying to show is that I don't know of a human being who has not had other gods. I don't know of anybody who has not, in one way or another, taken the name of God in vain. And, yet, if we find somebody doing something that we abhor, then it is indeed abhorrent. But we didn't see ourselves; we didn't abhor the thing *we* were doing; we didn't take ourselves up short and say, "Well, who are you to condemn anybody? Look what *you've* done." Oh, how true that statement is: "deceiving and being deceived." Self-deception is perhaps the worst thing than can happen to anyone.

Now, I do not justify what happened. I want you to understand that. I loathe it as much as any human being. But I hope I have come to recognize that the things that I have done—which may not fall into the same category at all—are just as serious in the sight of God. That includes the things that I still do, that I have come to loathe and hate, and yet I have not been able to master perfectly. Which one now lives the perfect example? Let him, as Christ said, cast the first

stone. And so they all fled. Was the woman guilty? Certainly she was. But were they? Alright, if you have committed no sin, whatsoever—ever—then you go right ahead and cast all the stones you want to at the man and the organization. That's fine, if you haven't committed any sins—if you have lived perfect lives—then you go ahead. But if you have committed them, then woe be unto you if you attempt to judge somebody else.

Alright, let's recognize that we desperately—and I mean we desperately—need to evidence faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. We cannot constantly go around demanding living, demonstrable proofs. That is not the basis of our hope for everlasting life. The basis of our hope is not faithlessness, but faithfulness, and faithfulness is the obvious manifestation of that faith which is evidenced by things that are not seen. Get the point? Then, brethren, let us, day by day; in the change in our lives; in the disgust and contempt for our own wretchedness; in the obvious understanding of our own defectiveness; and our love, tolerance and compassion for somebody else, obviously manifest our trust in God—our faithfulness, our response to those very truths of God. How can you manifest faith in God when you don't even see yourself for what you are? If you really see yourself, *there* is the beginning evidence that you really have confidence and trust in God.

So it is necessary for us then, brethren, to manifest that kind of faith and that kind of confidence, and not to be like Thomas, who said, "I'm not going to believe until I can see it—until I ram my hand into His side." And how many of us are constantly demanding the right to thrust our hands—our fists—into His side, and to take a physical advantage of Him? Let's not be faithless, brethren, let's manifest faith. And I am confident that is the reason for your presence.

Yet, brethren, it is essential to remember that there are dozens who have manifested, initially, that faith and confidence, but who have turned away from it. Will we turn? That's what Christ said. Don't accuse me, now, at all. When those who had been following Christ turned away from Him because they were offended at a certain statement He had made, did not He turn to the others and say, "Will you also turn away?" Will we, brethren? Which one of us will lose that faith and turn to faithlessness—we will no longer manifest that kind of confidence and conviction—and will turn away? Brethren, there isn't a point that I can stress that is more significant and important than that one. Believe and trust, manifest faith,

remain *faithful*, not *faithless*—*apistos*. Remain *pistos*, as the Bible says—have that faith, and believe it, and trust it.

Alright, time is nearly past, now, so I am not going to get into the next point in this. That point is that, "Those things believed by the called are thought incredible by the faithless." And, you know, it is an amazing thing how people, when they see what we are doing today, will denigrate and ridicule, and they think it's an incredible thing that we should remain faithful to that. Well, they thought things that happened back at that time were incredible, and I want you to notice how that is applied next time we come back to this very subject, which will be tape number eighteen on this matter of faith. We will wait, then, until that time, because, otherwise, I would just get into the middle of this point.