

**Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 111**  
**The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit**

**Faith #20**

Raymond C. Cole  
Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren, this is now tape number 20 in the sub-series on "Faith," in the general series on the "Fruits of God's Holy Spirit."

Last time, we were dealing with a series of subtopics on this matter of faith itself—or in this particular case, we are dealing with the negative side of that with the Greek word *pistos*. If you will recall, in the last tape we were dealing with the subtopic of, "When is one called, worse than an infidel?" And we spent considerable time explaining many of the aspects of our behavior in our relationships one with another. And if those are not acceptable in the sight of God, then we are actually in worse circumstances than one who has never believed at all.

And then, from there, we went into the second one, or the next point: "Unbelievers and believers should not be yoked together by agreement or by contract." And God Himself laid down the rules and the regulations regarding that, because we are motivated by certain fundamental mental or philosophical principles of life, and when those philosophies are not in accord, one with another, we are destined for contention, strife, and hurtful situations. And it is not God's will that we should be involved in any such circumstances. So I spent considerable time explaining that.

And then, finally, we went into the third point, which is, "How do you conduct your social life before unbelievers?" So, oftentimes, we are involved in circumstances in which we are to be "in the world, but not of the world," as the Apostle Paul said. And being in this world, obviously, as social creatures, we have to have some kind of a relationship with our neighbors, with our community, with professional friends, and with others that are involved in certain specific circles. Now, how do we handle those circumstances? Well, the Apostle Paul laid down

some relatively clear and precise situations regarding our internal relationships within families, within communities, within social circles, and so on, that involve both believers and unbelievers.

Now, we want to get into the beginning point for this tape number 20: "Satan has powerful sway over natural-minded people." If you will recall—and we have explained this a number of times—that when men were created, and since that time, by natural birth, they are born with carnal minds, natural minds. I have given you many technical explanations of that. The carnality that we possess simply means "flesh," and the fleshly mind is the natural mind with which we were born. It is not an adverse mind in the sense that here we are with neutral minds, and then somebody else gives us a contrary mind. No, we are *born* with that contrary mind—that's the natural mind with which we were born, regardless of the philosophy of the vast majority of people on the face of this earth who want to believe that we are simply, somehow, a neutral, responsive mental entity that can be influenced either negatively or positively. That is not the case, at all. We are negative *by birth*, and we are *born* with our natural, carnal minds that must, then, be subjugated and brought down by the power of God's Holy Spirit, and we must be given a new mind, which is the mind of Jesus Christ. So, we are not just a neutral entity until such time that we are influenced by one power—one force—or the other.

So, here now, we see that Satan has powerful sway over natural-minded people. Yes, there is no question about it, the natural mind is the mind of Satan. Paul explained that very clearly in Ephesians the second chapter and the first three verses. The very mind that we had is the mind of Satan that, as a principle, as a concept, as an attitude or an orientation—I guess that is the best way to explain it—God took and used to make the natural man. He used that very mind. So, it has a natural affinity with Satan. It just simply subscribes to that mind—it walks in accord with it—because that is the nature of that mind, and it is the mind that dominates this whole world. That is, it visibly dominates it. It really does not dominate it, because there is another force that is merely allowing something to occur for a period of time, and will powerfully intervene at the appointed time.

So, let's notice, then, this sway that Satan has over those human beings created with the mind that has the natural inclinations manifested in the mind of Satan himself. Here in 2 Corinthians 4:4. I'm going to read verse 4 and then I am

going to go back and read verses 1 through 7, after which I want to read it from the *Living Bible*. I think that will make it quite clear for you. Verse 4 says, "In whom the god of this world [now, we know who the god of this world is—it's Satan, the Devil] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not"—those with the sad case of *apistos*. So, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Now, the unique problem in taking this out of context, which most religionists do, is that they merely make it say what they have fundamentally accepted as a doctrinal philosophy within that group of people—unbelievers. And so, you will find that even the *Living Bible* does exactly the same thing, and I read, it must have been five, six, seven translations when I was reviewing my notes yesterday. And they will all immediately assume that, here, all the people are responsive to God initially, but when they reject and rebel against the way of God, *then* is when they become unbelievers. Prior to that time they are not classified as unbelievers, and that is not what this is saying, at all. What this is saying is that everyone in the whole world, in a natural sense, is an unbeliever until God calls them and grants them the faith by which they *can* believe, and then *from* that premise, some aggressively turn away from the faith once delivered and become unbelievers because they are practicing the philosophy of their own minds.

So, there are two ways that human beings can become unbelievers: By natural birth we are unbelievers, or, we can aggressively turn away from God and become an unbeliever because we *will not* hold on to the faith which God gave to us. So, there are two avenues. Now, I want you to keep that in mind as we go back and get this in context, reading the first seven verses of this chapter:

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry . . ." So we are talking, now, about the New Testament ministry—the ministry of reconciliation that was given to the Apostle Paul. It was the ministry that was merely the carrying out of the very ministry that God gave to Jesus Christ, first and foremost. For this *is* the ministry of Christ, and the twelve carried out exactly that same ministry, doing exactly the same things; for even *as* Christ was commissioned and sent into the world, so also were the twelve apostles. And then years later, the Apostle Paul said that he was doing exactly the same thing, and that *his* was the ministry of Christ. So it is still the ministry of Christ, and will continue to be the ministry of Christ—or the ministry of the New Testament—clear down to the time of the return of Jesus

Christ, when He will take up His responsibility once again and He will be assisted by the small remnant that will remain faithful to Him and will be born into that glorified, divine Family and be seated with Him upon that throne, exercising the same responsibility with Him.

Now, we read: "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty . . ." So here the Apostle Paul is saying that they, as ministers of Jesus Christ, have renounced the natural tendency of dishonesty, the "hidden things of dishonesty"—those things that are residual down in our minds and in our hearts that give orientation and direction to the carnal mind. Men are going to employ these subtle principles as long as they live as natural, carnal beings, and they are going to do it in their favor, never being self-sacrificing, never giving of themselves—never giving up their own mental rights, their own heartfelt rights, their own emotions, and turning themselves over to Jesus Christ. No, they will bow before the very carnal principle of self-aggrandizement. And they are going to do it—and will always do it—until God gets a hold of them, and until they come to recognize that they must surrender that will and give it up to God, which all of us must do.

"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness"—the arrogance of natural minds, the conceit by which we are self-deceived, that which brings about strife and arrogance and all of the human manifestations. "[N]or handling the word of God deceitfully." Oh yes, they handle the Word of God. They use it, but they use it craftily; they use it to justify *their* whims; they use it for *their* purposes. Never does it speak directly to them. It is always applicable, in some way, to other people, negatively, and they will use it for that purpose.

. . . nor handling [as the Apostle Paul said] the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Self-sacrificing—giving up the self completely—which is a terribly hard thing to do. But Christ is our example, Who did not even retaliate. Now we, as human beings, are most inclined to always retaliate—to be vindictive, to always pull a fence around ourselves. We are always hurt; we are always upset; we are

always distressed or troubled in some way, never recognizing that when we allow that kind of thing to happen, all we are doing is manifesting the natural tendencies that God says we have to master and to overcome.

Now, if anybody had the right to be despondent, and to be upset, and to be more than unhappy with human relationships, it would have been Jesus Christ; and yet, when He died and ascended, He said He was going to leave His joy with us. He was going to leave His joy with us. I wonder how many of us really know what that kind of joy is? You get bombarded on every side; you get cut into pieces; people are constantly nailing you to the wall in one way or the other, and yet, you turn right around and you respond with a broad smile, with understanding, comprehension, and with real love and affection because you understand what people are up against. You understand their natures. It doesn't mean that they are right and you are wrong. Christ was perfectly right—never was He wrong—and yet, He was taken to task daily.

. . . but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid [or, better terminology today would be "hidden," and it is talking about the Gospel of the New Testament, or the Gospel of the Kingdom of God—there is only one Gospel, so said the Apostle Paul who was supposed to have taught the other Gospel], it is [hidden] to them that are lost [or, in this case, "being lost." It is that tense in the Greek terminology which means that it is an ongoing act, or is a progressive consideration.]: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So here, now, is a text which shows that it is not only the first consideration that I gave to you earlier: that there are people who have never been chosen; who are not called; who merely see technical arguments and who are going to fight on the basis of those technical arguments; who themselves have *never* received the Spirit of God, at all. They are natural men and are *in* that way of destruction. Now, that doesn't mean that they have lost their chance or their hope. They are only in that way of destruction until God elects to call them. God has the appointed times, and God *will* call them—revealing His Truth to them and allowing them the necessary power to make the start, and to give them the impetus

that they really need. God has inexorably bound Himself to do that. But, once He calls us, He expects us to employ the article of faith and to use it wisely and judiciously so that we can be absolutely effective in the mastery of ourselves. But it takes that faith. The just are going to live by that faith, and if you don't have that faith, and you cannot hang on to God's Word, you are in trouble. And that faith is manifested in the continuity of the will of God. That's what it means. It is the faith that you have received it and that you don't have to change anything. It is the revelation of God, and that's what the Apostle Paul was saying over and over and over throughout his writings: that it was the very doctrine that was revealed—it was the very Way of Life that had been given to them—and it was going to remain viable and in force in their lives by faith, the Faith that God Himself would give.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What a beautiful expression, and that is exactly what conversion is all about. The light and the dark that existed back in olden time, back at the time of Genesis 1, is the physical manifestation of the spiritual—that we exist in that darkness until the light is commanded to shine out. But darkness naturally prevails until, by the authority of God (in this case, the call of God), He calls us and commands light to shine into our lives. And it happens when God commands it—not because *we* willed it; not because *we* thought it; not because we have the ability in our own right; not because we have willed to be obedient to God. It is because *God* commanded it in our lives and we were appointed to it, and God has called us and given us that knowledge that is going to shine out in our lives.

Now verse 7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ." Oh, indeed we do. What we have is the knowledge of God, the power of His Spirit—that faith and all of the manifestations of God's Holy Spirit. But where do they reside? In the weakest possible vessels that could ever exist: human beings. And, until we recognize the ineptitude, the inefficiencies, the deficiencies, the lacks and the terrible, terrible drag that those human natures are to ourselves—until we recognize that, and the horrible, horrible demands of our own natural minds which are in defiance against the knowledge of God (remember 2 Corinthians 10, verses 3–5?)—we can do nothing. We must bring these minds into captivity to Christ,

and let me tell you, that is a terribly hard thing to do. If you are not aware of what is going on, that mind can get out of hand so fast that it isn't even funny. But if we always justify everything we think, every thought that occurs to us—if we never test these things on the basis of that spiritual input which God gave to us (the true light that God commanded to shine out in our lives)—then how in the world are we ever going to know? Why, there are some people that bow before every thought that comes to them.

Well, I will tell you one thing: I have made thousands of mistakes—I readily admit it—but I guarantee you, my dear brethren, that even though I may uphold certain thoughts that maybe I shouldn't, and I am aware of them, I don't know of anybody that trounces upon his own thinking any more than I do. I have come to loathe—and pardon the emphasis—the wretchedness that can proceed out of a human, carnal mind, and first and foremost, this one.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ." And I have to recognize it as I go before God on a day-by-day basis and say, "Well, God you made this horrible mind; you made this wretched nature, please do something with it." I do not want it. I loathe it, I abhor it, and I don't like the things that can be conceived, or thought out, by it. I want only the thoughts of Christ. I would like to have the manifested dimension of the love of God Himself. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ." We have all of this glorious brilliance that God has given to us through the power of His Spirit, and it all resides in these wretched, human, mortal bodies.

"[T]hat the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Now do you understand why you are flesh? It's so that when you master, you are not going to be able to take any credit for self. Now he is hooking the whole thing right back and showing to you the dishonesty of human beings. Remember verse 2? "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully." That's what we would do as human beings. Well, what do I mean that's what we *would* do? Don't we all too frequently do it?

And, yet, what did the Apostle say? I want you to get it in context. Let's not lift it out of context. What was the context? Paul said that there was a ministry delivered to the ministry, and that ministry is a responsibility that must be

born faithfully and judiciously, and they must proclaim the Truth. And, then, those who hear must respond on the basis of the Faith that God will give.

So, regardless of the fact that we have been called, we still hold in possession the glory of God in the most wretched vessels possible—human minds, human hearts and flesh—that are absolutely despicable. So, you are going to have to recognize that and hang on to it.

Now, let me very quickly read it, and I want you to notice how the author of the *Living Bible* here misinterpreted it because he took one side of the issue only. And that's the only thing they can see because they do not recognize what we are by nature. So, here in 2 Corinthians 4, we begin:

It is God himself, in his mercy, who has given us this wonderful work of telling his Good News to others [Nothing wrong with that. That beautifully says it.], and so we never give up.

That is, regardless of the circumstances, we cannot compromise—we cannot give up, we cannot throw our hands up in despair. We sometimes feel like doing it—the Apostle Paul did. But you don't dare do it.

"We do not try to trick people into believing." And I'll tell you that if there has ever been a motto that is true of Church of God, The Eternal, or the ministry within it (and I'm sure, the members also), it is stated right here. We do not try to trick people into believing. It won't work. And, yet, how many people have been tricked into belief, and all they can see is a man, or an organization—something to which they can belong—as a philosophy of life, or whatever? But how many of them recognize that the real purpose of the work is the mastery required in their own lives? You see, there are not many who want to do that, anymore. That whole principle turned clear out into left field so that it became the idea that it isn't a matter of what you believe, it isn't a matter of what you do, it is a matter of your support for a "Work." That is not the call of God, at all. We were never called for that kind of thing. For, how in the world can you carry out a work if you do not even manifest its intent or purpose? You're going to tell the world that they are so bad, and yet, you are going to go ahead and live it? Pray tell, how is that going to work?

We do not try to trick people into believing [indeed, we do not]—we are not interested in fooling anyone [Not at all. We are going to be up front, and we are going to say it exactly for what it is. So, I'm not going to be involved in any trickery or chicanery]. We never try to get anyone to believe that the Bible teaches what it doesn't [we are going to be straight-forward about it]. All such shameful methods we forego. We stand in the presence of God as we speak and so we tell the truth, as all who know us will agree [For, those who know us will agree, unless we are clouded by our own minds. That's what we have to check]. If the Good News we preach is hidden to anyone, it is hidden from the one who is on the road to eternal death.

Now, of course, the author here simply believes that all people have a right, and therefore, the only person involved here is the one who knew, but turned away from it and would not "accept Christ," as they say. And that isn't what is being said, at all. For, even those who have never been called are on the road to death until God calls them. And, then, once they have been called, they can fulfill the second aspect of that: they can turn away.

If the Good News we preach [that is, the Gospel that we preach] is hidden to anyone, it is hidden from the one who is on the road to eternal death [in both categories]. Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind [he has blinded the whole world, and he will, once again, through subtlety and trickery, even deceive those who were once called], unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him or to understand the amazing message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is God.

Oh, how true that is. How many are deceived? That is what the world doesn't understand. Revelation 20 and verse 9 tells you that it is the whole world. Only a handful really know and believe. That means also that so-called Christendom is blinded. That means all of the religions of this world are blind. They have all been blinded until God allows that glorious light to shine upon them. I didn't write it, it's in the Bible. Why don't we believe it? God said that the entire world is blinded, with the exception of that small handful. I don't have the time, now, to show you that He said very clearly that it was a "very small" number. Well, pardon me, I do—if I get that far—have a text today that will tell you how limited it really is.

We don't go around preaching about ourselves [I should hope not] but about Christ Jesus as Lord. All we say of ourselves is that we are your slaves [Now, that's what Paul said, and I ask you, brethren, how many times have I said that that is exactly what this ministry is going to be?] because of what Jesus has done for us. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that it is the brightness of his glory that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shine within us—is held in a perishable container [human, earthen vessels], that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own.

So, sometimes, the author of the *Living Bible* makes it so beautifully clear, if we can recognize the gross errors. But you have to understand it, and that's why we still use the *King James*, which is our basic text. And if we will use that as our guide, other translations can oftentimes make it much clearer for us.

So we find that Satan has a very powerful sway over *all* of the world, as well as the people who have been called and chosen, because, if they are not mindful of his devices, they can very quickly be led astray. Yes, all but the very elect, the Bible says, shall be deceived. That means that in many cases, even many, many of the elect will be deceived—even the holy ones, as Daniel said, will be led astray by that force and by that power. They will be made unbelievers because they turned away from the Faith that God originally gave.

The final point in this word *apistos*—meaning "unbelievers"—is: "What is the ultimate fate of the unbelieving?" Isn't that a natural conclusion? Revelation 21 and verse 8. Revelation 21 and verse 8. Here, now, is exactly what is going to happen to us if we don't really believe that Truth—the "faith once delivered"—that God gave to us. If we don't believe it—if we are not hanging on to that—and if we turn away from that Truth, as the Bible says, we are "ever seeking, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth." It is a negative principle. The Bible did not authorize it—it did not put a stamp of approval upon it—whatsoever. So, here we find all kinds of people going every which way, searching, seeking, questioning and doing all kinds of things that God calls an illness. They are never able to come to it because He said that in the last days—and I want you to be mindful of this fact—"some will depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing

spirits." Somebody, then, departed from a faith originally given, and they fell prey to that deceptive spirit who is arch-ruler over a domain: demons. And these have fallen prey to it. Now, what is the fate of those who fall prey to that? Notice it here in Revelation 21 and beginning in verse 8:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Oh, right along with whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and even sorcerers—that is, those involved in witchcraft—are unbelievers. Unbelievers are exactly in that same category because they did not trust God. They had no faith in "the Faith" of God—the doctrine of God, in that Way of Life. What a tragedy that will be. Indeed, as we shall see, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now, the next word that I want to cover is *elpis*—e-l-p-i-s. It is from a primitive word *elpo*—e-l-p-o—meaning "to anticipate, usually with pleasure." It is an "expectation (abstractly or concretely)," and is translated as "confidence, faith, hope." It is used only once as "faith," but this word will be completely analyzed under the fruit of "hope." As "faith," it is used in Hebrews 10 and verse 23, and this will be our subtitle: "The basis and strength of our Christian profession." That faith, now, is the basis and strength of our Christian profession.

Notice it here in Hebrews 10 and verse 23. Hebrews 10 and verse 23. Paul wrote: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith . . ." Notice the word "our" is italicized. Let's drop it out for one moment. "Let us hold fast the profession of . . . faith." It doesn't have anything to do with our faith. It is something that was given. "Let us hold fast the profession of . . . faith without wavering . . ." I ask you: If, now, faith is synonymous with doctrine, or with belief—and we are going to see that it is—how, once you have that faith, can you justify changing it?

Then I ask you, also concretely: If faith must be given by God—it is not something that you can conjure up in the self—and it is something that must come as a gift from Almighty God, how are you ever going to have it unless you are called?

And a third question now: If, then, God does not give it until you are called, and once it is given, it is given by God, once you have it, can it ever be changed?

So, then, we can logically deduce that if any change is necessary, one of two things applies: 1) You either departed from that which was given to you—which was given by God, or 2) You never had it in the first place, and you are simply moving from one human premise to another. Those are the only two circumstances that can apply—the only two.

And so he said, "Let us hold fast the profession of [*elpis*] without wavering"—without ever having a doubt. The word "wavering" here is sometimes translated as "doubt"—without a single doubt. Brethren, that is the very premise of this little, fledgling operation right here with you and me. That's what we have been trying to do. For we *firmly* believe that the Truth of Almighty God was delivered, and we are going to hold that Faith without wavering—without turning away from it, whatsoever.

"[F]or he is faithful that promised." God does not change. Why should we? When God call us, He gives us that knowledge and God has bound Himself inexorably to back us up, if we remain in that Faith. So, if God has inexorably bound Himself, why can we not covenant with God with an inexorable—and binding—conviction? Why not?

And, yet, so many people believe that they have to consistently try it, alter it, and change it. To try it, in the sense of the Biblical parlance, simply means to live it and to see its value in your lives. It doesn't mean to attempt to find out whether or not you believe it to be the Truth. Do you think for one minute that God Himself gave us the right of checking Him out? What nonsense. But God said simply to human beings—who are not only derelicts, but who are doubtful, and cannot somehow get themselves on a solid, firm footing: "Go ahead and try it. I give you the right and privilege of living it—to try it. I want you to see that it works." That's all He is saying. And that's precisely what we should have done, and we did do it for many years, and we saw the results of it, and then we turned away from it. Oh, indeed we did. Some of the very people that saw the greatest results are the ones who have turned away from it today. What a tragedy.

Alright, what is the real meaning of this expression *elpis*? I want to go back and analyze it just a little bit, because in this case, the manifestation, now, of that responsibility that is borne by every one called and chosen of God, is a profession. That is, you know, if I have a profession, it is something that I am practicing. Isn't that what it means? If I am in some professional field, it means that I not only profess expertise, or capability, in that area, it is my practice—it is what I am doing. So, in this case, we are not only professing Christians but we are practicing Christians. Some people make a profession but they never practice it. We had better do both. We had better make a profession—and that profession had better be backed up by our practice, for that is the manifestation *of* our profession.

So, it says, "Let us hold fast the profession of . . . faith without wavering." How is it manifested? In our works, our conversation, our attitudes in general, our obedience, our control, and our character—all these are areas in which that profession of faith is manifested. Now, faith is a profession. The word "profession" here in the Greek parlance is *homologia*—the h-o-m-o means that it has to do with men. And the "logia" part has to do with a mental conviction—a confidence, a faith.

So, it is human conviction—human determination, human dedication. I want us to see it as it is used in about four cases in the Bible, and I think this will help you to understand what that profession of faith is. Here in 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6 and let's note verse 12: "Fight the good fight of faith." Fight the good fight of faith. That means, then, that apparently, to maintain faith is extremely difficult—it's a fight. It is something that we must labor to perform. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession . . ." The word "profession" here is exactly the same thing. So, our seeking of everlasting life is the quest of a new profession. It is our college of hard knocks—our training period—the years of preparation for entrance into the joy of our new profession. That's what it's all about.

"[B]efore many witnesses." They may not realize the source of your conviction—your belief—but they are aware of what you are doing. Don't you ever forget that. As a matter of fact, if you make a mistake, it's not unlikely that they *could* call it to your attention. However, they don't do it, because, you see, they justify themselves in a belief that they don't have to do any of those things.

Yet, if *you* make a profession of believing this Book, they'll tell you when *you* make a mistake. Oh, I've seen it happen many times.

So let's make a good profession. As he said here, ". . . and hast professed a good profession." So, let's make it a very valuable and a good profession—a good *homologia*—"among many witnesses," in which our character, our works, our conversation, our attitudes in general, and our obedience are manifested. They're going to see it, and they're going to believe it.

Verse thirteen: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." The word "confession" here is the word *homologia*. Here, now, is the example of Christ, and this is what the Apostle Paul is saying in an explanatory note to verse 12, where we are commanded to manifest a good profession. And he gave us the example of Christ before Pontius Pilate, when he said that there He "witnessed a good confession"—or "profession." That is, He did not sin; He showed only love for even the perpetrators of His suffering; He showed kindness and consideration for the whole world, and never once, even in that critical, dark hour, did He violate any code of ethics, or basic principle of life. Christ is our living example, and if we're going to make a profession, let's make sure that we walk in His footsteps.

Hebrews 3 and verse 1. Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." There it is once again. It's *homologia*, just simply meaning our conviction, our faith—the profession of our faith. So, He is the high priest, then, of our profession. He is the one that we look to—that we trust.

Now, there are many people that have high priests in their various professions. You know, it is interesting that that very term is used with regard to many, many leading individuals in certain organizations: "the high priest of this," or the "high priest of that." Our High Priest is Christ Jesus, as we saw back here in 1 Timothy 6 and verse 13. He set us an example.

Now, finally, Hebrews 4 and verse 14. Hebrews 4, and noting verse 14: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Seeing that we have an

unalterable Being—one who never changes, one who has never made any mistakes—whose life is going to be lived within us, should we not walk in His steps? How, then, can we justify any changes in our lives if Christ is living within us? Or do we say that He isn't? It's got to be one way or the other. If Christ is living His life within us, He may grow, but He is not going to change what He gave to us. Let's not accuse Him of double standards and hypocrisy.

Alright, brethren, that will give you a basic understanding of the word *elpis*. But I am going to definitely expand greatly in a future series on the matter of where this word is used in other ways, principally under the term "hope." So we will come to it, and we will use it in that regard.

Now, the last text that I want to give to you—and I must read these rather rapidly, because I would like to complete it—is the word "*oligopistos*." The word *pistos*, of course, means "faith." So, the word *oligos*—o-l-i-g-o-s—which is the original word in the Greek, is a word "of uncertain affinity." It means, "puny (in extent, degree, number, duration or value)." It especially, in the neuter case, or adverbially, means "somewhat." It is translated as "almost," "brief," "briefly," "few," "a little," "a season," "short," "small," or "a while."

And then, the second part of that is *pistis*—p-i-s-t-i-s, which will be defined later, as we shall see, as the basic word for "faith" in the New Testament. So, it means, then, "incredulous"—that is, lacking confidence in Christ, meaning "of little faith," "of little conviction"; we don't really profess it, we don't really believe it. We have more confidence in ourselves.

Let's see how this word *oligos* is used. This is the one that I was referring to earlier. Let me read them very quickly, just so that you have an understanding of that basic suffix to the word. Here in Matthew 7. Matthew 7 and let's note verse 14. I want to read these quite rapidly: "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few [that means a very small number] there be that find it." The word "few" is *oligos*—o-l-i-g-o-s—which is the suffix to this word *oligopistos*, meaning "of little faith." "Few there be that find it."

Then we will find it also in Matthew 20 and verse 16. Matthew 20 and let's note verse 16: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few [a small handful] chosen." The word "few" here is *oligos*.

Then I want you to compare that, now, to Luke 13 and verse 23. I'm going to read Luke 13:23, but you read it in context, reading all the way through verses 18 to 30. Luke 18 and let's note verse 23: "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?" You see, they had begun to analyze what Christ was saying, and they had put the picture together pretty well. They realized that there were not very many of them out there who were really going to live it. And so they came back and asked: "Then said one unto him [that is, unto Jesus], Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them . . ." So, then, He gave them a parable—or an illustration—down here. You read that entire story in verses 18 through 30 and you will find the summary of the matter from the words of Jesus Christ. Only a handful are going to be saved at this particular time.

Then I want you to notice 1 Timothy 5 and verse 23, and the word "little" here: "Drink . . . a little wine for thy stomach's sake." He didn't say "bottles." A lot of people drink the wine—"the spirits," you know—like the world believes salvation has been offered. They want the whole thing. No, he said "a little wine for thy stomach's sake." He didn't say a lot, at all.

And then in Hebrews 12 and verse 10. Hebrews 12 and note verse 10. Here, it is also used: "For they [speaking of our own parents] verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure . . ." A few days—that is, in relationship to eternity. Now, how large is "few"? It's very, very small, isn't it? Very small, indeed.

And then in 1 Peter 5 and verse 10, the term "awhile" is used. 1 Peter 5 and noting verse 10: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while . . ." It may seem like an eternity, but even man's days are likened totally unto the passing of a shadow, or the flight of a dart, or the falling sunset. How long is that? Very, very short. "[Even] after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." So we find, then, the word *oligos* is used in all of those areas, and that term is the suffix, now, to this word meaning "little faith."

Now, it is used in three different ways, as I have broken it down. First: "The faithless worry about daily human needs." Matthew 6 and verse 32. Matthew 6 and verse 32. I want you to take the time to read verses 24 through 34, because, once again, it is in a true story that Christ is giving. Here in Matthew 6

and verse 32 it says, "(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek"—that is, clothing, food and all the things that are necessities of life. "[A]ll these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

Yes, now notice it back in verse 30: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" How many of us have that kind of firm conviction—we really, really trust God? "O ye of [*oligopistos*—puny] faith." So, God is saying we are of puny faith if we do not really trust Him for the necessities of life.

You will also find this same expression in Luke 12 and verse 28, for it is Luke's version of what we just read in Matthew.

Secondly, "The faithless worry about physical, natural conditions with which they are confronted." Matthew 8 and verse 26. Matthew 8 and let's note verse 26: "And he said unto them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." You see, here they were, they were worried about their physical lives—they were frustrated about these things. Read the whole story in verses 23 through 27, and get it in context, because the word "of little faith" is once again this word *oligopistos*—puny faith. And this gives you a setting of certain physical circumstances that any one of us could encounter. When we see the turbulent clouds and the billowing waves of doubt, and so on, that confront us, are we always the most optimistic, or do we sometimes manifest *oligopistos*? We need to stop and think about it.

In Matthew 16 and verse 8, we will find another example of exactly the same thing. You read it in context. Matthew 16 and verse 8.

The third principle is, "The faithless begin in God's way confidently but, through doubt, begin to falter." Matthew 14 and verse 31. Matthew 14 and verse 31—an illustration that Jesus Christ gave here that involved Peter. All of you will remember it. Matthew 14 and verse 31. I want you to read the whole story in verses 25 through 33, because this is the example of Peter walking out on the water and he had to be saved by Christ. And he said here in verse 31: "And

immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Then, brethren, why do we, at times, manifest the horrible subtlety of our own natural natures—doubt, *oligopistos*, "little faith"? We need to evaluate our lives. We need to evaluate the circumstances with which we are confronted. Have we learned in these preparatory years to manifest absolute and total faith, so that when the day comes for all the horrible, horrendous trials that are going to come upon us, we can stand, undaunted, faithful and firm, in our profession of the Faith?