

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 116
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #25

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This will be tape number twenty-five on the specific fruit of God's Holy Spirit, faith. It's been a very, very long series, but I think also a very rewarding one from the many comments which I have received from people around the world. And certainly it has been a very great help to me in going through this material because, first and foremost, I always try to apply it to myself. For if I don't live it, then certainly I am not entitled to try to proclaim it to others. Otherwise, I would be a hypocrite.

So, the term *pistis*—p-I-s-t-I-s—which is the one we are presently covering, has had very definite meaning for all of us. It is the term that, as I said earlier, was divided into a general application, and a specific application. The term is used frequently in the Bible, although I do not want to improperly emphasize that aspect of it, but nonetheless, it does show that it has a definitive application—that is, "*the Faith*" versus the generalized concept of "faith."

The last time, that is, in tape number twenty-four, we talked about the test of continuity in that Faith. Also, we talked about it as a standard of evaluation—that is, as the means by which we take introspection of our own lives, as in 2 Corinthians 13:5, where we are required periodically to examine ourselves as to whether we are in *the Faith*. So, how can we examine ourselves with regard to *the Faith* if we do not know what the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of *the Faith* really is? So, it is essential to know the dimensions of *the Faith*.

Then, next, we covered the matter of "the Faith as determined by individual actions."

Now we have come down to a very, very significant text which we have used many times, but I want to give it to you, once again, in the context of the continuity of the Faith—and remember, we covered that continuity back in the early part of tape number twenty-four, but now we want to cover it as a prophetic concept of the last days: "The continuity of the Faith stands in doubt in the last days." Here in Luke the eighteenth chapter and verse 8, we read this: "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith . . . ?" You will find that the Bible translates it here as "faith," but in the original Greek it is *the*—*the* definite Faith. "[S]hall he find [*the*] faith on the earth?" We're talking about the coming of Jesus Christ, and at His return will He find *the* Faith on the earth at that time? It means that the very Faith—the essence by which man is to live, by which the called are to live—is standing in absolute doubt. People are turning to their own concepts. It doesn't mean that they have rejected religion. It means that they have established religion on the basis of their own conviction, no longer on the basis of *the* Faith, for the Faith is something given to us. It is not something you and I can generate—it is not something that we build for ourselves—*the* Faith is a gift of God, and if it is a gift, it must then be given. God Himself grants us the Faith. So we are talking about something that is a gift from God that has now been subjected to human tampering. They are altering it—changing it. If we can only see it in perspective, they are turning to their own minds to justify their own behavior, their own decisions, and the things that they are doing and thinking.

So, Christ Himself said, "[W]hen the Son of man cometh, shall he find [*the*] faith . . . ?" I don't mean man's convictions; I don't mean the concepts of human minds, but will He find *the* Faith—which is a gift—on the earth? So we are talking now about a time in which somebody *did* receive the Faith, but had to have turned away from it, and now it stands in doubt. Few people are going to hang on to *the* Faith.

Let's notice the context so that we can get a truer picture of what it really means: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." You see, here is the very concept of Jesus Christ Himself. We are talking about human beings who have resorted to their own minds—they trust in themselves that they are righteous. They believe that which they have generated in their own minds, and that which they have established as a way, is *the* way. They believe that what they have come up with is

acceptable in the sight of God, and they trust in themselves, and they despise others who do not subscribe to them. Now, you can take that in any narrowly confined definition, or as broadly as you please, but it is my firm conviction that it means in all respects. So, some people will say that this means the arrogance of a human mind versus just implicitly trusting Christ. No, this goes way beyond that, because we're going right back to the statement of Jesus Christ: "[S]hall he find [*the*] faith on the earth?"

And that's the reason He made this statement here in verse 9: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves." The reason He spoke verse 8 is due to the fact that some people were trusting themselves. They had resorted to their own natural minds—they had come to believe in themselves and their own concepts, their own ways, and they believed that when others practiced what they thought, they were righteous, but they had contempt for everyone else.

So, the continuity of *the* Faith stands in doubt by the prophecy of Jesus Christ, relevant to the last days. And what is *the* Faith? We have already seen ample evidence that that which Jesus Christ brought was *the* Faith, and what Jesus Christ brought was that which the Father had given to Him, which He, in turn, taught to the twelve, and which He, in turn, gave to the Apostle Paul over a three-year period when he was out in the Arabian desert. It was exactly the same thing, and it was called *the* Faith that was given to them, and they taught it to those over whom they had been given a responsibility.

So, here now, is a serious, serious challenge for you and me in these days. We had better know what that Faith is—*the* Faith—because otherwise, we are going to find ourselves classified outside of it. Here is the statement of Jesus Christ Himself, and it means that, first, the Faith was given, and then there was a departure from it, and now they stand in jeopardy of the fulfillment of that very prophecy: "When the Son of man comes . . ." That is, in the day Jesus Christ sets His feet once again upon this earth, upon the Mount of Olives, and He looks out and He evaluates, "Shall He find *the* Faith on the earth?" That's conditional, and that conditional statement of Jesus Christ applies to you and me. Will we be resolute, determined, and dogmatic in adherence to *the* Faith that God gave to us unto the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? In order to be dogmatic—in order to be determined and resolute—you must know what it is, and the only people that will ever know what it is are those to whom it was given. Anyone else may make a claim, but it will be a deception, and the world is filled with deceivers.

So, there are two classifications, then, of all of those out of that group who once knew: those who turned away from it—who turned to their own minds, who believed and trusted in themselves—versus those who are going to implicitly trust that which was given to them and they refuse to depart from it. Where will you stand? That is your responsibility, and your responsibility alone.

Now, obviously, you are going to have to understand where that Faith is—*the* Faith. There are many people who will be new and will not have seen, nor have gone through the turmoil, the trauma, the horrible, disconcerting factors of the past number of years. When they hear such words as have just been spoken, their minds will probably be in turmoil because they do not have a premise from which to evaluate. But let me assure you that the Bible itself showed us that somebody would be teaching the Truth in the last days, and because they didn't love it, they would turn away from it. And then the responsibility would become incumbent upon those who *did* love God's Truth to adhere to that Faith which had been given to them. And that number will be relatively few. Yes, new people can come to it, but they must come to recognize *the* Faith and subscribe to it as a Way of Life, and as the premise for their baptism and their acceptance of Jesus Christ, just as much as those who may have understood many years ago. They must respond to it.

So, the continuity of the Faith will stand in doubt in our days. Jesus Christ said so. But it is up to you and me. It is conditional, remember? Therefore, it is up to you and me to make sure that we do not compromise it.

Now, secondly, some called ones do not possess the faith to continue. That's the tragic thing. There are some who are going to start looking to the billowing clouds of doubt, troubles, turmoil, perplexity, threats, anxiety, frustration, or whatever, that may prevail, and indeed will prevail, in our time. That's why the Bible clearly tells us: "Let not your minds [and your hearts] be troubled. You believe in God." Hold on to it, hang on to it—don't compromise it, and don't sacrifice it. We are living in the time of chaos. We are living in the time of threats against anyone who will really pursue God's Way of Life. Human beings don't believe in it. They are going to turn to a trust in themselves—they are going to delude themselves into believing that they have no reason to doubt that which they trust. It's called a form of humanism, and they are going to trust it. I don't care whether it's in the field of education, or in the field of economics, or in

the field of politics, or whether it is in the field of religion, humanism is a trust in man's own capability, and we see it rearing its ugly head in myriad ways.

We must be careful. We must have confidence in God. We must hearken back to that day when there was something given to us that gave us confidence and assurance, and we responded to it, for that was the gift of God. But when we begin to turn to our own minds, and we begin to trust ourselves, we are losing that relationship with God, and it doesn't take long until it is completely destroyed. We must trust God, and we must believe Him. When God has called us—when we have been given that Way of Life, and when we have responded with alacrity, with joy, with enthusiasm, with purpose and with dedication, we must hang on to it, because it will never be given to us again. We must keep it alive. It's your responsibility to keep it alive, not God's. For if you don't love it, if you don't respect it, and if you don't hold it as something significant—more significant and of greater value and worth to you than all the world and all of its wealth combined—then you are not worthy of everlasting life. God has given to someone in these last days the most priceless gift that could be given. I know who those brethren are, but what will you do with it? It's up to you.

Now, some called simply do not possess *the* faith to continue, just exactly as Christ said, for there was a doubt manifested here: "[W]hen the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith on the earth?" And He made this statement because men began to trust in themselves, and they despised everyone else.

Let's notice that here in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 2. 2 Thessalonians the third chapter and let's notice verse 2: "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not [the] faith." It means, obviously, that it has to do with our relationship in the very last days, if you see what the Apostle Paul is talking about here in 2 Thessalonians. We are talking about people in the last days. Going back to the first verse. Let's notice:

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not [the] faith.

That means that those who hang on to that Truth, and those who proclaim that Way of Life are going to be subject to the fiery darts—the venom, the contempt, the hate—of all those who turned away from it. I won't take time to turn to the texts, but the principal ones that are going to turn against you are not people who have never known God's Truth, but those who once knew it and who contemptuously turned away from it. They do not want that sense of guilt, and rather than to sustain their guilt and to turn back to God, they will challenge those who believe it. They are going to threaten you. The people that will cause you the most distress—create the most unsettled circumstances, trouble you the most—will be those who once knew. They are going to be, as they say in the vernacular, your squealers. Daniel showed that very clearly. They are going to turn against those who believe in that Holy Covenant, and they are going to attempt to undo you.

"[T]hat we may be delivered." Why do you have to be delivered from somebody that isn't causing you problems? "[T]hat we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not [the] faith."

Now I want you to notice the next verse: "But the Lord is faithful." What is he saying? You can't turn away because Jesus Christ is not going to change. Even though the temptation is there—the pressure is on to compromise—it isn't going to do you any good, because Christ isn't going to change. "But the Lord is faithful." Then what he is saying is that you had better not turn from *the* Faith, even though unreasonable and wicked men are going to exert powerful pressure in the last days. Why? Because they don't have *the* Faith. Why don't they have it? Because they turned away from it. They didn't elect to sustain it. They elected to turn, as we saw back in Luke 18 and verse 8. They elected to turn to their own minds.

"[F]or all men have not [the] faith." "Nevertheless, I tell you," as he said in verse 8, "some are going to turn away from the Faith." They are not going to believe. Will Christ find [the] Faith? As He said, the test is upon us, and we are going to be confronted with a lot of obstacles, even if we are delivered from the final aspect of tribulation—even if we are finally delivered from the horrifying events of the closing days, yet, many of us, if not all of us, are going to be tested to within an inch of our lives, and that test is going to come because God allows it, and it will come because of those who have no love or respect for God's Truth, and they are going to pour out their venom in the form of verbal abuse and even physical action in some cases.

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you." If you really believe Him, and if you trust Him, and if you put your confidence in God, He's going to establish you and "keep you from evil." Can you trust Him? You can if you really have that faith. If you trust it—if you really believe it—then He is going to keep you from that evil. It will not completely suffocate you. Oh yes, it's going to exercise its influence of faith in all of its broad intent and purpose, because that is the will and the decree of God.

So, some are just simply not going to possess the necessary faith to weather the onslaughts of disagreeable circumstances generated, oftentimes, by those who once knew—maybe even our own relatives, or our own close friends. What are you going to do in those days? Weigh it seriously, brethren.

Now I want us to notice, secondly, in that concept, 1 Timothy 1 and verse 19. 1 Timothy 1 and let's note verse 19: "Holding faith." Why do you have to hold it, unless it is a difficult thing to do? "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning [the] faith have made shipwreck." A lot of people simply cannot hang on to it—they cannot sustain themselves in that Way of Life. They will wrestle with it, they will begin to challenge, and all kinds of interpretive ventures will be undertaken, but they just cannot be faithful and loyal. They will become super-critical; they will become suspicious and doubtful; they will begin to generate animosities and resentments within; they will create all kinds of circumstances whereby they trust themselves, but they do not trust anyone else. And I can see it happening repeatedly. People who have allowed themselves to become involved in this are the most troubled and perplexed of all, yet, interestingly, they are the ones who believe that they are carrying out the purpose of God.

Now, pray tell, how in the world can those who are doing the right thing always be the ones winding up with the problems? Does that make sense? And yet, the people who are constantly questioning, who are constantly replete with doubt, who are troubled and perplexed because of their own interpretations, because they have turned to their own minds and are looking to themselves, are the ones winding up with the problems. It would seem to me that if they were the right ones, they would stand awesomely powerful in the love of God, in patience, in forbearance, in kindness, but also in fervency and diligence. But that doesn't happen. They are the troubled ones—they are the ones upset, they are the ones

deeply distressed. Why don't they take a look at the fruits borne in their own lives? For by their fruits you are going to know them, and when I see these fruits, I know, then, that their concepts cannot be right, for Christ believed, even though all forsook Him. He never turned in any contempt, never had any doubt, was never perplexed nor troubled, and even at the last moment said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." You see, His fruits were the fruits of stability, confidence, assurance, and purpose, though He stood alone. Why do we not manifest those fruits? Is it because our agitation, and the things that we are generating, are not of God—are not acceptable in the sight of God?

You know, I've oftentimes wondered why it is that when we go through these things that we feel are responsibilities incumbent upon us, that we violate every principle God laid down. That's right. In the exercise of what we think we should do, we violate every principle. What about the one that says, "If we are true servants of God, we create peace"? "Oh, but, but, but . . ." and we start babbling all over the place, because we are trying to find words. "Well, now, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do this or that . . ." In other words, we don't answer the question, at all. We are just going around in circular reasoning. I tell you, brethren, that the true people of God *do* create peace, and they are tolerant, and they are forbearing, and they are kind, and they are filled with love and understanding. They *do not* react in a volatile fashion.

Brethren, I want to get this point across because of an intense love for all of those who have made a profession of God's Truth, because I don't want us to fail. I want us to stand tall in the purpose of God in the Day of that Judgment. I don't know how else to say it. Anybody who feels that I'm saying it out of contempt is absolutely wrong. It's a heart that just bleeds for those who allow themselves to exist in such turmoil and chaos. You don't have to. Not at all. I want to tell you that I exist with firm resolve and faith in that which God gave to us. I wish everyone else could experience that. I know many of you do, and I'm well aware of it, and I see it written all over, but I'd like to see all of you do it—to thrill to it, and to live with that exuberance, and that excitement, and that joy. Those are the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, not this dejection, not this windmill battling. Those are not of God, not at all. The fruits tell me that they are wrong—totally wrong.

So, we see here in 1 Timothy 1 and verse 19, the need to hold to that faith. Let's hang on to it, and let's hang on to it confidently, with a good conscience in

which our minds are clear. I tell you, there are a lot of people—and I've said this right from the beginning—they may start looking to themselves, they may trust their own minds and so on, but in conscience they are always going to stand in doubt. Did I, or did I not, tell you that? The only people who are going to know, are those who hang on to that thing which they had from the beginning, and they refuse to turn away from it.

"[W]hich some having put away concerning faith [or *the Faith*] have made shipwreck." Some are going to put it away, and they are going to wreak havoc in their own concept of faith. What a tragedy that is.

1 Timothy 4 and verse 1. 1 Timothy 4 and let's note verse 1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times [that's in our days] some shall depart from the faith." Yes, they will. They are going to depart from it, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of [demons]." That's the thing that led people, initially, away from God's Truth. They departed from *the Faith*—they didn't have any love for it, they didn't really trust it anymore. They began to trust themselves; they trusted in their own committees; they trusted in their own ways; they trusted in their own research; they didn't trust the Faith that God had given to them—the very premise of their baptisms. No, they didn't trust it anymore. What they wanted to do, on the basis of their own evil, nefarious purposes, was to go back and *they* were going to search things out, and what *they* could prove for themselves, they would trust. They were not seeking the proof of God. The proof of God is in the spiritual things—the fruits borne in our lives—not what we can see tangibly, not what we can dig out of musty old books. Not at all, for Truth does not come in that way. It comes because God reveals it and gives it to us.

So, we find that the Faith is going to be challenged in the last days. The Spirit tells us very clearly that in the latter days some shall depart from the Faith. You can't depart from what you don't have. You can't have the Faith unless God gives it to you. So, they are going to depart from what God gave to them, and they are going to turn to the diabolical deceptions of the hour. And the diabolical deceptions are not extraneous—they are not removed from us. It is the perverting and the twisting of our minds. We are going to resort to our own minds, under the influence of Satan, the Devil.

1 Timothy 5 and verse 8: "But if any provide not for his own." This is a very strong statement. "If any provide not for his own." You know, when God gives us responsibilities, and we undertake responsibilities of our own free choice—like when we marry—"if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith." What a denial has been going on in a lot of areas. They have not undertaken the responsibility that they assumed—the responsibility that God gave.

God laid upon mankind the responsibility of the care of this earth. Isn't that what He said? He gave them a charge over this earth—He gave them authority over all the physical elements, even the animals, the fish and the fowl. He gave them total charge, He gave them authority to carry it out, and He said, "I want you to take care of it." But men have done nothing but abuse it from that day down to the present.

He gave them marriage, and responsibilities within marriage, and He said, "I want you to carry it out," because within marriage is seen the entire relationship, spiritually. That's the responsibility that God gave.

And so we find that some have turned away from it. Why have they turned away from it? Because there's a humanistic concept that is being generated today that men, by virtue of life, deserve certain things. That's a total one-hundred-eighty degree turn from what God said. What God said is that if he does not work, neither should he eat. So, what God says is that unless we bear responsibility from youth—that's when we are to begin teaching it to them—and we must bear that responsibility, or we should not be entitled to the requirements for physical sustenance, or physical life. We don't have a right to it by virtue of birth. Now, this is the diabolical teaching of Satan, the Devil, because he has been deceiving the world that, by virtue of birth, he is entitled to recognition—he is entitled to the sustenance of life. No, he isn't. God said that if he does not assume responsibility, then he does not deserve those things. So, those things which men feel innately belong to them, such as a place to live, food to partake of, recognition in life, and so on, these can only come if we assume responsibility. God so said, and men have turned that all the way around.

So, here now He said: "[I]f any provide not for his own . . ." and that means every mortal must bear responsibility. Then, what does it mean with regard to the

care of other people? Why the third tithe? Why the responsibilities in the care and the concern for other people? Go back and check them, and you will find that they involve people who either are in transition, and we're aiding them to get their anchor down, or their feet down, once again, or we're assisting those who have no means of obtaining it, or we're taking care of those who are assuming another form of responsibility, like widows who become servants within the church. That is, they don't receive for naught, but for the service that they render. No one is entitled, by virtue of life, to the necessities of life. No one. We must bear responsibility as long as we live here.

So, God lays those responsibilities upon us, and He says that if we deny them, then we are—what did He say here? "[He] is worse than an infidel." That's an unbeliever. He is worse than an infidel. Now, that is a comparison, and in the comparison, the one who knows and understands God's Truth, and does not sustain that element of Truth, is made worse than the one who has never believed. That's a tremendous responsibility.

Now, in 1 Timothy 6 and verse 10, we read another concept here: "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Oh now, we are getting into something that's going to affect a lot of people in these last days. "[W]hich while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith." What has happened is that people have become so concerned with monetary return, and they're using that—like when they go out and make a great deal of money, or whatever—and they are saying, "See, God is blessing us." But that is not a proof of it, at all. It is not a proof of it, at all.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith." The Bible is telling us very conclusively here that many are foolish in the last days, for they have been turning to physical things, and physical things become the substantiation of their belief and their hope. And that isn't true at all. They have turned away from the very Truth of God for physical reasons—monetary reasons. They "have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"—the aftermath of that situation. What a problem that's going to be.

Now, let's notice also verse 21. 1 Timothy 6 and noting verse 21, but going back up, let's pick it up in verse 20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." Here, the Apostle Paul is using an example of that which had been

committed to the young evangelist Timothy. ". . . avoiding profane and vain babblings." Meaning that, somehow, within the very body, something had become obvious. There were a lot of secular—that's the meaning of the word "profane"—and vain, which means that they don't have any purpose (they are the rationalizations of human minds), babblings. They are vain and profane—secular—babblings, then. In other words, we are talking about somebody that has resorted to the human mind, and they are trusting their own human capability to reason.

"[A]nd oppositions of science." Oh, now they are technically oriented—they are turning to their own capability, their own rationalizations, and they are justifying their concepts, predicated upon what they can read.

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings [Why?], and oppositions of science falsely so called." There has to be some reason for this. "Which some professing . . ." They turned to this. They wanted to see proof. They were turning to their own minds—they were turning to science, to history books, to reference materials. They were trusting in their own capabilities, and they were using *that* to prove what they called "truth," rather than the Faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. It is the evidence of something that was given to us—a concept, a conviction. And we believed that, we trusted it, at the time that we accepted it. Only for traumatic reasons, later on down in life, that faith was subjected to question. We no longer trusted God. Now we were going to trust science, history, and reference materials, and on the basis of that, we were going to evaluate the Faith.

Notice it: "Which some professing have erred concerning the faith." They turned away from a trust in that which is not subject to human proof. Any of you think you are going to prove spiritual things? The only way you are going to prove them is that you are going to live them, because God has to reveal them. There is no way you are going to see spiritual things. They are not visible, but they are eternal, and they must be given to you—revealed to you. And they are revealed in the fact that Jesus Christ, whom we don't see, is living within us. And some have turned away from that, and as the Apostle Paul said, it was necessary that Christ be created in them, anew. Christ is the personification of that. None of us see Christ, yet He has to live within us, and it is Christ within us that is the hope of glory. You don't see Him, you only see the fruits that are borne—that are

manifested in our physical lives. And those fruits are going to be exactly the same, whether it is today, or back in the time of Christ, or in the time of the apostles, or in the time of Moses. It doesn't make any difference which time it is. Now, some, because they have turned to the capabilities of their own minds, are going to err concerning the Faith. "Grace be with thee. Amen."

Let's notice, now, 2 Timothy 2 and verse 18: "Who concerning the truth . . ." We are referring to a number of people from back here in verse 17:

And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

People come along with all their diabolical concepts, their doctrinal ideas, and I have seen it broadly practiced in the last ten years. They come along with all kinds of concepts and ideas, and they go out and teach them. Other people follow them. Do you know who is accountable? Well both are, but the principal one is going to be the one who taught it. He is going to bear that liability. Now, notice what he says:

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness [indeed they do]. And their word will eat as doth a canker [the word that they are espousing, that they are teaching]: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred . . .

They departed from it, but it doesn't mean that they turned away from religion. It doesn't mean that they no longer professed Christianity. Not at all. They just turned away from the Truth—the revealed Truth.

". . . saying that the resurrection is past already." In this case, they came up with a certain doctrinal concept. There are all kinds of erroneous concepts espoused today that are contrary to the Faith that was once delivered, and what do they do? They "overthrow the faith of some." People turn away from the Truth because of those things which have been espoused. What a price is going to be paid by many people. I certainly would not want to be in their boots.

2 Timothy 3 and verse 8: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." Here is another situation. Let's go back and pick it up here in verse 7: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." These are people who are looking at all kinds of reference material. Where does learning come from? Do they dream it up, or do they read it? So, it's learning—it stretches the mind—but it doesn't mean that it's the Truth. It is a form of humanism.

Now, who are these? Let's go back to verse 1: "This know also, that in the last days [there's the time] perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . ." And here it tells you what they are going to do. They are going to have a form of godliness, but they are going to deny the power thereof. From such, God said, we should turn away. That means you don't have any spiritual relationship with them. I don't think that means that we should make them enemies. I don't find that as an example anywhere in the Bible, but you will never discuss spiritual things. Remember, what we have read in times past over in 2 John, when John said that if they come to you and they bring not this Gospel, don't even bid them godspeed? That means don't have any spiritual fellowship with them—don't discuss those doctrines. You can be kind, you can be warm, and you can be friendly—you can be a human being. You don't have to be hard and indifferent, but don't discuss spiritual things if they teach anything contrary to the Truth you initially accepted, and for which you were baptized.

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist
the truth [When? In the last days.]: men of corrupt minds.

Why? Because they have perverted the Truth of God, because they have handled the word of God unwisely—perverting the Truth, resisting the Truth. But they are still claiming to be Christians, and they have turned away from those things that had been given to them. Why? Listen: "reprobate concerning the faith." Somebody in the last days, then, had the Faith—and the Faith is specifically identified as the doctrine delivered—and they turned away from it in the last days.

So we see, then, as we noticed earlier: First, that the continuity of the faith stands in doubt in the last days. But then we find that even some called ones do

not possess the faith to continue. And we have seen situation after situation that prevails in the last days.

Now, quickly, let's cover one more sub-topic here: "Will failures and perversions change the doctrine of God?" Is God going to change because human beings could not remain faithful—because they turned away from the Truth? Romans 3. Let's turn to Romans the third chapter and let's note verses 1 through 4. Romans 3 and beginning in verse 1: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" You see, the Apostle Paul is harkening right back to a physical relationship, because a Jew was born, in this case, into a peculiar people, and by circumcision, he was made the recipient of a very special covenant relationship. So, he's turning right back to that physical example: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." So, physically looking back there, they had an advantage because the oracles were given unto them.

"For what if some did not believe?" What if some people did not believe in that old covenant—what if they didn't believe that Moses was the servant of God? What if that were true?

. . . shall their unbelief make *the* faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

What we are told—and here he gave a physical example—is that when God gives it, that's it. I don't care whether people believe it or not, that is not going to change it. It didn't change it back in that physical example that Paul gave. Is it going to change it in our day? God forbid. God is true, unchanging, unalterable. It is absolutely binding today, I don't care what human beings do. They can kid and delude themselves. We can stand and argue forever if we want to, but that isn't going to change God. And, you know, the Day of Judgment is going to be too late, for men are to live by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. They won't be able to wait, as I hear some people say: "Well, I'm going to wait and see." That's too late. It's all over. You are going to come back in faith and believe that which was given to you, or it's all over for you, if you were called.

So, we cannot, then, turn to any perversions. We all knew our call, and we responded to it. We began to doubt and to have difficulties only as a result of the turmoil that was generated. And that's why we are told: don't let that upset you; don't be distressed by those physical circumstances and those factors. You had better be faithful to God, regardless. You had better manifest the same courage and conviction that Jesus Christ did. You had better be able to stand alone, if necessary. And yet, He prayed with a Spirit that was all-encompassing: "God forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

But that doesn't seem to be our attitude, because we become contentious—we're going to fight—because we are born with that nature of anger and wrath. But fighting isn't what it's all about, unless we are fighting for God's Truth, and that fight is carried on within our own minds toward ourselves—no one else. There is a warfare alright enough, and it's a big warfare, but it's one that you are fighting in your own minds—in the subjugation of your own natures. It isn't fighting anybody else. That warfare we are to put down. There should be no strife; there should be no animosity; there should be no resentment, but only "God forgive them"—even if we feel they are wrong—for they don't know what they are doing. An element of real love and affection, kindness, and oneness is generated within.

Romans 4, now, and let's notice verse 14. "For if they which are of the law be heirs, [the] faith is made void." If it is a matter of literally being born into it, then the option of *the* Faith is made void, because being born into it is tangible—that's physical. You see that. You are born into it, you know, like someone being born as a king or a queen; you can't get out of it. You are there. But I'll tell you, in spiritual things it doesn't work that way. You are born in by faith, and you can lose it very easily.

Putting it, now, in context, let's notice what he says beginning back here in verse 13: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world . . ." And, after all, isn't that the promise to those who are the faithful—that they are going to have rulership over all this earth? Go back and read it in Revelation 2, verses 26 and 27; Revelation 3 and verse 21; and Revelation, what is it, 5 and verse 10, and so on?

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law [that is, by natural birth], but through the righteousness of faith.

Why, even the Gospel was preached clear back there to Abraham. You go read in Galatians 3 and verse 16—beginning in about verse 10 or 11, and reading to verse 16. That's right, the Gospel was preached clear back at that time.

"For if they which are of the law be heirs . . ." That is, if they which are born into that physical covenant are the heirs, "[the] faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." The promise, then, would not be a promise at all. It would be a matter of birth: you would be born into it. And that's what a lot of human beings seem to believe to this day. Or, the others turned away from it totally. Neither one is right.

"Because the law worketh wrath [the physical things]: for where no law is, there is no transgression." So, it is of faith itself.

Colossians 2 and verse 12. I have two more texts that I want to cover here very quickly, and I will complete this particular sub-topic today. Colossians 2 and noting verse 12, but going back, now, let's pick it up here earlier in about verse 11, so that we can get it in context: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands [that is, in Christ], in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh . . ." In other words, what we are talking about is not destroying the Law, but destroying *you* as a physical entity. This is what people seem to misunderstand. They cannot even read the element of truth in these things. When God talks about abrogating, or destroying, something, it is destroying the flesh. You and I are under obligation to subject our lives—to submit our lives—to Jesus Christ, and to eliminate them physically, entirely. We no longer have any physical rights.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh [that is, we must crucify this whole flesh] by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism.

That's the meaning of baptism: you bury the whole self. You don't bury that which is alive, you bury that which is dead. So, you have crucified the old self, and now you are going to lay the flesh down.

". . . wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God . . ." So, we are brought up, then, in *the* Faith, and *the* Faith is the operation of God—the purpose of God.

". . . who hath raised him from the dead." Well, my purpose is not to go into this particular mysterious thing that is happening in our lives in the transition from the old self to the new. That is a very replete subject in its own right. My purpose is to show that when we were baptized, we were baptized into *the* Faith. If we were not baptized into it, then we are either reprobates, renegades, or have never been privy to that knowledge. It's one or the other.

So, we must not pervert—we must not turn away from that which is given to us, because we were baptized into it, and a lot of people think that they are coming to it subsequently. You know, here they were baptized, and only years later they have come to the Truth. They believe in some form of progressive revelation. There is no such thing in the Bible. The Truth of God is revealed to you, and anybody knows that a babe grows. So, if you want to call it progressive in that sense, fine. But it doesn't mean that when we achieve one level, we destroy the previous level, which is what they are talking about. In other words, it just simply means that we grow into more and more knowledge of God's Truth, but that begins at baptism.

James 2:14. James 2:14 is the final text, here very quickly, now. And that will end it for today. Here he said: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can [the] faith save him?" The faith. If people conceive of that faith as merely an intangible substance, not as a form of action or behavior, can that save man? No, the Faith is translated into action. That's what James is saying, and you see the living fruits of it. But people have perverted the concept of *the* Faith. Let us not do it, brethren.

Next time, we will go into the next point.