

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 117
The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #26

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This, now, is the continuation of this long series on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. For the last number of weeks—months actually—we have been covering the subject of "faith." This particular tape, now, will be the twenty-sixth tape in this series on faith alone. The last part of this series of tapes that we have done on faith has covered the particular word *pistis*—p-I-s-t-I-s—in the Greek. It is the principal word—there are a number of other words, but this happens to be the principal one—that is used for "faith." And, as I explained to you, before I commenced to the breakdown in the coverage of this particular word, we were going to divide it into two fundamental sections. One area is that area dealing with the definitive adjective, "the"—that is, "the Faith," as opposed to just the generalized usage of the word *pistis*—"faith."

So, we started out, then, by giving you a broad definition of the word *pistis*, or p-I-s-t-I-s, and the third part, or the third component, of the explanation of that word is: "that which is believed—the body of faith, belief or doctrine." And I gave you a number of texts where it can mean nothing else other than the fact that we are talking about a body of belief—doctrine—something that you can act upon, that you can respond to, that you can obey, and that you can perform, that has control in your life.

Now, in the last tape—tape number 25—we were dealing with sub-topics that well-defined "faith"—or "the Faith"—and the first point that we covered on that was, "A test of continuity"—meaning that we would stay, or continue, in that Faith, *the* Faith, that was originally delivered, as we saw in Jude the third chapter. But there are other verses that speak very clearly of the continuity of that Faith as a test, also.

Then next, we covered that Faith as a standard of evaluation. It is the means by which we evaluate what we are thinking, what we are doing, and our *modus operandi*, or our orientation in life.

And then we discussed, finally, the matter of the fact that, "The level of that faith is determined by our individual actions." In other words, the actions that we take—the orientation that we give to our lives—determines the level of our conviction or our belief.

Now today, let's get into the next sub-topic, and these sub-topics, of course, are titles that I have given in the overall evaluation of the subject—in breaking it down under various headings. Those headings I call sub-topics. Now, the beginning of the last tape that I gave to you covered the sub-topic, "Continuity of the faith stands in doubt." And, indeed it does. We have gone over this so many, many times, to express the condition of, and the lack of faith evidenced in, society today. In Luke 18 and verse 8, it asks the pondering question, "Will Christ find the faith" when He returns?

Well, then we found also that, "Some called do not possess the faith to continue." That is, they do not have the determination, the drive, and the direction.

And then, finally, "Will failures and perversions change the doctrine of God?" There are prognosticated for today failures, perversions, and various changes, but they will in no way change the doctrine of God, because the doctrine stands forever—it is absolute. And the doctrine is characterized as *the Faith*. So, *the Faith* cannot change, because the words of God are Spirit and they are life, and they will never change.

Now we come to the beginning of tape number 26, which is: "A principal characteristic of *the Faith* is obedience." Now, that's logical when you understand, as I have just reviewed for you in the form of synopsis, that a part of the characteristic of *the Faith* is doctrine—that is, something we can obey, something in which we can continue, as a Way of Life. Then, obviously, an inherent ingredient in this matter of *the Faith* is obedience. Obedience is a matter of action on the part of individuals, and so, therefore, *the Faith* is the length, the breadth, the height, the depth, and the well-defined definition of our actions—that obedience required of those called of God.

So, let's turn, now, for our first text to Acts 6 and verse 7. We *do* want to complete this subject today. Acts 6 and verse 7. It says:

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to *the* faith.

If faith is nothing more than many people believe today, that is, that it's a mental orientation—something that is not tangible, that has no defined or manifested form, that is merely an orientation of the mind—then I ask, how can you obey it? It is an embodiment of something that can be obeyed. And so we find here that, "a great company of the priests were obedient to *the* faith." Then there have to be characteristics within *the* Faith that can be obeyed, and when you have anything that can be obeyed, you are talking about some form of statute, judgment, law, rule or regulation, and some form of responsibility. And we find that the Faith, as defined by God, can be obeyed. Therefore, there are specific points to it, and they—that is, these priests—were obedient to that Faith. Therefore, you and I are obligated to understand what *the* Faith is—meaning that it isn't individualized. There are not many faiths, at all. There is a singular Faith, and as these priests were obedient to it, so today, you and I must obey it, because there is but *one* Faith—*the* Faith—and it is the embodiment of the doctrine of God. And we must obey that Faith—*the* Faith as God has revealed it.

Next, note Acts 13 and verse 8. Acts 13 and verse 8. Here we find another expression to this same effect, where it says, "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from *the* faith." So here, now, was an altercation taking place—a strong and a powerful influence was being exerted upon a particular individual that had been called by God and was being instructed and helped by the servants of God. And here was a man of the fabric of this world that was highly opposed to the Way of God, and was standing there attempting to turn this deputy away from the Faith. So, we obviously are aware of the fact that it is something tangible—it can be seen. It is not merely a figment of the imagination, and it isn't merely a mental orientation, because if that were all that is required, then a man could go ahead and have this mental orientation, and no one else on the face of this earth would know it. You can hide it in the gray matter, but it has a physical manifestation—something that is tangible, and that can be seen, because this sorcerer saw what the deputy was doing. I mean, he was able to observe his actions, and he sought deliberately to turn him away from the Faith.

So we see then, that obedience is a specific characteristic of the Faith, and it is a manifestation. It is manifested in the form of action, in the form of responsibility, in the form of endeavor, that you and I, as individuals called of God, take. And it can be observed by anybody else, and usually by those who are very vehemently opposed to it, and would do anything to destroy those who manifest that faith, conviction or belief—who are acting upon that embodiment of doctrine.

So here, then, was somebody doing nothing differently than the majority of people who are extremely volatile—hateful—toward the Truth of God, and would do almost anything to influence others away from that doctrine. Yet, they themselves, when their time comes, I'm sure, are not going to say, "Well, I'll sacrifice my life, because I don't have any right to that life. I pulled somebody else away from the Truth. Therefore, I wouldn't want to be faithful during my period of time." No, that's the reason you and I have to understand that people of this world are created with a nature absolutely opposed to God and His laws, His statutes, and His judgments. We must understand that. We must know that those people are only acting on the basis of the natural nature with which they were created—the very same nature that you and I had until God called us. That nature is vehemently opposed to God, and it is not going to subscribe to the will of God—to *the* Faith. So, therefore, you and I, if we can really understand where we were—if we really understand that we were not as righteous as we thought, that we were not as good as we deemed ourselves to be—if we can really see our natures and our minds for what they are, then we can understand other people. We have a great deal of compassion for them.

Well, here now, was a particular individual doing his level best, as a human being inspired, of course, by His own nature, and probably by Satan, the Devil, because he was a sorcerer, who was trying to pull this deputy away from *the* Faith. He wanted to pull him away from acting in obedience to *the* Faith.

Now, this will somewhat explain to you one of the major problems that prevails in the world today: As long as religion is nothing more than a faith, governments, society in general, communities, and your own particular organizations, and what not, will tolerate you. But the minute that conviction becomes *the* Faith—that is, it contains within it an embodiment of duty, or a form of action, that is incumbent upon you on a day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, and year-by-year, basis—they don't like it.

The medical profession has no problem with you as long as you talk about faith, and as long as that faith is not translated into faithful obedience—a trust in God with regard to healing. No, they will talk about faith. "Oh, that's fine, go ahead and have faith, we are just doing the tangible—the physical."

So, this world does not believe in the manifestation of anything that is otherwise called spiritual. That is, they will not accept the concept that spiritual things, when acted upon, produce a tangible, visible, action that can be seen, judged and evaluated. They will not accept that. So therefore, it's fine to believe in the Kingdom of God, as long as you don't believe that it's going to supplant the kingdoms of this world, because then you are called treasonous.

So, that is the whole concept in religion today, and Satan doesn't mind, as long as we will accept the idea that "faith" is nothing more than a mental orientation—a figment of imagination in which we go around in a fluffy dream world. But when that faith becomes *the* Faith—the premise of action, of belief, and response—they hate it, and they will do their level best to either influence you away from it, by psychological or by other means, or they will use force. And that's why there is going to be the horrible reaction and behavior of the people who do not comprehend the significance of *the* Faith in these last days.

So, it is not unusual that this sorcerer should have been attempting to influence this deputy away from the Faith. That's exactly what the world is going to do. That's exactly what they are doing today in the name of religion. That's what they call "Christianity." It is an overt attempt to influence humankind away from the actual manifestation of *the* Faith, which is obedience to the rules, the regulations, the doctrine, the laws, the statutes and the judgments of God. So that is the essence of what is going on in this world. They will not accept that spiritual things must have a physical manifestation. They will not accept it.

Now, let's notice Acts 14 and verse 22, and because those who are really called of God, and who really believe the Truth, are going to act upon it, and there will be a physical manifestation, we're going to see, now, what happens to them. Here in Acts 14 and let's notice verse 22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." This continuity, now—continuing in the Faith—is going to bring about some hazardous circumstances in the lives of those who are the recipients of that Faith.

"[E]xhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." So, the very fact that we believe in this literal, physical manifestation—that is, something that is observable, the translation of a conviction or a belief into physical action—it will lead to persecution. That is, when I believe in the Ten Commandments, I do what those Ten Commandments say—I literally keep a Sabbath; I literally avoid worshiping idols (sacrilege, in other words); I absolutely avoid these things that God says are taboos we must not do. Therefore, when I live the determination that "I will not do such and such," it becomes a physical manifestation. Now, as one, then, who acts upon this—who does it; who lives by that conviction of the heart and the mind; who, then, has manifested faithful obedience to God—what will I, and the rest who practice that Way of Life, experience? It says "through much tribulation [we must] enter into the kingdom of God." The world is not going to like it. They are not going to accept it with a kind of a hands-down philosophy—with a laid-back concept. They are not going to do that at all, because it is a matter of condemnation.

It always reminds me of what a particular minister of a particular denomination said a number of years ago when he came out to see one of the larger facilities of our former affiliation. As he was standing there, you could tell that he was visibly, physically agitated. He was deeply distressed and troubled, because he saw all the activity going on there, and so on, and it was explained to him, at that moment, that we do not try to influence the community. Our purpose is to live in harmony and in peace with all human beings. At which statement he came unglued, and he said, paraphrasing, "That may be alright for you to say that, but that's not so with respect to us." He said, "How in the world can you say that you are not a manifestation, or that you are not exerting a powerful influence, with all these cars going up and down the highway on the Sabbath, and they are all coming in here?" He said, "It's a light that is seen by everybody." And he said that it was a powerful influence. He was agitated because that light was shining. It irritated him.

Alright, any time you and I obey the truths of God, we are a light—we are a manifestation—and it is continuity in that manifestation which God requires. You cannot be an acceptable Christian if you are going to bury the light, that you must be, under a bushel basket. You can't be. You must live it—you must act upon it. And when you act upon it, it is going to agitate anybody of this world who

believes in camouflaging all that he does, and all that he thinks he is. Because their concept of Christianity is that it is simply something of the mind, and it has no physical manifestation, whatsoever.

Now, there are those, of course, who will challenge that. I understand that. But not the overall. The overall philosophy is that it is a concept of the heart. You simply accept it and it makes you one of them, and that's that, as long as you subscribe to the dictates of this world, so that you are not different—you are not peculiar—in that sense. And if, now, you *do* become peculiar and you act upon the Truth of God—upon the Faith, that doctrine which God gives—you, then, are subjecting yourself to tribulation, through which you are going to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Tribulation is going to come from fellow man, influenced, of course, by a diabolical power. And they are going to be very upset, because it is a form of agitation, and it is a constant light—a reminder to them—and they don't like it. It troubles them—it deeply distresses them, it bothers them—because they can't get around the physical facts themselves: that the Sabbath is the Sabbath, that the Holy Days are the Holy Days, etc. Why do you think they fight it so much? Anything that does not require a visible manifestation is of little concern to them, but the more visible it becomes by your behavior, the more volatile in nature they are going to become with regard to it. They hate it, and they are going to react.

And so, that's why we are told here, that it is through much tribulation we are going to enter into the Kingdom of God. Why? Because you can't bury it in your own mind. You've got to live it—you have to act upon it. That Faith must be obeyed.

Now, we don't do the best job of obeying it. There are too many times when the physical things of this world get close to us, and we begin to buck and carry on, because we don't like the pressures of it, and we begin to point fingers at God, and we take *Him* to task, when, in reality, we should be taking ourselves to task, because nobody—no one, my dear friend—can take God's Truth from you but you, yourself. No one else can do it, because God already said from the beginning that you were going to prove it, and manifest that Faith, through trials and through tribulation. And He didn't tell you from whence they would come, either. They are going to come from without, from within, from around, from above, and from

beneath. They are all around you, and they are going to come from within the family, and they are going to come from every source possible.

So, God will not allow you to use circumstances, or anything else, to justify an attitude. It won't work, because it will be those circumstances that God is using as a means by which to refine you, and to produce that Faith—that belief, that solidarity of conviction that cannot be taken from you, even at crucial times of test.

Now let's notice Acts 16. Acts 16 and verse 5, but reading verses 4 and 5: "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." Notice what they are delivering: "the decrees for to keep."

. . . the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith . . .

What were they established in? In obedience to those decrees which had been given to them. That sounds to me like some form of physical manifestation—something that they were told they must do. It's a form of action. It was a responsibility incumbent upon them, and the churches became established. That means that they were now in agreement—there was total acceptance, because it proceeded from that source God held accountable and responsible for the proclamation of that Way of Life. And so the churches were now accepting the Faith Once Delivered on that very basis, and they were established in that Way of Life.

Oh, I wish, and how I wish, that the same thing could be said of us all—that we would finally become established in the Faith, rather than constantly questioning, being constantly doubtful, and distressed, plagued and troubled by circumstances. If we could become established in that conviction—that Way, *the* Faith that was given to us—and just hang on to it.

" . . . and increased in number daily." I am convinced, my dear brethren, that the very reason God has not allowed us to expand any more than we have, is the fact that He refuses to add those who need stability to those who should have already manifested that stability, and haven't done so.

Brethren, I know that we are increasing, and improving, and doing better, but all I have ever asked, and all I will ever ask, is that we finally have confidence in the Faith that God gave to us initially, and believe it, and trust it. Hang on to it, and don't ever relent—don't ever give it up. Hang on to that Faith—believe it with all that is within you. Don't look to a man, don't look to an organization, don't look to anything or to anybody, but *the* Faith.

But what does God say about those who really believe in that Faith? He said that they are going to be one—they are going to be meeting together. It affords us the privilege of speaking to you, but I don't want anyone ever just looking to some other organization, or to another man. I want us to look to that Faith, and I want us to believe it with everything that is within us. It is the only thing that is going to see us through in the final test. So, let's trust that Faith, because when you are finally tested in the last days, it isn't going to be on the basis of whether you can stay within a body, or whether you can stay loyal to an individual. It is going to be a matter of whether or not you are going to stay loyal to the one who gave you the Faith initially. That is so vital. And if you do, then everybody else who remains faithful and loyal to that same Faith—the Way of Life—will be together. And what a beautiful harmony that will be.

Alright, next, I want us to notice Acts 24. Acts the twenty-fourth chapter and let's note verse 24: "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning *the* faith in Christ." In other words, the Apostle Paul was able, now, to reduce the Faith in Christ to verbal concepts so that Felix could hear it. In other words, he was able to explain the principles of faith, and if you can explain the principles of faith, then obviously, they can be acted upon. It is not just merely a figment of imagination. It is the depiction—it is the characterization—of responsibility and action. So, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning *the* Faith in Christ. And Paul was able to explain, then, that which gave him his direction, his responsibility, his thrust, in life.

Now I want us to turn to Romans the third chapter. Romans 3, and let's note verses 30 and 31. There are a couple of interesting statements here: "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith [this is the generalized form of the word: "by *pistis*"—p-I-s-t-I-s], and uncircumcision through [the] faith." Well, I'm not going to grow philosophical, now, as to why it was

generalized with respect to the circumcision, but it became specific with respect to the Gentiles. Although, let me just give you one thought: Does it have anything to do with the fact that the Truth was originally delivered to the circumcision? And it was only a matter of their faith in that which was delivered to them. Whereas, in the case of the uncircumcision, or the Gentiles, it was a matter of the Way being delivered to them, because they had never had that Way—it had never been delivered to them. It makes all the sense in the world.

Alright, let's notice verse 31: "Do we then make void the law through [the] faith?" Now, do we, with regard to our active obedience before God, make void the Law? "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Indeed, because it is the manifestation *of* the Faith, and if you are going to act upon the Faith, you are going to be obeying the Law—you are going to be doing the exact things that are contained in the Law. There is no way around it. And "the Law" does not mean man's interpretation of the Law, it means the Law in its specific terms.

Specifically, the word "law" here does not relate just to the Ten Commandments. I know there are a lot of people who would like to reduce it to that, but it does not. It is the word that means, basically, the entirety of the five books of Moses—the "Torah." It's the word *nomos*, here, of course, but it is a word that is used with regard to what is called the Law section of the Bible. Because the Hebrew scriptures were divided into three basic divisions: the Law, the Prophets, and the writings—the very things that Jesus Christ referred to in Luke 24, verses 44 and 45, when He said that, "all things which are written in the law, and the prophets, and in the psalms [or the writings] concerning me . . ." He is speaking of the three segments of the Scriptures. And so, here the word "law"—the word *nomos*—means the entirety of the laws, statutes, judgments, rules and regulations as revealed to Moses.

So now, what did he say? "Do we then make void the law through [the] faith?"—that is, through concentrated obedience based upon that principle of trust and confidence? "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." So, then, when we act upon the Faith—if we are acting upon what God gave to the Apostle Paul here—we are fulfilling the responsibility of the Law, meaning all of the statutes, judgments, and so on, from God.

Alright, Colossians 1 and verse 23. Colossians 1 and let's note verse 23. And here, Paul writing to the church at Colossae, had something to say about *the* Faith. Colossians 1 and verse 23: "If ye continue in the faith . . ." It's something that you can either continue to do, or you can reject it, or turn away from it. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled [that is, it's a form of confidence]"—without moving, without a shadow of turning, without doubt and suspicion, with no questioning spirit or attitude. "If ye continue in the faith"—that is, we are solid in our conviction, our trust in that which has been delivered to us—defined as the doctrine given to us. "If ye continue in the [doctrine] grounded and settled [not troubled, not perplexed, not doubtful or apprehensive, but with all confidence], and be not moved"—refusing to be moved laterally, or in any other direction.

"[B]e not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Here now, is the Faith defined as the Gospel "which ye have heard." So it can be heard. It isn't a figment of imagination. It can be reduced to verbal form, and can be preached. You can preach the Faith. So, if you can preach the Faith, then you are preaching words. What words? The words that proceed from men, or the words that God Almighty gave?

". . . which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Yes, the Apostle Paul was a minister of *the* Faith. He taught it, and he said you must continue in it. So, whatever it was that the Apostle Paul taught, it had tenets, ways of life, concepts, beliefs, or whatever, and they could be practiced, and they would be manifested, and they could be adhered to on a continuous basis. That is the meaning of *the* Faith.

Then, in Colossians 2 and let's note verse 7: "Rooted and built up in him." The most difficult thing for men, apparently, is to put down roots. They are constant transplants. Not only are they moving in the sense of demographics—which means they are moving geographically from one area to another—but they also move philosophically. They are moving all over the place with their minds. But God says we must be rooted and built up in Him.

Now, when you put down roots like a tree does, you don't pluck that tree up once it ages, do you? You can cut it down, and when you do, it's forever finished.

Then, we can cut down the tree of our own growth, but that doesn't mean, then, that it will be of any value. It will only be burned up. That's what they do with trees—or they turn it into lumber, or something of that nature. But in this case, we are talking about cutting it down and burning it. So, we don't want, then, our concepts to be cut down. We want them to be: "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith." So, that means that our mental concepts must be like that tree that has put down roots. It is anchored, and once it is grown—once it is an aged tree, a mature tree—you can't transplant it. There isn't a thing in the world that you can do with it, except to prune it, to take care of it, to see that it gets nourishment, and to see that it continues to perform the function that was given to it.

And so, we as the called and chosen of God, are likened to that tree, and we put down roots, and then we are built up in Him, with absolute confidence in Him, and established in the Faith. We are not moving all over the place; we are not "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." We know that which has been given to us—we have confidence in it—we are not doubtful nor suspicious, and we are not without our anchor of hope and confidence, regardless of all the unsettling, turbulent waves of life.

Or, are some of us like the Apostle Peter? We take our eyes off of Christ and we begin to look at the physical circumstances around us, and we see the great billowing waves of doubt—troubles, perplexity and difficulties of one type or another—and we lose our confidence in Him. Brethren, we had better get back and anchor ourselves in Christ—rooted and built up in Him.

How? Established in the Faith—established in that doctrine which was given to us. If that doctrine was not given to us, there isn't a thing in the world that we are going to be able to do about it. All of our aspirations, our hopes, and our driving ambitions are in vain. But if it has been delivered to us, then it can be shored up—it can be anchored, it can be increased, it can be given a new dimension—pruned, and made very serviceable and effective. God did reveal that to His people in the last days. Are we a part of them? We must evaluate our own lives, and then establish ourselves by faith and confidence in Jesus Christ. And that confidence is in the fact that He *did* give us that Way of Life—that we are the recipients of it, that we have been taught that Way of Life, and that we are still the faithful and obedient children God. Do we have that confidence? Do we have that assurance and that faith?

" . . . abounding therein with thanksgiving"—abounding in that which we have been taught. We were taught, my dear brethren.

The next point is: "Total obedience has great reward." Total obedience has great reward. Let's turn back, now, to Acts 3 and verse 16. It won't take us too long to cover this, because, as I said, I want to finish this specific area, now, on the word *pistis*. Acts 3 and noting verse 16: "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, *the* faith which is by him . . ." *The* Faith which is by Him. What is our faith, then—the faith within us? Christ. Christ within us, living that Truth. Christ is within us, and He never changes—that's what He said: He never changes. He grows, yes, but He never changes. Then, any time one feels a change is necessary, it is obvious he did not have Christ.

"[W]hom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him . . ." I want you to get the factor there that it is *by* Him. "*The* faith which is by him." Christ was the living manifestation of the Word of God. How much of it? The totality of God's Word made flesh, and He *is* in the flesh today. That's in the *aeroist* tense. He is *presently* here in the flesh today. How? Not in His own physical body. No, nobody sees Him today. He's not on some lonely mountain; He is not in some great far-off, unknown country. He is present today *in* those whom He has chosen, and when He is within them, they are living the same Faith and the same confidence He lived in His own flesh body over 1900 years ago—almost 2000 years ago, now. "The Faith which is by Him." That Faith has never altered, and it, now, is lived within those called of Him.

"[W]hom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness . . ." It not only will precipitate within us such healings, help and strength, but it will also give us everything that Christ has promised, in His time. But what if, now, some of us have to bear the marks and the sufferings of Jesus Christ? Here was a perfect Being, and yet, He had to pay the price. He was persecuted, spat upon, and all kinds of things happened to Him. He was impoverished—poor. He said that He had no certain place to lay His head.

You know, if we have been called of God, then we have the priceless gift of the Faith—the Truth of God. A trillion dollars can't buy that. Who is the rich one, then? You know we are so rich—*so* rich—that I guess there's no way of even

giving you a definition. We are still just in college—in school—learning. Our true inheritance is coming. But we sometimes get our eyes off of that true inheritance, and we begin to look at the present. We say, "Well, but now we want so-and-so. We need this and we need that." You mean you think that God doesn't know that? Why don't you just leave it in His hands, implicitly, and let Him take care of it? The more we agitate, the more we get in the road of God carrying out His functions. And we are awfully good at agitating.

"[T]he faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." We can have it. It's the promise of God. But you can't look to somebody else. You can't point a finger at somebody else. The only person responsible is you. So, if we are not the recipients of the promises of God, having been called of Him, the problem lies at our own feet, and no one else. No one else. But that's not the way of men, because men will start looking to all kinds of circumstances. They will start finger-pointing; they start evaluating; and they will do all kinds of things to circumvent the responsibility incumbent upon them. If we are not receiving what we feel we ought, we had better, then, open up our lives and start taking a good, long, hard look. That's the responsibility.

Now, let's notice Acts 15 and verse 9. Acts 15 and noting verse 9: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by [the] faith." Purification of heart and mind comes by what means? Implicit obedience to the doctrine delivered. We have found the Faith means the doctrine of God. That's the essence of it. Then, purifying our hearts comes by faithful obedience to God. That's how we change our hearts. It isn't that we start thinking, and we think, now, "I want a pure heart." How are you going to do it? You start obeying the doctrine. That's what it is.

Romans 4 and verse 9. Romans 4, verse 9, and let's read verses 7 through 10. Romans 4 and beginning in verse 9. It says: "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that [the] faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." The Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. Then righteousness is obedience to the Faith.

Now, does that not correspond with what the Psalmist David said over in, what is it, Psalm 119 and verse 172? "All thy commandments are righteousness." That's what it is.

Here he said it in another way. In Romans 4 and verse 9, he said: "[F]or we say that [the] faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." He trusted it and he believed it, and acting upon that was what made him righteous in the sight of God.

In Romans 4 and verse 11, he said: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith . . ." So here, then, the sign of circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of *the* Faith. What is circumcision today but circumcision of the heart and of the mind? Then, what is the sign of *the* Faith today? A change of spirit and attitude. As long as we are belligerent; as long as we are questioning; as long as we create strife; as long as we are perplexed and troubled; as long as we are fulfilling any of the fruits, or the works, of the flesh, we are proving that we do not have that Faith. Today, circumcision is of the heart and the mind, and it is the seal of *the* Faith today in those called and chosen of God.

[The] seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

So it is, then, the manifestation of that confidence and that trust in God. That's the seal of it—that's the sign of it. A seal is the living proof, the manifestation, the cover, and it is the absolute that demonstrates our faith and our confidence in God. It is action upon that Truth.

Now, let's notice Romans 5 and verse 2: "By whom also we have access by [the] faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Remember, total obedience has great reward. What is it here? "By whom also we have access [that is, by Jesus Christ] by [the] faith." We have access to Christ by the Faith. Well, that seems to make sense now, because we just learned in Acts 15 and verse 9 that we are purified by that Faith, and in Acts 3:16 we found that *the* Faith is by Him. So, therefore, we read here now in Romans: "By whom also we have access by [the] faith . . ." So, if it is the means by which we have faith, it is also the means of access, is it not? And, true enough, he said, "By whom also we have access by [the] faith into this grace." So we have access into that grace, that confidence, that relationship with God, by that doctrine which was given to us.

Ephesians 2 and verse 8. Ephesians 2 and let's note verse 8: "For by grace are we saved through [the] faith [salvation even comes through the Faith]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." That's right, our very acceptance of the doctrine of God is a gift. It wasn't anything we did. It was given to us as a gift, and then He said to continue in it.

Now, in Ephesians 6 and verse 16. I must hasten, because I want to complete this. Ephesians 6 and noting verse 16: "Above all, taking the shield of [the] faith . . ." Brethren, we are going to come up against many trying circumstances, and here is the means by which we are going to be able to stand during those circumstances of the last days. "[T]aking the shield of [the] faith . . ." What is it? The doctrine that you were taught. "[T]aking the shield of [the] faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Why not take it? Let's get a hold of that Faith, and let's use it as our shield, and as our protector, against the terrifying circumstances of our day.

Hebrews 11 and verse 39. Hebrews 11 and noting verse 39: "And these all, having obtained a good report through [the] faith . . ." All these, then, obeyed that same doctrine. That Faith has never changed—the doctrine has never changed—so said Christ. He *was* the doctrine, He was the Way, He *is* the Faith, and He said it has never changed. "And these all, having obtained a good report through [the] faith, received not the promise." They haven't received it yet, and yet they maintained their faith and their conviction. You and I should do exactly the same thing, regardless of how long it takes.

James 5 and verse 15. James 5 and let's note verse 15: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The prayer of *the* Faith shall save the sick. Is it a possibility that some of us are just not living up totally to the Faith that was originally given to us? Don't blame somebody else. Look at your own lives. God does not pour upon you the punishment that somebody else deserves. That would be an unjust God. God does not do that. When it happens to us, it is because His love is toward us, and He wants us to stop long enough to ask why, and to get down into our lives, and evaluate, and make the necessary changes.

Now, the next subtopic is: "The faith must have unity." Ephesians the fourth chapter. Ephesians the fourth chapter and verse 13, but I'm going to read

verses 11 through 15, very quickly. Ephesians 4 and beginning in verse 11. It says:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ [that's the church in the last days]: Till we all come in the unity of *the* faith . . .

Now, God said that they are still going to be there for the very purpose of preaching *the* Faith, and that we all might be unified in it.

. . . and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children [Every one of us should make this a motto in our lives. These texts right here.], tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men . . .

No, God doesn't want us to be plagued, and distressed, and troubled, by those things, but to stand firm in those things that we were taught. Why don't you make that a motto of this time?

Now, the next point is: "The faithful are to serve one another." Let's notice Galatians 6 and verse 10. Galatians 6 and verse 10. It says: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of [the] faith." Here God instructs us to be watchful and ever concerned about the health—about the needs—of those who are of the household of the Faith.

James 2 and verse 1. James 2 and noting verse 1. Here we read: "My brethren, have not *the* faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." God said don't select. They all belong to Christ, and if they are a part of the Body of Christ, then they are brothers and sisters of each other.

Now, finally: "Who may serve the household of the Faith?" 1 Timothy 3 and verse 9—our last text. 1 Timothy 3 and noting verse 9: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Go back and read it. He is talking about people

who are to serve the household of Faith. Who? Those who hold "the mystery of *the* faith in a pure conscience." That's a matter of the mind. Where do we stand, brethren? Is that our attitude toward it?

Now, brethren, next time we are going to begin with the general usage of the word *pistis*.