

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 125 The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Faith #34

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This, now, is tape number 34 in the series on the specific fruit of God's Holy Spirit, faith. We have covered many, many unusual traits and characteristics of that fruit of God's Holy Spirit, reducing it to some basic questions which we can formulate in these human minds. I've called those sub-topics.

We have now come down to the next sub-topic, having completed point number eighteen in this broad Greek word *pistis*. We have now come down to point number nineteen, having completed that point eighteen last time. This point number nineteen is only an attempt on my part to reduce texts to some definition—something that we can comprehend in our own minds. All textual material has to have a reason behind it. It is written for some purpose and it behooves us, through the power of God's Holy Spirit and an awful lot of prayer, to try to grasp and understand the reasoning behind these things. They do explain many, many of the basic questions that naturally occur to us.

As I went through the whole series on this particular Greek word, a couple of texts were rather unique, and I have put them under this title: "Even those called to know the doctrine need trust rehearsed, or recharged, occasionally."

Here in Romans 3 and verse 30. Romans 3 and verse 30, we notice: "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through [and here is the definite word, the] faith." Now it is extremely interesting here that God should have inspired this particular text with regard to the two classes of people that exist on the face of this earth: either the called or the uncalled. The circumcision, in this case, technically, physically, represent the called of today. We are the circumcised in heart, whereas the uncircumcised represent the world.

So now, in this case, since we are cognizant of the fact that there is but one God—only one God—what is the relationship between that one God and these two classes of people? What we will see, now, is that the circumcision today, manifested in the called of God, shall be justified by faith. In other words, the generalized concept is that no longer is it a matter of having to be called. It is no longer a matter of coming to understand the doctrine, because when you are called, the Truth of God—that doctrine—is revealed. In this case, now, it is a matter of continuity, of trust, and belief. Whereas, now, in the case of the uncircumcision, or the people of this world, it is through the Faith, and the Faith is a matter of coming to understand the doctrine.

Remember, I went through quite a series in explaining to you that *the* Faith, in nearly all cases, represents *the* doctrine. It is the fundamental premise of faith and trust. When you say, "Well, I have faith," what does that mean? Faith in what, based on what? Is it just some kind of a mystical look on the face of an individual? What is faith? And when you understand that faith itself is a conviction predicated upon some fundamental concept, then you can begin to understand that the generalized usage of the word *pistis* means the continuity of trust and belief, versus, then, the matter of revelation to those who have never been called. And it is a matter of revelation because it is a matter of giving to them *the* doctrine, which is specifically *the* Faith.

And so when the fundamental doctrine is delivered, that is, *the* Faith, what is, then, a matter of necessity on the part of those called—those to whom that revelation has been given—is continuity of belief, staying true to it. It is no longer a revelation of doctrine, it is no longer a matter of proving anything, it is now a matter of consistency of belief. And so, here the Apostle Paul is explaining the difference in the relationship between the called of God, versus the uncalled, toward God Himself. And the one requires a continuity of belief, and the recharging of our belief, our trust, and our confidence in that Way which was delivered to us, whereas, the call of the uncalled is a matter of revealing the doctrine, which is *the* Faith.

So even those called of God—the called now having had the doctrine, the Faith, given to them—need to have it rehearsed. Even the called who have that gift—that awesome, mysterious, marvelous intervention of God in the giving of that faith and that confidence—need to have it shored up, recharged, and given

better dimension and direction, on occasion, because we ourselves, by virtue of the climate in which we live, by virtue of our own natures with which we were born, need to have that reorientation from time to time.

So, maybe we can understand why God has the Sabbath every seven days. We need that kind of recharging. Now, maybe we can understand, in the overall sense, why God required obedience to all of His Holy Days on an annual basis, because we need that recharging—we need to better grasp and understand, and have more firm resolve in our own hearts and minds with regard to the plan and the purpose of God. So, even though we are called and we have been given the knowledge of God, we need to be recharged on occasion, and for that very reason we keep fifty-two Sabbaths per year, and we keep seven Holy Days, annually. It is required of God because the Sabbath and the Holy Days are the doctrine, but continuity of the Faith is essential with regard to those doctrines.

Now I want us to notice also 1 Thessalonians the third chapter and verse 2. 1 Thessalonians 3, and let's notice verse 2. In this case, we are going to begin in verse 2 and read to verse 4, but let's go back and get it in context in verse 1:

Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.

It was necessary to send somebody over there to reestablish—to establish them—that is, to firm up the foundation, the foundation that had already been given at the time of their call. But, in this case, it was a matter of firming up the establishment of that faith—that conviction.

"[A]nd to comfort you [that is, to give them new hope and assurance concerning their faith]. That no man should be moved by these afflictions." Now, what Paul is saying is that sometimes when we, individually, encounter problems and difficulties—and how true it is, because I have seen this manifestation over, and over, and over—we begin to question God.

Why is it—as Mr. Clark and I have mentioned so many times when we have talked these issues over—that when people encounter difficulties with other

people, the first one that takes it in the neck is God? They distrust God. They are no longer going to do this, or they are not going to do that—they take it out on God. The last thing I would do when somebody else treated me badly, or treats the Truth of God badly, is to allow them to influence me into treating God badly. So we have to understand that what other human beings do, and how they treat the Truth of God, should not affect our relationship with God. It, indeed, must not affect our confidence in God—our faith in God.

So, in this case, the Apostle Paul had encountered some difficulty. He was now, in all probability, either incarcerated, or being subjected to it, or threatened with it, whichever the case may have been. We don't know the exact timing here, but anyway, he was being afflicted very broadly, and so somebody could probably have looked at it and said, "Well, if he were truly of God, he wouldn't be going through these things." I can just hear people today saying that very thing. If we were to encounter difficulties, or if we encountered some adversity predicated on situations, conditions and circumstances of our time, I don't care what the conditions might be—they might be moral issues, they might be economic issues, they might be any kind of issue—somebody is going to point a finger. Don't we all realize that physical things are going to pass with the using? Is that what our hope is built upon? Then we are indeed of all men most miserable, because what we ought to do is turn around and set our hearts on these things, and go after them with a vengeance, if they are everything. But if they are not everything, let's turn loose of them and focus our attention upon things which are spiritual—that are of eternal value.

So the Apostle Paul found it necessary to write to the people up in Thessalonica: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." It isn't the fact that we are not aware of certain things, it is the fact that sometimes we don't recall them, or we don't want to recall them, whichever the case may be. Because we would rather use it as a justification for some attitude that has become dominant in our thinking. And so what we will do is to take it out on God. Many people did so with respect to what happened in our former affiliation. When they turned from God's Truth, they threw the whole thing overboard and said, "There isn't anything to it." What a tragedy. If there weren't anything to it, there was nothing to it from the beginning. Then you have to ask why in the world we were so naive and stupid as to be sucked into it.

Or, if there were something to it, it is not based upon the integrity of the people who were involved, it is based upon the Truth of God—the revelation of God. The Truth of God is never affected by what human beings do. So if it were the Truth of God, and it was exemplified only in the lives of other people for a period of time, the change of those individuals cannot change the Truth of God—it never has and it never will.

So the Apostle Paul here was originally a very shining example of great prestige, power and capability, and he influenced a great number of people. Was it his influence, or was it the call of Christ, which? But because they saw, then, the Apostle Paul in affliction, they began to question God—the doctrine. And so Paul found it necessary to recharge their faith and to assure them through a letter that had been written to them: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know," as we do today. For we ourselves know that we are appointed unto these difficulties, and these difficulties will manifest themselves in a myriad ways. So let's not allow any set of physical circumstances, regardless of whom it may affect, or involve, or regardless of what the nature of the problem may be, ever affect our relationship with God, which is through *the* Faith—the doctrine that was given to us.

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation." And, brethren, I have done my utmost to try to make all of us aware of the things that are going to happen, and to cause you—even, yes indeed, to make you—to trust in the doctrine that was given, and not in any human being. I want more than anything else for you to trust that which you received before you ever knew another human being—before you ever had any single name. You didn't know them, those associations came afterward, but you heard the voice—you responded to it, and you believed it. I want you to turn to that and to believe it and trust it with all that resides within you and don't ever look to another human being. You just hang on to that faith—that conviction—and be recharged in that confidence and that trust.

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation." Yes, we are going to go through those things. Human beings are going to be subjected to all kinds of things, and the tribulation is not always going to be outside. Some of it is going to be on the inside. As a matter of fact, my dear brethren, ninety percent of the tribulation that occurred in Apostolic times occurred within the church, not outside of it.

"[E]ven as it came to pass, and ye know." And it will come to pass in our day because God Almighty said that these things were written for us upon whom the ends of the world are come. They were not written for other people, they are specifically written for this generation of Christians. So these things, brethren, were not written specifically to Thessalonica, they were written for you today. And so when you read these things, what you need to do is read them while understanding their specific relevancy to you. For the Bible indeed, in that case, is written to this generation.

So, brethren, the called do need to have their faith recharged every once in a while—and maybe twice in a while. And I have spent an awful lot of time trying to get us to firmly believe it, and to trust it, and to have that faith and that confidence.

The next principle—broad category—is, "What is required for healing?" Here is the word used in another category, and it has to do with the unique problems that we experience, physically—our own diseases, our own uncomfortable situations, our own problems which we precipitate for ourselves, and also those which we inherit because of the climate and the environment in which we live (because of the manner in which man totally has lived).

So he has exploited the environment and he is still trying to force it and use it in his own way. And you and I, while living in the fabric of this society, will experience some of these environmental problems, but again, let's understand that we were not created to live forever in the flesh. That's not what counts. For if God wanted us to have sought a means of living longer in the flesh, then why do we not live two thousand years today, instead of seventy by the decree of God? God reduced the lifespan, the longevity, of man from nine hundred, nine hundred-fifty, nine hundred sixty-nine, almost a thousand years, down to seventy, and He said if we exceed that, it will even be with turmoil and strife—difficulty. So why in the world did not God turn it around, if it is a matter of living a longer life—if that's the most important thing? The important thing, brethren, whether you live seventy years, whether you live fifty years, or whether you live nine hundred and sixty-nine years, is your orientation. It's a matter of the orientation, spiritually. That's what counts, and that's the important thing in our lives.

So healing, then, is the understanding that we need maximum health to discharge our responsibilities before God. You know, "rather let it be healed," said the Apostle Paul when writing to the Hebrews. It says not to let our "feeble hands hang down"—meaning with lassitude, apathy and indifference. But why don't we recognize the reason for these things, and why can't we change our thinking and give a better orientation to our lives?

The real way to have health is not to become involved in the health program. Now, does that mean that we should thumb our noses at good eating? That isn't what I said, at all. God is the first one who established good health laws, and they are not predicated upon some wretched philosophy of some organization that believes in the occult, or some other ridiculous concept. And the vast majority of them today still are struggling for what they call perpetual existence in the flesh. What a tragedy. They don't even understand—they have no grasp of—what it's all about.

God wants us to be in good health. Yes, because it requires good health to serve God as we ought. God doesn't want us on sick beds. God wants us healed, and He wants us with good mental orientation—with powers of mind. But He doesn't want us devoted to the physical. We are here for no other purpose than to train and to qualify for the tomorrow. That's our purpose.

So, what is really required for healing? It is unique and interesting that it involves faith. It involves not only faith, but *the* Faith. *The* Faith is the premise of our continuity of faith, or trust. So, it involves total obedience, and total obedience involves a lot more than the specific commands. It is a matter of understanding the broad fabric of what it is all about, and the broad fabric is in understanding the basic causes for our difficulties—the basic problems that we are experiencing as human beings: hereditary diseases; diseases of environment; diseases that we have brought upon ourselves; because man has been forcing the nature that God gave to him—over which he was given dominion, but in order to control properly.

So we are going to exploit—we have been using it and abusing it—and that is what the Apostle Paul said. You know, all of these physical things are for the using, but not the abusing. We are not to abuse any of these physical things.

So there are many things in which we do not have specific commands of God—in which God does not say, "you cannot do this, you cannot do that, and you cannot do something else." Smoking is one of them. There is no such command in the Bible. But anybody who is a true and genuine Christian knows that it is a useless habit. It precipitates bad health and it has caused untold injury in many, many ways. It is a defilement of the temple of God's Holy Spirit, and that is as broad a command as any command in the Bible, yet it is not a specific thing, because God didn't have to put those things in there. If we just had good sense, we would realize that we are not to violate the principles that control and keep in good health the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

Alright, there are many other things that are involved in it. A lot of our eating habits are atrocious, and yet we justify it completely because "well, you know, God doesn't have any command against that." No, He doesn't, but I'm not going to take the time, brethren, because I think you are smart enough to sit down and to reason how far that is going to take you astray from God. Just because God does not have a specific command in here, does that mean that there are many things that we should do? What it means, brethren, is that as human beings we are smart enough to figure those out for ourselves. Why in the world does He have to reveal and give a specific command for something that anybody ought to have enough sense to be able to study out and realize its consequences? Did God approve anything that is going to take untold lives and bring to pass untold amounts of injury, pain and suffering before death?

Smoking is now proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, irrefutably, to be involved in a host of major diseases and ills that afflict mankind today. It isn't second guessing, it is an absolute, unless we want to technically argue an issue. And who is even interested in argumentation? If somebody wants to argue himself into ill health, go ahead. What I'm saying is that the man who recognizes *the* Faith is not going to allow himself to be involved in it. Yet, interestingly, the party who will recognize the adversity produced by smoking will turn around and, in his own eating habits, bring to pass every conceivable ache, and pain, and suffering. And yet he feels that it is perfectly acceptable. What a tragedy.

What is required for healing? Now what I am saying, brethren, is that to really have healing, it is a matter, not only of obeying specific commands of God, but seeing the total fabric of faith. We trust in the will and the purpose of

God—God's Way. Sometimes we do not have health because we are still justifying some of our behaviors—because we don't find a specific command in God's Word. And because we don't find it, we think that everything is acceptable.

Eating is a physical matter. The only reason that God gave specific commands regarding eating is that maybe you and I could not have found out, until it was too late, the problems with pork and with unclean foods. And so God laid these laws down.

But there are other things that are a matter of idolizing what men have done. We would rather have some kind of refinement that has come through the hands of man than to take the un-perverted product produced by God. We somehow feel that it is almost an ignominy and shame to take the mundane—the natural, the physical—of this world that is absolutely right in the sight of God. It was created by God, but we have to tamper with it. We are going to refine it—we are going to make it *so* much better—and it is going to be held in high esteem by the great gourmets and by the people who are supposed to understand this type of thing. And yet, they don't know the principles of God's Word, at all.

What is required for healing? It is the ability to see the total fabric—it is the ability to understand, first and foremost, that God didn't create anything that is bad. When He had finished creating it, He looked at it and He said, "It is good"—including the vegetables, and including the fruits. But I find no place in all of the Bible in which God looked at it, and as men went on down and brought about certain refinements, quote/unquote (to me they are perversions), He said, "Now men will do a marvelous thing in the future, and they are going to give you a half product that is a whole lot better than what I gave to you." But what God gave to us was a complete product, and it is good for health—it will produce health. But what men have produced will bring about all of the wretchedness and the terrible things that we as human beings are experiencing today.

What we need for health and real healing is a better understanding of what it is to really trust God—to believe God. Most of us don't believe the very things that God said about foods. We take what the great food industry tells us today. Or maybe it is the doctoring profession. When they say, "Why, that doesn't make a bit of difference. These things contain all of the natural vitamins, the natural minerals, and the natural food substances that you will find in any of these things

you call natural foods." Indeed they do, but you know, there is a matter of quality as well as quantity, and the quality isn't there. It just isn't there. And they are going to learn that one of these times. So, we are experiencing the net result of man's disbelief in God. So, faith is a matter of understanding, totally, what God has given to us and believing it and trusting it implicitly. God gave us things that will produce good health if we will just believe and trust.

So here we find, then, in Matthew 9 and verse 22—and let's quickly go through these—Matthew 9 and verse 22, now that we have laid the fabric, and let's see its usage with regard to healing. Matthew 9 and noting verse 22. He said: "But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Now, what was the object of that faith? She had trusted Christ, and Christ was what? The living, personified manifestation of the Word of God. She had confidence in the Word of God. He was the Word of God in action. What Word of God? The Word of God that also involved her orientation in life—even her health. And she had implicit confidence in Him and the fact that He had authority over those situations. So He turned around and He said, "[T]hy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." She had faith in it.

Now, people say, "Well, you know, if I had Christ right here, I wouldn't have any problem, either. I'd ask Him all kinds of questions." Do you know, my dear brethren, that we do have Christ with us? Here it is. It is in a written form right here. It is the Word. Our problem is that we don't believe it, and we are always looking for some area of justification—self-justification. So, we don't trust this one, because we think it is a matter of interpretation, or what not. Just take it at face value. God said what was good for us.

Now, this woman obviously didn't understand all of those principles. Why? Because she was only beginning—she was a babe—and that is why, oftentimes, beginning people get mysterious, miraculous healings that those who have been in the church for many years don't get. Because God expects us to have improved, and to have grown in greater confidence and trust in the totality of that Word. There is a reason why we are not getting it, brethren. We don't really trust Jesus Christ totally, because to trust Christ is to trust what He was. He *is* the Word of God, and we must come to trust Him implicitly, and if we were to trust Him with regard to everything, then we could have the health that we really need.

Matthew 9 and verse 29 says this: "Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you." That is an interesting statement. "According to your faith." In other words, God is asking, "What do you believe? What is your level of trust? According to your faith be it unto you." There is no human being that does not want to live perfectly—that is, physically. There is no person that does not want absolute health. The problem is, there are billions of them that don't want to live the Truth. Now, if they could live the dictates of their own ideas, and their own conceptions, and the lusts of their own flesh, and then have perfect health, they would think they had the Kingdom by the tail. The only problem is, they don't even begin to grasp, nor understand, because what they are wanting is the perpetuation of that which produces all of the illnesses and the problems that we are experiencing. We say that we don't want a perverted society; we say that we do not want an evil society; we say that we do not want a problematic society, yet, we will turn right around and justify ourselves in pursuing the ways that bring these things.

We say, "Well, now, wait a minute, that doesn't have anything to do with the Law of God." That's right, in a technical sense. But in a broader sense, the physical things are underscoring factors of spiritual things. We have to obey the laws, physically. We can understand those things—we can come to understand them, to prove them and substantiate them by tests, by experimentation and so on. You can't do that with spiritual things. Therefore, spiritual things must be revealed. But physical things can be seen, if we will just take the time to do it.

So, "according to your faith be it unto you." Do we really divisionalize the Truth of God, or do we accept it *carte blanche*—physical and spiritual? Do we try to get around some basics by saying, "Oh, well, that is not part of God's spiritual Law"? I know that—I can tell you that already. But isn't God the author of physical laws, too? You see, God did not differentiate between the physical and the spiritual laws, and the statutes and the judgments of God, when He said that if you sin, or you violate certain things, it is going to produce these horrible circumstances. A part of the reason for our adverse experiences, today, is the violation of physical laws. They have a consequence, too, and if you don't believe that—and please don't take me up on it—just jump off the roof. Now, if that law of gravity takes its toll, so do other physical laws. If you put your hand in the fire, then you are going to get burned as long as you're physical. That ought to tell us that we had better obey physical laws. And God is the one that instituted those

laws, and then told us that if we lived according to those laws, we would reap perfect health. "According to your faith [Do we divisionalize, or do we accept wholly?] be it unto you." If we will accept, *carte blanche*, faith, confidence and trust in the totality of God's Way, both physically and spiritually, then we can have perfect health, it is up to us.

Matthew 15 and verse 28. Matthew 15 and verse 28:

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt [So what He is saying is, 'It isn't a specific command of mine. What do you want?']. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

So, God powerfully intervened because there was a desire. But will the people involved continue in the same circumstances that brought about the illness? If they do, it won't be long until they are right back in the same problem, but the next time it is going to be more difficult. And I won't take time to analyze that. You can do it. Every time we harden ourselves by a carnal, lustful orientation, it is just that much more difficult for us to turn around. It becomes harder—a lot more difficult.

Mark 5 and verse 34. Mark 5 and noting verse 34: "And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." So faith is absolutely essential, but now we have to understand what faith is. What is that faith? You know, a lot of people think that it is somehow just looking august—you sit there and you stare kind of blankly into outer space, and so on, and that says, "oh, that is a man of real faith." It has nothing to do with a man's look. It has nothing to do with the physical dimensions, nor the physical characteristics, of an individual. But it does have to do with a mental orientation. Faith is of the mind. You do not manifest faith with your big toe. Faith is an orientation of mind. According to the orientation of your mind, "be it unto you," said Jesus Christ.

Now, God may not even require a significant orientation for the infant, because they don't have the mental powers and the experience behind them. But as we begin to mature, God is going to require a lot more evidence of that faith—He is going to require a better orientation as we grow up. Don't *we*? We

become troubled, don't we, when we see people are still acting like juveniles? We use the term very broadly, "I wonder when he is going to grow up?" Well, you know, I wonder how many times Christ must turn to God, or God to Christ, and say, "I wonder when they are going to grow up?" But, you know, we never stop to think of ourselves in that way. Do you know why? Because the lusts of the flesh still dictate. And because we cannot find a specific command against certain things, we think we got by with them. We are paying the price—we do every day—but we refuse to recognize that. We will use every excuse in the book—every excuse in the book—to justify what we are going through, and do everything except to turn around and say, "I need to change my total mental orientation."

Mark 10 and verse 52. Mark 10 and verse 52: "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight"— showing that here was the very Being that had power over all circumstances, spiritual as well as physical, or maybe I should say physical as well as spiritual. So here was One who preempted the power and the force of some physical law, as well as the spiritual laws that were involved. He preempted it, He interrupted it, He interfered with it, and by that very power and by that very force, or by His dominionship, He gave health to somebody who had, by circumstances of his own choosing, brought about ill health. So God had powerfully intervened—that is, Christ had at that moment—because the man went away perfectly healed. But how long do you think he *stayed* perfectly healed—unless he changed the factors that had brought that ill health about to begin with?

Luke 8 and verse 48. Luke 8 and let's note verse 48: "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole." So it is necessary for us to have confidence in it, and the confidence, brethren, stems from the fact that either Christ directly intercepts the power of natural laws which precipitate ill health in our lives, or it is by the change in our lives that bring about, automatically, the restoration of health. And therein lies comfort and good cheer.

Luke 18 and verse 42. Luke 18 and noting verse 42: "And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." So this is simply saying that by one of two laws, there can be an intervention. In this case, it was a miraculous intervention on the part of Jesus Christ who had dominion over all these laws. All things have been put under His authority and His power. And so He intercepted

that very law—or the laws—that had precipitated this blindness, or whatever, and in interfering, or intervening, He brought about health. Let us only hope that a sufficient change occurred in the life of the individual so that there was not a natural degradation that occurred because the man continued in the circumstances that had brought about the ill health in the first place. Otherwise, the healing would not have been permanent, because those laws were only transitionally, or temporarily, intercepted. And they are still going to apply in the future. So that is why Christ said, on occasion, "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you." What He is saying is that degradation, or degeneration, is progressive downward, so a worse thing is going to happen to us unless we learn our lessons.

Now, the next principle is, "What is the nature of that which the petitioner can expect from God if faith is manifested?" What is the nature of that which the petitioner can expect from God if faith is manifested? In Matthew 15 and verse 28. Matthew 15 and verse 28, we read this: "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." What Christ is saying here is that the nature of what we can expect is what we will, providing the orientation is correct. That's why we find that we can receive whatsoever we petition—or whatsoever we ask—of God if we perform two things: One is that if we do those things that are pleasing in His sight, but the second is equally important: if we ask it not to consume it upon our own lusts.

Now let's analyze that. Consuming it upon our own lusts is living according, then, to the dictates of these flesh minds and bodies. That is, we have lustful appetites, we have lustful desires—we want certain things. Some people want things that involve other people, like promiscuous behavior. That is a form of lust. But let's not make any mistake about it: there are many other people who commit the same sin in the manner in which they eat, because it is the dictates of a mouth—the taste buds—rather than intelligence of mind and heart.

Now, I know there are going to be plenty of people that might be very, very upset to think that eating garbage food could be likened unto people who are living promiscuous lives, but they are both a matter of the lust of the flesh, and God does not differentiate. That's right, God does not differentiate. We pay a price for both of them—and a terrible price. And so God said that one of the absolute requirements for the restoration of good health is that we do not consume it upon our own lusts. That is, we don't want good health for the very reason that

we want to go back and do the very things that precipitated bad health in the first place. That is the reason, brethren, that most of us are not receiving answers to our prayers. We haven't learned the lessons yet, because we still categorize sin—because we look at it and say, "Well, it's not a major thing before God." Oh, yes, it is. We are violating the temple of the Holy Spirit and we want to abuse the powerful intervention of God because we merely want the privilege and the right to go ahead and do the thing that has brought ill health in the first place. But God is not a mean God, and that is why He is not going to give it to us. Why in the world turn around and heal us when we are going to turn right around and do the very thing that brought the ill health, and then bring a worse thing upon us? He is a benevolent God; He is a kind God; He doesn't want to do that to us. So He isn't going to allow us to go through that. He may do it for the sake of spiritual growth, initially, because God didn't even ask any such behavior on the part of the initiates, but He surely does as we mature. He expects us to respond.

Now, the next point here—point number twenty-two—is: "What is the level of faith needed for called Christians to begin to live the responsibility given to them?" What is the level of faith that God expects of us? Here in Matthew 17 and verse 20. Matthew 17 and verse 20, but let's begin in verse 19. We read: "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?" Here is a very interesting thing. Here the disciples had been right there with Christ—they had observed Him all along, they had seen Him do miraculous, marvelous things—and yet, all they were trying to do was to emulate, on the surface, the same thing that Christ had done. Yet, they couldn't cast out this demon. Why? There has to be some difference, and it is not an observable difference. So obviously, it is not physical. I'm sure, you know, that they must have used some of the same words that Christ did. So it was not a matter of the phraseology, like some people believe—kind of a ritual, you know. So it didn't have anything to do with physical matters, or otherwise they could have observed that and corrected it. So it had to be something beyond that.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief." Their unbelief boiled down to some form of physical deficiency in their lives. Was it a doubt of some kind? Was it predicated upon a form of human arrogance, because maybe one of them wanted to get out in front of the others? I know a lot of people who wanted certain gifts of God because they were afraid somebody else might get them. Oh, I know of some circumstances in which that prevailed.

Do you think God cannot read hearts and minds? What is the purpose that is acceptable in the sight of God? Why, in this case, did He say, "because of your unbelief"? Because they were still manifesting some characteristics of the uncalled—of the worldly, of the carnal: unbelief. It had to be doubt; it had to be the fact that they were not perfectly oriented spiritually; or it had to be some factor that manifests itself in unbelief, or the lack of faith.

[F]or verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed [It doesn't take much. Just faith as much as a grain of mustard seed], ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Do we really believe that? Now, we can't do it just to show off, because God's purpose is never for the ostentation of man. And how many human beings would like to do it just to say, "See, I am the chosen servant of God. I'm better than he is"? Don't ever think that impossible to human beings. How many of them could do it totally for self-effacing reasons? There are not many human beings, if any, who could.

"[Y]e shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." He didn't even equivocate; He just said it was an absolute. And yet, I don't see very many people removing mountains. So there must be one of two reasons for that: there is no man worthy of it, or more particularly, is there any real purpose for it? You see, we look at it and think, "Well, now, wait a minute. If we had a man of real faith around here, we would have mountains being moved all over the place." Would we? Can you say that Christ was deficient in faith? And yet, I don't recall His having moved one single mountain. Do you? Then, it must have been that Christ didn't consider moving a mountain important. So, what I see here is the fact that there wasn't a necessity. If there were ever a reason to move a mountain, and that kind of faith were evidenced, that mountain would remove. So it is highly doubtful that many mountains are going to be removed, because God puts it there in the first place, and I don't know that we have to move it, except to manifest the arrogance of a human being. And it is not going to be done for that reason.

So what we are talking about here is the unbelief of carnality. We trust the self—we are oriented to the self. It only takes a little, tiny grain of true faith. The

rest of it, then, must be feigned faith, not unfeigned. If you have an unfeigned faith, there must be a feigned faith. People only talk about it. It isn't a matter of real belief.

Then we find also in James 1 and verse 6—and we will have to bring this to a conclusion here today. James 1 and verse 6—a very significant text in this regard. The first chapter of James and verse 6: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering"—meaning that there is total confidence, or total trust, and it is trust in Christ, on to God. And when you trust Christ, what are you trusting? The Word in its totality. We do not equivocate with it; we do not waiver about it; we do not use any form of self-justification. We say, "Yes, Lord. Your ways, both physically and spiritually, are best." We obey, and we are the recipients of good things for that trust and that faith.

Can we manifest that kind of trust and that kind of confidence? Brethren, that is what is required for salvation. Maybe we had better seek a greater portion of it, as the apostles did: "Lord, increase our faith." We need it, brethren.

Next time, more on the subject of faith.