

GALATIANS - SERMON 34

GALATIANS 5:22 — THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - FAITH - πίστις

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INTRODUCTION: Read Hebrews 11

Faithfulness is the seventh attribute of the fruit of the Spirit. The word for faithfulness is πίστις which can be translated by either *faith* or as *faithful* depending upon the context. It can refer to our faith in God - *faith*. It can also refer to our faithfulness in conduct - *faithfulness*. Either sense is suitable to the context of Galatians 5:22. The KJV employs *faith* in its translation while the NKJ uses *faithfulness*. Both are technically correct.

If the word means *faith*, then what is said is that the Spirit produces in the Christian an attitude of confidence and trust in God and His Word. This faith, in turn produces behaviors and attitudes formed and directed by that confidence and trust in God. Such a one walks by faith and not by sight. A man of faith is one who trusts and believes God and His Word with complete confidence.

If the word means *faithfulness*, then what is said is that the Spirit produces in the Christian a commitment to being trustworthy in his dealing with others. A faithful man is one whose word is his bond and he keeps his word. This man is a reliable man.

Both translations of this word are biblical and acceptable. The focus in this sermon will be upon the first translation of this word - *faith*. One reason for this is that the word πίστις is translated by our word *faith* the majority of the time in our New Testament (over 200 times). There are only four passages that consistently translate and use this word in the sense of *faithfulness* or trustworthiness. While *faithfulness* is an acceptable translation, it is a rare one. It is profitable to lean towards the more common use of a term unless there is some compelling reasons to embrace or prefer the rarer uses and translations (Romans 3:3 & Titus 2:10).

It is obvious that this word in this passage is not a reference to saving faith as a fruit of the Spirit. Each of these fruits (all nine) are the result of salvation and not the basis of salvation. Though we are surely saved by faith, we are also, after conversion, to live by faith as the ruling principle of our lives. This is the topic of the passage - living the Christian life after salvation. This is the difference between saving faith and living faith which differ in a little way, not a large way. The former is at the base of our salvation and the other in the execution of our salvation throughout our saved lives.

OUTLINE:

- I THE NECESSITY OF THE CONTINUOUS EXERCISE OF FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
 - II THE MARKS OF THOSE WHO CONTINUOUSLY EXERCISE FAITH IN GOD AND HIS WORD WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
 - III THE MEANS OF DEVELOPING THE CONTINUOUS EXERCISE OF FAITH
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- I THE NECESSITY OF THE CONTINUOUS EXERCISE OF FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
After we believe in Christ as Savior, faith does not cease to have a significant role in our lives. As we live daily, we are to live by faith. Faith is the Christian's atmosphere breathed.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

The word used for *walk* is in the present tense indicating a continual and constant activity. Christians go on walking as a habit to walk by faith and not by sight. As sighted people keep their eyes open for constant benefit so also Christians continue to walk in faith for the constant benefit of it. A Christian not living in continual faith is spiritually blind. This kind of Christian will stumble repeatedly.

Luke 17:5

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

The apostles saw the desirability and necessity of increasing faith for increasing service and constancy in the Christian life.

Luke 22:32

"But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Jesus knew that faith was indispensable and that the Devil would destroy Peter if he did not walk in faith. To avoid such destruction our faith must not fail with respect to its exercise and operation.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

A true Christian's desire is to please the Lord, yet without faith it is impossible to please the Lord. Unbelief is an insult to God. Unbelief is the opposite attitude with respect to faith. It is to deny the trustworthiness and power of God in caring out His promises.

James 1:5-7

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. . .

Without faith prayer is useless.

When the Canaanite woman came to Jesus for help with her daughter, He said that it was not fitting to pass the children's bread to the dogs. The Canaanite woman responded that even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table. Our Lord calls this woman's faith great and grants her petition. Faith supported her prayer.

Hebrews 4:2

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Without faith preaching becomes useless. Sound preaching without *faith* will profit very little. Preaching must be attended and received by faith and in faith.

Romans 12:3-6

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. . .

Without faith we cannot minister to others effectively. In the exercise of a spiritual gift the appropriately proportioned faith is necessary as well. The exercise of faith is behind the profitable use of spiritual gifts.

If we would walk safely, be delivered from the destruction by Satan, please God, prevail in prayer, profit from preaching, and minister with effectiveness, then we must have a continuous exercise of faith in our lives.

1 Timothy 6:11

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Timothy was to vigorously pursue all those things, including *faith*. The attributes listed in the charge to Timothy all must be had by a vigorous pursuit and practice of them.

The Christian can no more function without faith than the human can function without oxygen.

II THE MARKS OF THOSE WHO CONTINUOUSLY EXERCISE FAITH IN GOD AND HIS WORD WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A A first mark of the life of faith is clarity about the origins of the universe.

Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Faith and evolution are incompatible. A Christian man by faith understands that God is the creator of all that exists from nothing. One who holds to theistic evolution or material evolution is not a man of faith.

B A second mark of the life of faith is that God dictates their form and method of worship.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

God had made known to Adam and Eve the kind of sacrifices acceptable to Him. Cain brought the wrong kind of sacrifice while Abel brought the appropriate one. God did not honor Cain's sacrifice.

God is not pleased with man made worship. His does not tolerate self-invented worship (Hebrews 12:28-29).

- C A third mark of the life of faith is a confidence and trust in God that pleases Him.
Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

In the book of Genesis we know that Enoch walked with God and God took him before the flood. He apparently did not die, but was taken up by God. Enoch trusted in God.

- D A fourth mark of the life of faith is belief in and action according to the warnings of God.
Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Noah heard and attended to the warnings of God. Noah was prepared. Men of faith believe the threats included in the Word of God. Such warnings are not lightly taken. They act upon those threats by heeding the remedies God has provided with respect to those threats.

- E Men of faith obey God even though they have no idea how things will work out.
Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Men of faith do not demand guarantees of God prior to their compliance with God's will.

- F Men of faith believe God even in the face of apparent impossibility.
Hebrews 11:11

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Though something humanly impossible was promised, these did not waver in their final confidence that God would accomplish what He had promised.

The Scriptures promise that one day all the kings of the earth shall bow to the Lord Jesus Christ and that the whole world will acknowledge Him. How can this happen? By faith we know that God shall accomplish it though it be humanly impossible.

- G People of faith are heavenly minded, not earthly minded.

Hebrews 11:13-16

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured (essence of faith) of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

These men of faith were not wrapped up in the concept of an earthly kingdom, but longed for and waited for the heavenly one. People of faith are not worldly minded, but they have their sights set on heaven.

- H People of faith are not dismayed by apparent contradictions in the words and deeds of God.

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

God's command that Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac seem to contradict the promise of God that through Isaac would come the Seed. Abraham was not discouraged by this event. He obeyed and believed that God would provide a perfect remedy.

There are any number of things and truths in the Word of God that would seem to us contradictory.¹ Men of faith, believing God, learn and find that there is no contradiction.

- I People of faith have confidence in the fulfillment of God's covenant promises.

Hebrews 11:20-22

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

Though the promises of the covenant did not come in the lives of these patriarchs, they doubted those promises not. They believed God.

We still have promises from God which have not yet come to pass. Christ is to return a second time. We have not seen His second advent, but by faith we believe it.

- J People of faith fear God rather than men.

¹ Sovereignty of God and the will of man, the Trinity, etc....

Hebrews 11:23

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

The faithful do not fear men even to the point of death.

- K People of faith put the eternal ahead of the temporal.

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Moses sacrificed the immediate and the present for the future and the eternal. A man of faith looks into the future and puts more weight upon those things affecting the future than the present. He stores up treasure in heaven rather than upon earth (Matthew 6).

- L People of faith put more confidence in the invisible than in the visible.

Hebrews 11:27

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

2 Corinthians 4:18

. . . while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Here is a clear evidence of a persuasion towards the invisible things of God over the visible things of this world.

- M Men of faith rely upon God's methods of deliverance.

Hebrews 11:28-29

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

God's ordained method of deliverance (blood on the door posts) seemed to contradict conventional wisdom altogether (an army for defense and protection), but nevertheless, by God's hand and method the people were delivered without the conventional. They walked between two walls of water!

2 Corinthians 10:4

For the weapons of our warfare =are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. . .

- N People of faith use God's methods to do God's work.

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

Faith enables us to do things God's way regardless of how unreasonable it might seem to us.

1 Corinthians 1:21

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Preaching is demeaned by many in our day and time as an outdated method of proclaiming Christ. Men long to replace preaching with drama and entertainment, but God's method is preaching and He has not changed it nor given to us liberty to change it for ourselves.

- O Men of faith identify with the people of God rather than with the wicked.

Hebrews 11:31

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Hebrews chapter eleven gives us examples of men and women of faith as examples to us.

III THE MEANS OF DEVELOPING THE CONTINUOUS EXERCISE OF FAITH

How do we become and pursue the kind of faith reviewed here?

- A By prayer. First we must pray to God for it.

Luke 17:5

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

That petition by the disciples was a legitimate prayer.

Mark 9:24

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

We have another example here of petitioning the Lord for the faith needed to meet the situation.

Hebrews 12:2

. . . looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus is the place to go for faith. Faith was His initial gift to us and it will be His ongoing supply to us.

- B Immerse yourself in the Scriptures.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The Lord uses the Word of God as a means to faith and regeneration. Reflecting upon the works of God in the past, even in our own past, should stimulate our faith.

Matthew 16:6-12

Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? -- but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus exhorts the disciples to remember His recent past works.

Luke 12:28

"If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?"

John 20:30-31

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

C Imitate the attitudes and behaviors of other men of faith.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

It is proper to imitate the *faith* of your elders.

Hebrews 6:12

. . . that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The saints who have gone before us are worthy of imitation with respect to their faith and its outworking. In this place the reference is to Abraham.

James 5:10

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

The prophets are commended to us as examples to follow.

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Our fellow faithful brethren may serve as examples to follow.

May we please God well by walking in faith before him in every part of our lives.