

A Genuine Minister with the Heart of a Shepherd? Or Fudging it?

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“If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.

But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.

He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.” (Eccl 5:8-10)

Introductory Comments

The Bible talks about shepherds (authentic ministers) as well as the false: wolves, hirelings, thieves, strangers (ie non-authentic ministers) (John 10).

Shepherds have a true heart for – and love for – God’s sheep. No amount of training can turn someone into a shepherd. A wolf cannot change to become one.

Wolves are the worst of the various non-authentic ministers Christ warns about as they scatter the flock by picking off the brethren one at a time or in a wild frenzy, spilling the blood of the saints.

How do wolves etc deceive the flock into thinking that they are authentic? Those that have been around long enough know the answer, but it needs to be written down and documented. So, here we go.

First of all, how do their sermons come across? Do they build one up and expand our knowledge of God’s Word and his doctrines? Or are they repeats and shallow? Do they just download sermons from a website and read it out in lieu of their own sermon preparation?

Are they lazy and incompetent, constantly taking holidays, abandoning his duties?

For instance, despising the brethren through silly comments constantly (Luke 18:9) does not build up. It is simultaneously childish and abusive. Even protestant ministers try and do their best and abide by their policies and watch their behaviours.

Also, it has been pointed out since old Worldwide Church of God days that there is a problem with abuse and the consequent results. It used to be mentioned that the abuses were probably worse in

the end-times than any other period given the prophetic parable in Matthew 24:44-51 which is set in an end-time context.

“But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to **beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards**, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 24:48-51)

Ezekiel prophesies similarly of ancient political and religious leaders as a type of those of the last days referring to physical Israel’s scattering and that of the Church of God, given prophetic duality:

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?
You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.
The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, **and with force and harshness you have ruled them.**
So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered.” (Ezek 34:2-5)

If you see this sort of behaviour in the local congregation, then beware that a wolf in sheep’s clothing is amongst you. They undertake a job doing the bare minimum with their heart and effort not in it. They are bullies, harassing people who are fruitful and beneficial for the congregation.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?” (Matt 7:15-16. Cp John 10:12; Luke 10:3; Matt 10:16 – some wolves are outside the Church too)

“Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.
And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD has not spoken.” (Ezek 22:27-28)

“I know that after my **departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.**” (Acts 20:29-30)

So, let’s find out how they (whether they be wolves or hirelings etc) ‘fudge it’ having learned how to do so from their friend or predecessor – how they learned the ‘tricks of the trade’. If the reader is not familiar with that term, it is simply an expression which in effect states that someone is pretending to be something they are not. That they are non-authentic and are just cobbling together

whatever it is they are doing, their job, statements etc. That they just don't have the capacity or concrete knowledge and are just fakes.

How like the wolves, hirelings and others – they pretend to be something they are not and some can see that they are not authentic but drawing a salary for something they are incapable of and cannot accomplish. In other words they have learned to play the part 'by fudging it' and thereby deceiving many.

They never have had and never will have the heart of a shepherd!

How to 'fudge it' and its consequences - in a few easy lessons

Here are some thoughts on how to identify a non-authentic minister and the tactics they employ to gain respect, attention and thus to fudge his role – to palm himself off as a minister and thus draw a salary for doing little, protecting their job, rather than the flock.

Rebellious

1. makes up rules and policies different to the official policies and values
2. doesn't want checks 'n balances or neutral judiciaries so that they can get away with anything. Because they claim that they inspired they don't need any of this apparently – what they really mean is they don't want to follow Church policies, values, doctrines and thus governance and thereby just ignores them
3. doesn't want to operate in the light (eg policies, structure charts, work groups) – they don't want you to know where everything fits and how it all works. Keep members in the dark so that we are ignorant of what goes on and the modus operandi
4. they push out those that don't agree with points of doctrine yet they do not agree with many doctrines, but tells lies to their superiors saying that they do believe them
5. refuses to teach many doctrines of the Church
6. when they feel they are under pressure from their superiors to 'shape up' they revert to the same old-same old trick – hide behind their medical issues so that the pressure is taken off
7. heaps up teachers to themselves as they have "itchy ears" for false administrative ideas and polices (II Tim 4:3). Their teachers are not qualified as teachers, are not authorised to lead or mentor other ministers or advise contrary to Church policies
8. does not want supervision so that they can do whatever they want 'just because they can'

Leadership and abilities

1. As they have very little leadership qualities, they resort to bullying and snappiness to intimidate people and to try and get them to fear him – thus gaining a false 'respect'. Getting so carried away with the abuse they actually become breathless as they attack members. Lack of shepherd-like leadership skills is evident – they are not followed by the majority of members. They appear to enjoy throwing their weight around
2. has no ability at counselling. Makes quick and snappy decisions as they have no interest or capacity in this skill. They resort to 'God is inspiring me to make the [counselling] decision'
3. sermon contents are shallow, limited and contain little breadth (this is a sure give-away). Many Fundamental doctrines are not covered as they do not agree with them (and also do not have the knowledge and ability to preach on them or explain them) and especially any doctrine that takes understanding, a bit of thought and work (eg prophecy, typology, difficult doctrinal issues). This shows their lack of inspiration, capacity and agreement with the Church

4. have shallow understanding of Scripture as demonstrated by their sermons, refusal to hold Bible studies, cannot explain doctrines etc. Thus they state in sermons not to study the Bible in detail and to look into it deeply. Contrary to Church teaching
5. no prophecy sermons – they just cannot understand or explain the details. Or do not agree with the Church's prophetic teachings
6. present sermons in a way that people will not notice they are ultra-shallow, repeats and the range of topics is very narrow; or taken from the internet. They use emotions, crack silly jokes and waves their arms around

Behaviours

1. refuses to take responsibility for their actions/decisions, blaming others if things don't work out
2. when they are found out contradicting themselves, telling fibs and such like – they like stating "I have been misunderstood". The only thing is that far too many 'misunderstand' him
3. keep members in the dark about decisions to cause nervousness – this is a control mechanism. Make decisions behind the member's back without them even knowing about them. Sometimes it is because the "finger-prints" of a vindictive minister is all over the decision has such a one operates behind the scenes, manipulating outcomes
4. when 'found out' about fibs and issues, constantly say that "it is a misunderstanding" (even though there are many witnesses). That is why they will normally not put anything in writing
5. create issues out of thin air to aggravate and to cause division – this is the control method
6. have favourites and reward them with 'opportunities to serve' and information. In return they turn these members into informants and spies
7. pretend to be super confident and be completely uncompromising – making people crawl and appeal to him. This elevates the self and feelings of self-importance
8. allow for a 'revolving door' of members and attendees because the fear is that if people stay for too long, they can forge power groups that they imagine might challenge them. This way one maintains an unnatural order. Is this paranoia? It also means no growth and one cannot develop friendships and relationships
9. whisper or spread gossip between members to keep them divided among themselves
10. little hospitality is shown to members or visitors as that takes a bit of Christian character and effort
11. refuses to be reasonable and 'give and take' – but digs their heels in like a child and refuses to change or be nice. Prefers members to leave as a result
12. dress and talk in entertaining way that looks good and official – as a cover for their intent
13. has clear patterns of behaviour that are predictive. Some are so extreme and weird, to be like aspergers symptoms according to observers

Abusive

1. constantly make statements such as they sit on Moses Seat, have a double portion of the spirit, are inspired, are like priests etc to try and imprint into the listener that they are authentic
2. they have 'attention addiction' as one member put it and have to have people run up to them and surround them like rock stars. They get upset and jealous of anyone who is popular and who organises events, seminars, socials etc
3. repeatedly tell members they must trust them (Ps 146:3 says otherwise). Why? Because that way some will follow blindly any wrongful decision made. To them God inspires all their sermons and inconsistent decisions and thus they can get away with doing anything they

want. No due process means they can make snap decisions without investigation, fairness, following policy etc because they are inspired. If you believe them, you will “just accept” which is often-times stated (ie “you must just accept”)

4. causes stress rather than relieves stress, effectively wearing out the saints
5. makes up his own, stricter policies than authorised by the Church’s leadership and is vindictive against anyone who abides by the Church’s policies and not theirs
6. has different rules for different members (has favouritism). That is why they want you to trust them in anything they decide upon
7. if replaced or moves on, whispers in the ears of their successor about people they do not like, continuing the persecution

Laziness

1. laziness – does the minimum possible, including sermon preparation, seldom visiting, no Bible studies or hospitality etc. Always some excuse
2. to gain support they constantly go on about their health issues and hide behind it, so people will feel sorry for them
3. they take excessive leave due to their laziness

Jealousy

1. will not have a speaker’s club or work groups (to organise socials, good works or outreach) because they don’t want anything much to be organised in a structured way even though it would produce results and benefit the church. They feel threatened by such work groups and in any event, MAY mean a little more work for them. Due to laziness, inability and especially jealousy, will not train people for various roles or even allow a speaker’s club, or social work group, or good works work group or outreach work group. It becomes a do nothing and fruitless church that just pays his salary for doing next to nothing
2. gossips about or slanders members to other ministers to ‘set them up’ to find a way to push them out of the Church.
3. are jealous of others’ success and possess the spirit of competition and as such, will undermine these members
4. often anyone who understands and believes the doctrines are pushed to one side because the minister himself does not believe them and refuses to preach them

Concluding Remarks

So, one can ‘fudge it’; one can ‘learn the ropes’ from friends without ever having the heart of a shepherd. One can have allies backing them up and covering for them. One can use terms such as “I am a minister of Jesus Christ” and such like trying to convince others of their status, but all that is just a cover for their lack of authenticity.

In other words, one has learned the art of deception, which is the beginnings of apostasy. It is being deceitful and cunning like a wolf, with their fangs dripping in the blood of the saints they have ripped to pieces.

Deception and deceit is basically lying to all and sundry and getting away with it!

Deep down they may know that they are not genuine but refuse to do the honourable thing. Instead they prefer the easy option of continuing their problems, not realising the offence they are causing is

to God and Jesus Christ, let alone man. They should be terrified of the future judgment. Yet their self-will and belligerence has blinded them to their awful fate.

But God's people should be able to very quickly tell whether someone should be followed because they can discern if such a one has or has not a shepherd's voice (John 10:4-5). They then have a duty of care for the congregation.

If an elder does not have the voice of a shepherd, you know such a one is a wolf or hireling etc!

Due to the behaviours of such a one, the members begin to detest him and wish they never had him around (much like Christ's distaste for the Pharisees - Matt. 23:13, 23-28). This is another proof a heartless wolf is in their midst.

Addendum: Shepherds and Sheep

Following comments are submitted by a member:

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-NIV

Note shepherd has the trust of the sheep

Know NT:1097 *ginosko*

to learn to know a person through direct personal experience, implying a continuity of relationship - 'to know, to become acquainted with, to be familiar with.'

Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. *Louw and Nida*

Notice this relationship is both ways. It involves direct personal experience – this is how the shepherd knows each sheep by name. The sheep know and trust the true shepherd. To know someone means you get inside their head, you know how they think. This can only be done by being with them. It takes time.

In my experience ministers never knew me. They took no interest in me. I did not have relationship with them. Many others I have spoken to in the church feel the same. In this aspect Protestant and Catholic priests in the old days did this well. They were part of the community. If you have ever seen the movie Ryan's daughter, the local priest lived in the community and knew his flock.

Appendix: Proverbs 29:2 explained by other Scriptures

“When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.” (Prov 29:2)

First of all this is supposed to happen:

“If you see in a province the oppression of the poor [read Church members] and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for **the high official** [read pastor] is watched by **a higher** [read National Council], and there are **yet higher ones** over them [read Council of Elders].

But this is gain for a land in every way: a king [read a true pastor] committed to cultivated fields [read

happy and growing church].” (Eccl 5:8-9)

Now read:

“He who is often reprov’d, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing. [like the Pharaoh]

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.” (Prov 29:1-2)

This ties in with:

“When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, people hide themselves.” (Prov 28:12)

“When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.” (Prov 11:10)

“When the wicked rise, people hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase.” (Prov 28:28)

“If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place.” (Eccl 10:4-6)

Let this principle abound:

“May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, **and crush the oppressor!**

May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!

In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!” (Ps 72:2-7. Cf Is 32:1-2; Jer 23:5-6)