

The Contention between Jesus and the Pharisees

At the bottom of this conflict in chapters 9 and 10 of John is the matter of authority and the calling of Jesus against the presumptions of the Pharisees. It is worthwhile to examine what Jesus taught here about the qualities and marks of a “good pastor,” what is Jesus, and also what should be all ministers that follow Jesus in the ministry, and this pattern that they will follow in order to be biblical in their spiritual leadership over the people of God.

His Entry is Legitimate

Jesus proposed that there is much importance in the form that the good pastor enters among the flock of God, which has to do with his calling and how he takes upon himself his authority. He is not a fence jumper, but enters formally and officially through the only door (the principal door). This speaks about calling directly from God, and the spiritual power that also comes directly from God. Equally this focuses on Jesus as the door of salvation. Jesus described these Pharisees as having the desire for enrichment or taking economic liberties because of their office of oversight of the sheep. In contrast, Jesus presented himself in the attitude of extreme personal sacrifice. Jesus had the motive of doing other good, of being a great and intense blessing to the people of God through his service to them, and not “taking advantage of his work among them”. Moreover, Jesus focused in doing the will of God as his principle overriding focus, and the upstart Pharisees focus on imposing their will against God’s will. Surely they declared their will as the same as God’s will, even bothering everybody with “the commandments of God”, but in reality they did not teach the true will of God, much less did they even understand that will. To impose another will against that will of the Father is to impose another (false) religion, upon the people, and to err into “Christianized” paganism. Jesus had devotion and commitment to this will of

God until the very end. In contradiction to this attitude of denying yourself as Jesus showed us and commanded us to imitate (**Matt 16:24** *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*). Jesus put the wellbeing of his charge before his own wellbeing as any good pastor knows he has to do.

His Success was of God

Today there is much confusion about what is success in the ministry. There are men who produce “success” in the ministry using Hollywood promotional methods, which focus on money, fame, and gathering large crowds. But this is not the success that the good pastor has. His success depends on the gatekeeper that allows him to enter. Who is this gatekeeper? Even though it isn’t clearly stated, this probably refers to the Holy Spirit who opens the hearts of the people to change them. You can identify the good pastor by his ministry with people who are truly saved and transformed under his immediate ministry.

The very important question should arise, How can a pastor to build a “flock of sheep” for God if he doesn’t witness. There are pastors today who are so famous that they refuse to go into the street to witness. They are not good pastors. Likewise there are pastors who use Hollywood tactics of carnal and worldly promotion to just get a quick sinner’s prayer, and count of the head for their own glorying. It is amazing how these pastors boast of the thousands of decisions that they lead to Christ every year, but those that follow Christ to baptism is the tenth part of them, and if any of them are in a church faithfully serving in a month or year, it is a miracle. If they didn’t use tricks of bribery to get these to come, their churches would be totally empty.

The good pastor is marked by his success in bringing people to Christ, and that this people are founded and faithful in their devotion, service, and participation of the ministry (they stay in the church). **Col 4:3** *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

You also recognize the good pastor by his total lack of ability to do all this in his own power, and he constantly depends on God’s power, constantly mentioning this and actively seeking it. The good pastor is somebody who is humble in himself, and understands that prayer and the will of God are what achieve spiritual victory (**2Cor 2:12; 1Cor 16:9; Rev 3:8**), not his own strength and talent.

The Sheep Follow Him.

John 10:4-5 says that the sheep follow him because they “know his voice”, and reject and flee from the stranger that they “don’t know. This refers to an element within the good pastor that the sheep identify as being “a good pastor”. The sheep are saved from sin by the work of Jesus Christ, and they recognize this Spirit of Christ working within a person when they see it.

Matt 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

The sheep quickly discern this anomaly of character between a Spirit-filled man and a pastor who is arrogant, boasting, haughty, who steps on others to get where he wants to be. This is not how Christ was, and all true Christians reject and flee from this type of pastor. The good pastor is somebody who doesn’t come to take advantage of the sheep (even though he lives among them), but come to protect, bless, and provide for them. The good pastor resolves all their needs and problems, and takes pleasure in his service to them. This is “his” work, and he is totally happy doing this.

Ezek 34:2 *Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe [be] to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.*

Wicked pastors are those who think nothing wrong with their devastation of the flock and their

resources, because they do not serve the flock of God, but their own bellies. The good pastor does not cause needless problems in the flock, but he alleviates any problems they may have. This builds confidence in him, and they follow the good pastor because they have seen his holy life, his ministry of sacrifice, and his humble service for them, being the sacrifice himself instead of sacrificing the sheep. He is reserved and restricted in his use of the sheep's resources for his own needs. The good pastor lives the same level of life as his sheep, and even so, is happy.

His Leadership is by Personal Example

The good pastor gives them life (**Jn 10:9**), and he takes them out "to find pastures." The good pastor always the example for the sheep to follow. (**1Pet 5:3** *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*). In other words, the leadership style of a good pastor is very distinct. While the governors of the world are cruel, forcing others to do their bidding and will (**Mt 20:25-26; Mark 10:42-45**), the good pastor does not impose his own will, but demonstrates the superior nature of God's will in his own life. Although the disciples fought over who would take control after Jesus' departure (**Luke 22:24-27**), Jesus rebuked them all for lacking understanding.

Matt 23:8 *But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

In other words, God wants the good pastor to be one who lives the exemplar life of Christ among the sheep. The brethren follow him not from an spiritual obligation to obey God as much as because he is successful in live Christ's example.

2Cor 1:24 *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.*

The Thief and Robber

In John 10:8, Jesus called the false ministers thieves and robbers (fence jumpers). A "thief" is somebody that subtly uses deceit to take what does not belong to him, and a "robber" is somebody that takes by violence (breaks in and takes by force), sometimes even in plain sight of others (like a bank robber). There are wicked ministers like this, and this criticism against them is valid, but there is another application here that these wicked ministers do not work through the power of God's Spirit, rather through their own astuteness, trickery, and agility in manipulating people. Jesus is the door, the way, and nobody comes to the Father except by Jesus' way (**Jn 14:6**). These false ones do not depend on God to change people's hearts, because they have given up on that, and have no faith in that, so they have to resort to brutality, cruel twisting with pressure and violence to get what they want. This goes hand in hand with their imposing their own wills on the flock, and they are clueless about God's will. The paid helper is equally off base. They see the secret of their success in their own outstanding personality, their strong character, their talents and insight, and the eloquence and astuteness of their pulpit manner. God is left out of all this.

In conclusion, a good pastor is known for his attitude, spirit, and manner of working. He is the example of Christ, so others follow him to Christ. The sheep copy what the good pastor has as established spiritual habits. Jesus said in Mt 7:15-20 that they will appear to be something, but the product (fruit) of their life and ministry shows what evil they really are. Paul echoes this "an example for you to follow" in **2Th 3:9** and in **1Cor 11:1**. Jesus repeats this in **Jn 13:15** *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.* It is sad to see so many Christians accept ministers who just are not anything like Christ but are wicked. When abuse comes from these wicked men, they should not be surprised.

Recognizing a Good Pastor

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I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. John 10:11

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. John 10:14

In John 9, Jesus healed a blind man, and after healing him, the Pharisees got mad at him, because they didn't want anybody to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Obviously the power and authority was different from what the Pharisees sought and used on the people, and because of this, they were bitter and angry against Jesus's leadership style and towards his attitudes of service.