

The Marks of an Unsaved Minister

It is interesting that that in defense of this minister before God (**Mt 7:21-24**) that God judged he wasn't even saved. He defended himself before God in three proposed evidences of his "*good minister status*": (1) his ability to prophesy, (2) his power over powers of evil, and (3) his work of miracles and great events. Many in our day want to validate their ministries in similar fashion. They insist that are true men of God, exalted ministers of Highest God, because they of their distinct insight into the mind of God, because their power over demons and evil powers, and most certainly because they impress with what they have done for God, miracles, great works, etc. It is important to note that Jesus in no way tried to contradict what they presented. Perhaps their bragging had some validation in that something notable was on some level accomplished. But Jesus' hard position is that even with signs of great spiritual power; they had nothing to do with God and His Kingdom. Read Mat 7:21 with great care. The **ONLY MARK** of a faithful minister is to be always "stuck" on the will of God. "Greatness," validity, and identification with God is only found in strict **obedience to God's will**.

Useless Ministers

Matt 24:48 *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite [his] fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* In this passage that deals with various parables on service and the child of God, it is very instructive that the evil "servant of God" goes to hell in the end. So we must open the possibility that many supposed ministers of God, preachers, evangelists, or even pastors that exercise official positions in the church, just are not even saved. The key factor that indicates their salvation is simply their disposition and attitude towards the will of God.

The deceiving hypocrite is he who follows his own will in place of exalting the will of God in his life (and ministry) and submitting to God. These people always pretend to have "biblical ministries", and they are experts in rhetoric because "they are biblical" or in giving reasons why they are truly "ministers of God", but if you listen closely, you will see how lightly they respect the Word of God, or how astutely they twist God's Word to suit their desires, aspirations, and ambitions. They "use" the Word of God for their own purposes and are not under its authority. True ministers that please God are people who always rely on the authority of Scripture as their authority, but also as THEIR GUIDE, **Jer 3:15** *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

Those that cause Division and Desolation

Jer 23:1 *Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.* One of the principle jobs of the pastor is to gather sheep. This is in one of two forms, both of which fully apply: (1) the evangelization of the unsaved bringing them into the fold (the local church), (2) To visit and encourage members of their church that have stopped coming, to return and actively participate in the church once again. The identifying mark of a fraudulent pastor is that he divides the church by his brutal actions, his cruel attitude, and in general by his style of leadership (way of doing things) which works against gathering and unity. Unity comes because all think alike, and act with the same spirit, carrying the same doctrine. **This is not by forceful imposition by authority figures, but by mutual submission to God's authority.**

The good pastor just explains the actual text of the Bible, but he also investigates, defines, and insists on the Scriptures ruling over everything the church is and does. The wicked pastor imposes his own will without respect to nor support of Scripture, except some twisted, unclear declaration. The will of God is grossly abused, mistreated and misrepresented. Jeremiah (**Jer**

25:34) refers to their days of "slaughter", which is to die and not live. The sheep ought to have a spiritual life within them, and the good pastor will promote this. The bad pastor destroys and kills this spiritual life among his sheep. He undermines, disrupts, and cuts off this spiritual relationship between believer and God (spiritual death). He takes the place of God in their lives.

Leadership by Force and Imposition

Jer 23:2 *Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; **Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them:** behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. 4 *And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and **they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking.** saith the LORD.* The style of ministry of a wicked, ungodly pastor is very particular. He scares people with sharp, loud (notorious) actions with lack courtesy and love towards them. He imposes on the brethren, and his objective isn't to correct sin, but to impose and ingrain his own authority over the people of God. The idea in verse 4 is that (1) they use **fear** – which is the anticipation of some bad interaction with the pastor. (2) They cause the sheep to be **dismayed**, which has the idea of submission by means of dragging or violent force, fear, or confusion. He is marked by his leadership style of cruelty, unthinking actions, and uncaring attitude towards his sheep, anything as long as they obey him. (3) **Be lacking** – This word is the opposite of pastoral visitation, where the pastor inspects and then handles whatever need they might have. This is totally or importantly lacking.*

Errors and the Erring

Jer 50:6 *My people hath been lost sheep: **their shepherds have caused them to go astray,** they have turned them away [on] the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.* There is a specific way in which we sheep should walk, and this is the way of God which Jesus showed us. It is to be spiritual, have faith, and depend on God, and is to complete the

work of God on earth. A false pastor is somebody who guides the sheep (he is a pastor), but not in the way of God, and this results in a road that isn't in the will of God. This kind of pastor doesn't bring the unsaved into a saving relationship "with the Master" (this pastor isn't saved himself), but rather it is a gathering of simple people to obey his rule and authority stolen from God. This wicked pastor isn't laboring in intercession and prayer for others, nor does he have compassion and love for those in error, sin, or the unsaved. He may be very astute (usually is) but his presentations, teachings, sermons don't show great insight and understanding into Scripture, rather they are tools to build his empire. A true man of God is concerned that others submit to God's will, and rebuke of sin and repentance from sin are regular objectives of their ministry. The false prophet is greatly disgusted over all this, and he will make false repentance over meaningless issues, and he regularly pleases himself with indulgence into sin of some kind. But his prime objective is that everybody follows his will, nobody can think or discern God's will except the pastor. Rather than understanding Scripture for themselves, the wicked pastor confuses the issues that most press against his own personal sins, distracting, detracting from the importance of him repenting of his own sin. He substitutes tradition ("we have always done it this way"), authority of his office ("I am pastor and I call the shots here"), or he appeals to popularity. A good pastor preaches sermons to himself first, and having repented himself first, makes it a great sermon for all. You can mark the bad pastor by his drive to change the traditional, New Testament presentation of what "church is" to a modern version that is more accommodating to our tastes. Reverence, worship, and exposition of God's actual words are replaced with an entertainment type attitude and environment, where "judging and rebuking sin" is not seen nor present.

John 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? **29** Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God,

that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. The work of God focuses in the person of Jesus Christ, our Savior, but also in the spiritual image of Christ. We should imitate Christ. Paul presents us this example (**Eph 5:1**).

1Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. **Phil 3:17** Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. **Heb 13:7** Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. **Ezek 37:24** And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

"Why" God gives good shepherds "according to the heart of God" (Jer 3:15) to the sheep is so that they can direct the sheep INTO God's way, God's will, obeying God. Churches today get involved in all kinds of foolishness except the actual work of God as presented in Scripture, evangelism in the street, prayerful intercession, exposition of Scriptures... A bad pastor will "tend away from these things," not following Christ's example.

Feeding themselves

Ezek 34:8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because [there was] no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Wicked pastors tend to feed themselves, not entering into personal sacrifice, personal risk or adversity, but they seek the "easy life". **Ezek 34:2** Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel...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.

They want others to give them a good economic life, but they don't do the real work of God the right way. Spiritual fruit and abandonment of sin are not the natural products of their ministry or life.

The Marks of a Bad Minister

How to recognize him

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Matt 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. **21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. **22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. **24** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

At times, it is difficult to identify who is a true servant of God and who is not. God has not left us without help in the matter though.