



When Satan Hijacks the Pulpit

On September 11th 2001, one of the most destructive events took place on American soil. The whole country watched as airplanes flew into the World Trade Center Towers in New York City. After hours of disbelief, awe, confusion and speculation, it was announced that Islamic terrorists had hijacked these commercial airlines, brought down WTC Towers 1 and 2, and had taken themselves, along with all who were onboard, into eternity in the process. The terrorists were able to commandeer the cockpit and turn the entire crew and passengers in a direction of their own plan of destruction.

It was later reported that another airplane was still in the air in Pennsylvania. Its supposed destination was either the White House or Capital Building in Washington DC. However, the plans of these wicked men were thwarted by the brave passengers who decided to take back over the airplane from the hijackers. These events brought so much anguish to an entire country and no doubt many others

around the world. But when we look back on these events, we can't help but see parallels happening to the body of Christ.

hi-jack :

to unlawfully seize (an aircraft, ship, or vehicle) in transit and force it to go to a different destination or use it for one's own purposes.

It is with sadness and urgency that I share this message. I take no pride in declaring the failure of churches or its leaders. There's no malice in my heart concerning spiritual leadership who've succumb to these things I'm about to share. I do not wish this to be perceived as arrogant, prideful, or and impossibility for me to fall into.

Furthermore, I totally understand the possibility that these words may be received with disdain or reluctance. I only humbly ask that we consider the following and ask the Lord to examine our hearts, the intents thereof, and the motivations in which we minister to God's precious fold in Jesus Christ. Have you considered that, as the cockpit of an airplane is taken over by a hijacker, the passengers, some aware but unbeknownst to others, sit in their seats riding to their own destruction?

As men of God, we are not only responsible to preach the gospel, but also to watch. The writer of Hebrews declares this of God's true shepherds:

Hebrews 13:17

*...for they **watch for your souls, as they that must give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you...*

Peter, another preacher to the preachers, writes a sobering message to the elders in this way;

1 Peter 5:1-4:

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and

*a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, **taking the oversight thereof**, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

There's a tragedy taking place in our churches in America. It's tragic because it's causing so much spiritual destruction with God's people. Not only are the sheep becoming scattered, but those lost and undone without Christ can't get into the fold. Each week, people come to the house of God, some born again, others lost, but all needing to get in touch with and be touched by God. It all has to do with the leadership. Although very few want to admit it or even talk about it, the devil has not only stormed our churches, but he has been able to work his way into them. Not just in the congregations, but he's managed to commandeer the pulpits. It would be preposterous to even declare were it not so devastatingly obvious.

The evidence speaks for itself. Most of this is evident in the doctrines that are expounded upon that are completely unscriptural. Other examples may not be as clearly discerned. Even if a preacher believes and preaches biblical doctrine, he is still susceptible to being led astray and become an instrument Satan can use. With all the foolishness in churches today, there must be a development of spiritual growth in the body of Christ to recognize error when it takes place. What we need in our congregations today more than anything is discernment.

When we take a deep dive into the Christian life, we have to be completely honest with ourselves. There's not a person alive who believes after they're born again that they will never fail again or even think that Satan cannot use them. It's evidenced in our marriage relationships when the husband spouts off harmful words they will shortly afterward regret. It's also evidenced in the acts of sin people commit that come through temptation. None of us are immune to failing, although we strive, and should, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

When it comes to preachers and church leadership, we are no different. Although preachers truly called of God desire to do His will, we cannot ignore the possibility that we are capable of the same things. As a matter of fact, we should be more cautious of this truth that since we are leading people spiritually, we are more of a target to the hordes of hell than anyone else. If we understand this truth, should we not continually be watchful on how the devil could get a foot-hold in our life and cause us to have the opposite effect on people as what God wants us to?

Preachers beware! I've said it repeatedly, if Satan can get an avenue in the house of God, the last place he should ever have access to would be the pulpit. Sadly it has become the most vulnerable. Can Satan use a man of God? There's no question about it. Not only is he able to use anyone, sadly he uses preachers more than anyone. Can preachers create an open door for the devil to use them? A few men of God in the Bible come to mind; Balaam and Peter. If you're a preacher, pastor, bible teacher, or in any other part of ministry leadership, then you must be aware of the possibility and arm yourself against it. One of my most prized possessions is my wife. I have asked her time and time again, "Please confront me if at any time you sense pride or anger or anything else pulling me away when I'm preaching." I must say she has been faithful to do just that. If you're married, then you and your wife are one flesh. If one flesh, then you are mirrors for each other. If mirrors, then you will be confronted with areas of your life that you may not like to hear; however truthful it may be.

External Influences

Not all attacks on the pulpit are on the inside of the pastor. Some of the devil's methods are from outside influences. When I say "outside" influences, I don't mean from outside the church, but from outside the heart of the pastor. Outside Influences such as members suggesting the church's involvement in a particular ministry, a direction the church should be going in. While we understand that ministries are important and needful, the question should be; *is that particular ministry something God wants us to join with?* Jail ministries, nursing home ministries, etc. are all wonderful ministries, but what if

those ministries are not God's will for your church? If not, then you'll be exhausting yourself in a place God never intended for your church. Not only that, but if His will is not with that particular ministry, then His anointing will not be on it and the church will exhaust themselves and ultimately burn out. Another facet to this truth is, if your church is involved in something God never intended, then you won't be available to the ministry God does want you to be a part of.

If a pastor or preacher is called of God and is desiring to be led of the Holy Spirit, then God has ordained that the pastor be the leadership for the direction of that particular church. God will deal with him on what direction the church should go. Often times, the pastor is influenced into taking a church in the directions because he doesn't want to cause unrest with his congregation. The question should be, is this the direction God wants us to go? All that being said, all church leaders are capable of being out of fellowship with Christ and thus not being able to hear what the spirit is saying. That's a different point which we will discuss later.

All too often Satan manipulates the pastor or preacher *by proxy*, meaning, he turns the direction of a church, not from within the pastor's heart, but by using a member or another person. Contrary to what many people may not understand, anything that seeks to steer the direction of the church away from the will of God, whether it be individually or a corporate church body, it is demonic at the root. I don't mean any of this in a malicious way either. Most Christian people have no desire to be a vessel for the devil, but there are times when it has happened. Satan masks himself by seeking to use an unsuspecting church member who may not understand what's taking place. Examples of this type of Satanic outside influence are;

Spirit of Jezebel –This is a type of spirit that influences the leader from the outside, i.e., a different person than the pastor. This is a hidden controlling spirit. It is content working behind the scenes to steer the direction of the kingdom contrary to the will of God. This spirit has to have a timid Ahab in order to be effective.

Spirit of Korah –This is a pushy overpowering mutiny spirit. It defies God’s anointed leader. It attempts to pull the body from God’s direction. It seeks to divide the body. It does not care for God’s direction even though it plainly sees God is moving! It is rooted in envy and jealousy. Numbers 16:1-40, Jude 1:11.

Spirit of Divination –This is a religious spirit. It is also a distracting spirit. This is the spirit that grieved Paul in Acts 16:16. This spirit can affect the church but was possessed by someone unsaved. A thorough examination of Acts 16 reveals no clearly evident issues with this spirit. The woman said nothing wrong. Everything she said was correct. “But Paul being grieved...” This spirit effects many churches today. There’s no signs of it. It says nothing wrong, but it hinders men of God. If this spirit is present, it’s more than likely attached to someone who everyone perceives to be saved. The only obvious sign in Acts 16 was the grieving of the Holy Spirit inside a man filled with the Spirit. The only way this spirit can be dealt with is to be cast out.

Paul speaks a tragic demise for the last days to a young preacher Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Let us not forget, we’re wrestling principalities!

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

While we grovel over ourselves on how well we preached our last message, the gates of hell are scheming to pull down the work that Jesus is building in our communities. I absolutely refuse to allow the enemy to ride me! Like my pastor Bro. Rick Rigsby used to say, “*The devil’s not riding this preacher! I’m not putting a saddle on my back*”

for him to ride on. If he's gonna hinder me, he's gonna have to walk behind me! I'm pressing on for God! This scripture teaches a few things in particular. For one, it declares that spirits are continually at work to pull people away from the faith. Secondly, it declares that people will give heed to them. This is why a preacher or pastor must be a man filled with God, led of God, seeking the will of God, have a smell for wolves, and not moved by anything but the Spirit of God.

Internal Influences

Not only will Satan hijack the pastor from outside influences, but from within his own heart. The preacher can be effectually driven away from the will of God from a spirit moving him without aid from an outside member or person, but also through a wounded heart. Let's look at the first influence.

Balaam was mightily used of God in the beginning. However, he opened the door to Satan by his love for riches. Is there any wonder why Paul taught Timothy that a bishop must not be greedy of filthy lucre?

Peter was also used mightily of God. Out of all the first disciples to open their mouth and declare that Jesus was the Christ, it was Peter. Matthew 16:16. But oh how sudden things can change. Immediately following this wonderful proclamation by Peter, Jesus reveals the things which must shortly come to pass by His betrayal, scourging, and death on the cross. Peter immediately following, is used by Satan to withstand Jesus. We all remember then how Jesus turned to and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan! Jesus' next instructions to the disciples was this;

Matthew 16:21-23.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Previously, I shared some demonic influences that effect the leaders, but those were external. Now let's look at some influences that effect the preacher due to issues in his own life. None of these are meant to convey that a preacher can be possessed by these, but can be

externally controlled by them due to weaknesses in the heart of the man of God.

Spirit of Saul –This is a spirit that is on the throne and is removing the people from the Lord's intended direction. The spirit of Saul comes by way of half-hearted men who are in a position of spiritual leadership, but are not led of God. Many churches today function under a democratic form of government much like our country operates. The pastor is voted into the church as the leader by popular vote as king Saul. The congregation places the man in the pulpit. While I don't totally disagree with this, I do see an avenue of error in it. You may say, it must be this way so that a higher governing body cannot dictate to a local assembly the man they wish to send to them. I totally see that as well. But what if the congregation is blinded by the man and not able to sense the will of God? The spirit of Saul is alive and well in churches today. This is a "people's choice" who is not completely sold out to God. God cannot approve his ministry because it is of the flesh and not of the Spirit. God will not confirm this kind of preaching with His Holy Spirit. This is a "compromised servant" type of spirit. It is possible for a local assembly to be blinded to a point where the church falls headlong into a man who seems to be the right fit for the church. They like his preaching approach. They like his personality; his attitude; his vision! They have fallen in love with his family! He is the peoples choice, but tragically he is NOT God's choice!

Spirit of Balaam –This is a man that is clothed in a priest's robe as a spiritual leader. Due to a weakness of financial gain, this type of man will not remain committed. He could be greedy of filthy lucre. This spirit made its way into the early church in Jerusalem. II Peter 2:15 & Jude 1:11

I'm going to share with you a few things the Lord has dealt with my heart about through my life as a preacher, not only lessons God I've had to learn from my own error, but that of others as well. The following is a list of things that, if you allow them to abide in you, they will not only cause the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be quenched, but

will become an open door for Satan to manipulate and control you; thus, devastating your ministry and calling.

- **Self-Will**
- **Pride**
- **Unforgiveness**
- **Root of Bitterness**
- **Anger**

SelfWilled – The Motivation Satan Can Use

Titus 1:7 – *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; **not selfwilled**, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*

Along with Jesus' words concerning "Deny himself" we find apostle Paul instructing Titus that a bishop must not be "selfwilled." If we take Jesus' instruction that a man must deny self in order to follow Him, we must realize that God wants us to lay waste any and all ideas we have concerning how to lead people. Does this also not drive the point home that a man of God must be led of the Holy Spirit? You cannot follow Jesus while at the same time be selfwilled. Self-will has devastated the body of Christ in our generation. It has brought forth more spiritual destruction than anything else. Preacher, God does not want us to do our thing behind the pulpit, He wants us to follow His bidding; his leading. Paul would say in Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* There's no wonder why the Holy Spirit does not move in our churches anymore like He once did. Friend, we must be led of the Spirit in order to see the Spirit move! He must lead you in order to work through you! When we preach His bidding, then we'll see God move in the pews. However, if we follow your own ideas, don't be disappointed when the Holy Spirit doesn't move through our sermon. We must get back to being led of the Holy Spirit behind the pulpit, not only for the Lord to anoint us so that those who come may be touched by the power of God, but for the greater direction of the church as well. It's the only way lives can be changed for the Kingdom of God.

Continuing our thoughts on denying self in Matthew 16:24, not only was Jesus' instruction for all who follow, but interestingly enough, these words of Jesus seem to be the answer to the dilemma Peter just found himself entrapped. Think of it, Peter, one of the strongest of Jesus' disciples has just been used of Satan to resist and rebuke the Son of God! There can be nothing worse! What about you friend? What about me? Peter's open door to be used of the devil was his lack of knowledge concerning the plan of God for Jesus to die on the cross. Remember this; lack of knowledge or direction will ALWAYS result in selfwill. This ignorance (I use this word respectively) was the avenue the devil was able to use. May I say that we err, not knowing the scriptures? Matthew 22:29. When Paul mentioned being a novice, I don't believe he was saying that God can't use a young preacher, but that the novice would be very unknowledgeable in scripture, wisdom and experience. Being a novice would place the preacher in a vulnerable position to move forward in selfwill and consequently being used of the devil.

Does a preacher really have to help the Holy Spirit? Why can we not seek God in prayer and ask the Lord to give us the word He desires? After all, the Lord knows what people need; not the man. Many churches today are suffering in their pews and evening starving to death spiritually because a self-willed preacher refuses to seek God for direction, burden and anointing. The issue is that it requires walking in the fellowship with God. You cannot hear from God unless you're walking in the light as He is in the light. Some of self-willed preaching comes from a preacher who has lost fellowship with God. He can no longer hear the Spirit of God, so to move forward, he must continue on in the flesh. If a preacher is self-willed, then it means he is not following the leading of the Holy Spirit. If a man is not being led of the Spirit of God, then his salvation is in question. If a man is truly walking in Christ, then he knows the Spirit. That same spirit that he received and has used him to preach under anointing before should be what he continues to follow today. If his fellowship with God is broken, then he will not have an ear to hear what the spirit sayeth! Jesus revealed if a man cannot see or hear spiritually, it is the result of the heart waxing gross. Matthew 13:15.

How does a preacher break free from this? When Jesus preached the sermon on the mount, he mentioned many different types of hearts, two in particular were so similar that they seemed to be the same. Did you know that there is a difference between *poor in spirit* and *meek*? Both seem to express humility and they do. There is, however, a completely different process in which these two types of humility are produced. The heart that is *Poor in spirit* is a willing humility. The heart that is *Meek* is one that has a forced humility. Remember Jesus words:

Matthew 23:12

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The word *Meek* takes on the understanding that, like a wild horse, a meek person's strong will has been *broken*. In order for a wild horse to be ridden, it must be *broken*. Every cowboy will tell you, and I have some dear Texas Cowboy brethren that I dearly love, that a horse is stubborn and strong willed. Every wild horse has to be broken in order to be used. Once broken, the horse is described like Matthew 6; meek.

As preachers, we can either humble ourselves willingly or we can go on in selfwill that will result in God abasing us. Humility is God's destination for us. The method in which we get there is totally up to us.

Pride – The Disposition Satan Can Use

1 Timothy 3:6 *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with **pride** he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

Not only is spiritual ignorance and selfwill an open door for Satan, but pride is another. Pride will be the overwhelming factor in whether the preacher admits he has a problem. If you notice Paul's words, it is a novice who will be lifted up with pride; and that pride will cause him to fall into the condemnation of the devil. These words clearly state that pride is the notable struggle of a novice. A well-seasoned man of God should know full well the consequences of pride through his many

experiences and should be at a place in his life where he walks in humility. A proud heart is a clear sign of a novice.

The preacher has a unique position. He must not allow pride to rise in himself. He is praised in his congregation. He hears the compliments of his preaching. The congregation will glorify him at the way he brought out a message. The comments about how much time he must have spent studying. The amount of time he spends visiting shut ins, and those in the hospital. His dedication to jail ministry. But Jesus said "Beware when men shall speak well of you." A few years ago, I was working at a nuclear plant under construction. My one desire was to share the gospel while I was there. The Lord granted me favor with the managers and supervision in our group. I was called upon on many Wednesdays to pray after our weekly safety meeting. I bowed my head, started praying and the spirit fell on me. I prayed for the lost people in the room that God would make Himself clearly known. When I finished the prayer, everyone grabbed their hardhats, safety glasses and gloves and started walking out of our breakroom. When I walked out the door, there were quite a few men standing outside. As I passed by them, they greeted me with a smile and handshake saying how thankful they were for my stand for God. They spoke very highly of the prayer I prayed. You could see a very genuine appreciation for my witness for God. The words they said made me feel very accomplished. I was so thankful to have had those nice words spoken of me. I marched up to my jobsite with my chest stuck out. Feeling fulfilled, as I made my last steps to the jobsite, the Holy Spirit spoke straight to my soul and said "beware when all men shall speak well of you!" I immediately understood what was being said to me. I had gotten so carried away with the nice words spoken to me that I was allowing pride to enter my heart. I immediately asked the Lord to forgive me and repented of the pride I had given way to.

As men of God, we cannot abide pride. As a matter of fact, Peter writing to the elders, shepherds and preachers that ***God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*** If God resists the proud preacher but gives grace to the humble, then we must come to the understanding that the heart of a proud preacher can cut off the

Spirit of God. Are you in a season in your ministry where the anointing is either gone, or severely limited? Have you once preached under a wonderful anointing, but right now there's crickets in your soul? Friend, has pride entered your heart? This is not my ministry or yours, this is us surrendering to the will of God. It's the ministry of Jesus. The Lord will not place His seal of approval; His Holy Spirit, on a man of God with pride. We will only get the Lord resisting us until we return to a place of humility.

Can pride actually cause the spirit of God to be quenched in our lives? Yes!

1 Corinthians 4:18-20

*Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, **and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.** For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

Some preachers that were greatly anointed earlier on in their ministry were anointed because they sought the Lord with a humble heart. Because of that humility, the anointing flowed upon them. They experienced a wonderful touch of the Lord behind the pulpit. People are being born again, set free, healed, gain greater victories in their walk with God. But after a time, something happens. Does that preacher start thinking that the results in the pews and altar services are due to him? Does he think his church is growing due to his doing? Has he settled into his position of authority and feels like he belongs and is due the respect he gets? I truly believe this is where genuinely anointed men of God start making a turn in the wrong direction. Pride enters the heart when he sees the success of his ministry. In order for a preacher to be used of God, he must be Spirit-led. In order to be Spirit-led, he must be in tune; in fellowship with God. His heart must be in humility and totally dependent upon the Lord in faith that He will take the preacher where He wants him to go. Pride must be confessed to God and repented of. We must pull this tare out of our heart and see ourselves for how we truly are; hopeless without Jesus.

When pride enters the heart of the man of God, then the Holy Spirit is quenched in his ministry. If the Holy Spirit is quenched, then the church will immediately be cast into a tailspin. If there's no anointing flowing through him, then there's another unusable member in the body. Once this happens, lost people become very hindered in coming to salvation. Also, the people will not be able to receive strengthening as they once did. Sure, the word of God strengthens us, but preaching under anointing will charge up a church like nothing else can. The church is then on its way to become cold, stagnant and barren.

What is the remedy for pride? As previously stated, either we will humble ourselves or the Lord will. What is in store for a man of God who will not recognize and deal with the pride in his heart? A thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:7

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a **thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.***

Unforgiveness – The Device Satan Can Use

What if, though, a preacher understands the way he must be led of God, can he still be used of the devil behind the pulpit? Yes, he still can. How in the world can the devil gain access through a preacher who knows these truths?

Through a preacher with a wounded heart!

Although ministry has many triumphs of victory, there are also a great number of opportunities for the man of God to become injured inside. There's nothing more devastating than to open your heart to people and getting your heart pierced. The natural reaction is to move forward shutting off your heart. But the Lord dealt with me strongly about this. You cannot minister the way God wants you to minister with your heart shut off to people. We must serve the Lord with our hearts wide open.

But how can a wounded heart be an avenue for Satan to get access? When your heart is wounded, then that hurt will be translated to everyone else. If a preacher has been hurt, then that pain will be present in his preaching. It will also be present in how he deals with certain situations, especially with the person from whom the hurt originated. If not dealt with and brought before the Lord to heal, Satan has then hijacked the pulpit through a man with a wounded heart. The preaching turns to bashing. The feeding turns to beating. Hurt, anger, frustration will be painfully obvious.

How do we remedy unforgiveness? This is an easy one to answer but not as easy to do. We forgive those who've trespassed against us. If we don't forgive, we are opening the door for Satan to get an advantage of us.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Unforgiveness, if not dealt with, will swiftly turn into a root of bitterness. Once the root of bitterness springs up, it will defile all who come near its path.

Hebrews 12:15

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

What is a root of bitterness? Is it present in your heart? It starts in a heart that has been hurt in some way. Most of the time, it is planted in a heart that has not committed any wrong. Most people who have this vine in their hearts have been victims of someone else's wickedness. The hurt grows in their heart. The hurt turns to anger and if not dealt with, the anger turns to bitterness. The person lives their life as a victim. They've been done wrong and felt as if they've done nothing to deserve it. The most pivotal point is what comes next; to forgive or not to forgive.

God will deal with our hearts continually to make right or forgive the person that has wronged us. Forgiveness is as much for the victim as it is for the offender. When you forgive, you remove the seed of poison that Satan seeks to plant in your heart. If you allow unforgiveness to remain in you, make no mistake, the root of bitterness will come. When it comes, it will not stop until it has totally destroyed you.

Like poison oak, the vine grows along side the tree. No one can get close to the tree without being infected with the poison. Once the person is exposed to the poison, it spreads like wildfire. Everyone who has gotten close to the person with this root of bitterness will become bitter themselves concerning the same person or event. This is how many are defiled by the trouble in one person's heart.

Consider this of a preacher in a pulpit. If he has allowed this poison oak vine to grow in his heart, can you imagine the numbers of people he can defile? The pulpit is at this point become an instrument to sow poison to all in the congregation. We must forgive people that have wronged us. If we do not, then the roots of bitterness will take root in us. Have you harbored in your heart resentment toward someone? Has someone wronged you and you feel as though that person is undeserving of your forgiveness? If so, then your lack of forgiveness is the soil in which Satan will plant this root of bitterness. Don't allow this in your heart. Be merciful to forgive those who've hurt you.

Anger

Titus 1:7 – *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, **not soon angry**, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*

The preacher must identify the spiritual splinter that's affecting him. He has to reconcile it before he can go on and effectively minister with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Distractions

Satan can also get a preacher's eyes off of the sheep and focus on the goats and wolves. There are many rebellious people out there who claim to be saved. While we know no man's heart, we can at least

make a faint assumption that many who say they're saved are not genuinely born again. These men and women who stir up strife and divisions. The lack of anointing in his preaching will be the overwhelming evidence that there is a problem.

Beware of Wolves!

Wolves aren't just interested in the sheep, but must first evade the shepherd. A true under shepherd not only looks out for his congregation, but loves them and lays down his life for the sheep. This means there will be times when demon spirits, in attempting to attack the sheep, will attack the shepherd because he will get involved in that struggling sheep. When he does this, he steps in between the wolf and the sheep. It is then that the preacher becomes part of the attack. The preacher must also be aware that the wolves will attack him also resulting in a wounded heart.

Smite the Shepherds!

Jesus revealed a serious truth concerning leaders when He spoke these words to His disciples in Mark 14:27: *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* Although this was a prophecy concerning Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary, there is another facet to this prophecy. It's gravely obvious that when sheep have no shepherd, they are destined to be scattered. I personally believe that this is also a warning on how that the devil destroys the sheep of God's pasture. If he can smite the shepherd, he can scatter God's sheep. In God's pasture there is everything Psalms 23 promises; provision, rest, restoration, protection, etc. When the sheep are walking in the wonder of this Psalm, the devil loses.

Anyone who is in a leadership role is a target for the enemy. His goal is to overtake the preacher, and in turn, hijack the pulpit. While I understand these are not all of Satan's devices, they are among the lessons we must learn in order to remove Satan's advantage. My prayer for every God-called preacher is this; that we continually come before the Lord with our hearts exposed before Him and ask Him to examine the intents of our hearts and if there be anything in our hearts that needs healed, uprooted or otherwise dealt with.

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted. Church leaders, this includes us.

I have fallen into some of these traps since I've been preaching the gospel. These are lessons I've had to learn the hard way. Thankfully I had a very fine example. His name was Bro. Rick Rigsby. He continually preached and pastored being led of the Holy Spirit with humility and love. When he would preach, the Holy Spirit would manifest so strongly in our services! He instructed me by just being the example. His desire to be led of God in everything he said and did was a landmark in my life. Unless you've been around someone like that, you may not know anything different. I can compare the methods of modern preaching to an humble man of God who was drenched with the Spirit. While God uses men in different ways, we all must offer ourselves to the service of God by denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him.