

Dangerous Shepards

by Carter Conlon

The sermon warns about the dangers of false shepherds who prioritize their own comfort and security over the needs of the flock, leading to spiritual emptiness and despair.

Duration: 58:27

Scripture: Isaiah 1:4, Ezekiel 34:5

Topics: "Shepards"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses concern about the state of preaching in North America, stating that skits and plays have replaced traditional sermons in some churches. The speaker calls for the raising up of shepherds who fear the Lord and are committed to faithfully preaching the word of God. The speaker then discusses the parable of the unjust steward from Luke 16, emphasizing the importance of accountability and stewardship in the Christian life. The sermon also addresses the dangers of treachery and not seeking God's guidance in ministry.

Transcript

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None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. We would understand... Ezekiel chapter 34, beginning at verse 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 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? You eat the fat, and you clothe you with the wool. You kill them that are fed, but you feed not the flock. The diseased have you not strengthened, neither have you healed that which was sick, neither have you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost, but with force and cruelty have you ruled them.

And they were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. As I lived, 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 the flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock. Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands. The shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep, that which was sick, but I will just with judgment. Ezekiel describes these shepherds as shepherds who feed themselves.

They would eat the fat, which means they took the choices of the offerings for themselves, and clothed themselves with the wool, but they would feed not the flock. These shepherds didn't possess the heart of God, and because they didn't have the heart of God, there was consequently no reproving and no healing message. The Scripture says, The disease, verse 4, you have not strengthened, you have not healed that which was sick, and neither have you bound up that which was broken.

Neither have you brought again that which was driven away, and you have not sought that which was lost, but with force and cruelty have you ruled them. The sheep, because they had come under these ministries, were scattered throughout all the mountains, and became prey to every beast of the field. Verse 5 and 6, it says, Because there was no shepherd, they became meat to all the beasts of the field.

My flock were scattered upon all the face of the earth, and I did not seek after them. We are living in that kind of a day. There's a great spiritual dirt in the land, and people are wandering all over the place looking for the word of the Lord.

The letters we get from all over North America of people seeking the word of God and not being able to find it. They say it's in prosperity. Gospels of self, and where those things don't exist, there's just an abject foolishness in the house of God.

We had a dear precious couple in California, and they were saying that where we are, we are because we're under the curse of God. You see, this precious couple are in a trial in their life, and people all around them are, you're not rich, you're under a curse because you're not prospering like we're prospering. And little to these people in a certain country, this airplane was heading to a destination and through a very mountainous area, and there were mountains on either side of a particular corridor that the plane had to pass through to come in.

Upon the approach to the airport in that particular country, the plane suddenly veered into the mountainous area, and according to the reports, they'd forgotten the gravity of their calling and the responsibility that they had at this time, knowing the treachery, knowing the danger, irrespective of you've been there before or not. And I thought as I read this, in the same way, it shows a way that we can identify the likeness about these men. There's no soberness.

There's no seriousness about the warfare that we're in and the high calling of God that's upon their lives. And you can identify them by their likeness. In Jeremiah 23, verse 29, the Lord says, Is not a rock in pieces? And do tell them, and cause people at all, saith the Lord.

By their likeness, Christ. That has to have a constant reproving word and be brought back continuously in line with the heart and the mind of God. I'm dumbfounded at the likeness by which they can talk about current events and things in the world and just, there's no sense.

I say, I saw one time a documentary by a man called Peter Jennings. Somebody gave me a tape of it. It was called In the Name of God.

It was of a certain organization that we're meeting and trying to determine some kind of doctrinal structure for their organization. And I watched it in absolute disbelief at the likeness of these men. Consequently, they will give a false peace and a false assurance to the people, even while they are leading them.

The investigation of this plane crash revealed that these pilots had failed to respond to the approach instructions that were given to them by the control tower. The control tower was calling, but they didn't respond. I believe it's three times the control tower called and said, you know, respond.

They were trying to tell them, you are passing a certain area. You're entering a danger zone. In the same way, dangerous shepherds are not shut in with God to seek God.

You don't have to shut in with God. Their likeness and treachery, they're not hearing from the Lord. Isn't it wonderful when you're flying on an airplane, I know I like the reassurance when I'm flying on a plane, to hear the voice that says, this is your captain, we've been in touch with the tower and we have established our course for a safe landing.

If I was going to sit under any ministry, I'd want to sit under a ministry where a man or whoever it is stands in the pulpit and says, I have been shut in with God and I have a word from the Lord. God has, it's a serious, somber thing. Or it can be a word of serious admonition.

We're going to go through some rough waters, better buckle in. We're going through some turbulent air, but we're going to get there because we've been in touch with the tower, we've got our directions, we've established our course and we're staying on that course. Thy word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

Hallelujah. Dangerous shepherds have no reproving word from the Lord. In Jeremiah chapter 23 again, verse 18, the Lord says, Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord? And who has perceived and heard his word? Who has marked his word and heard it? Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind.

It shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return till he hath executed, till he hath performed the thoughts of his heart. In the latter days you shall consider it perfectly.

The Lord says in verse 21 in Jeremiah 23, I have not sent these prophets and yet they ran. I have not spoken to them and yet they prophesied. Now here's the mark of a man of God.

But if they had stood in my counsel, in other words, if they had been with me, if they had been conversing with me and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. They should have turned them. This is what the Lord is saying.

They've gone. They've prophesied. They've spoken to the people.

But if they had been in my counsel, if it's me they had been listening to, if they were truly speaking on my behalf, they would turn the people from the evil of their ways. Because brothers and sisters, it's sin that separates man from God. It's not the lack of money.

It's not the lack of self-esteem. It's sin that separates man from God. Hallelujah.

If I was going to sit in any church, if I was not pastoring today and I had to take my family into any church, I would want to sit in a church where a man was standing and bringing the word of God, a reproofing word, that would cause me to have to examine my heart and examine my life and make sure Jesus speaks about the hireling, the man who is not the true shepherd of God. John chapter 10. I'm going to be talking about the characteristics of a shepherd but also the characteristics of a hireling.

I remember when I used to have a sheep farm, and I remember going one time and visiting another friend who had sheep. And I remember I got out of the car and walked in and he had these poor sheep. They were dirty.

They were bug-infested, tick-infested, and they were on this horrible pasture that they had eaten it down as low as the carpet that I'm standing on here right now. There was nothing left. These poor things were bleeding and pawing the ground and looking for something to eat.

And, of course, when they get down that low and there is no pasture, then they start eating worms out of the ground. They get full of parasites. And I stood there dumbfounded.

I said, how can this man call himself a shepherd and let these sheep get into this kind of a condition? You see, not all are true shepherds, and that's the way it is in the body of Christ. Talking about the hireling in John chapter 10, verse 11, Jesus said, I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. That's the characteristic of a good shepherd.

You know, Pastor David is a good shepherd. I say that unreservedly. I can say it tonight because he's not here.

He'd be embarrassed if he was here if I said that. But he could hardly stand up this morning. He could hardly literally breathe because of the sickness in his physical body, and yet he got up and came into the house of the Lord today because he had a word from the Lord.

He said, there's somebody there that just needs to be encouraged today, and I need to come and deliver that word. That's what God put upon my heart. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

He's not living for himself. He's not living for his own comfort. And verse 12, the hireling sees the wolf coming.

You get a picture when you read this that you think that the hireling just runs away and leaves the flock. No, that's not what happens. It's not necessarily a physical running away.

The spiritual hireling leaves in his heart the duty that God has given him to do over that flock. He sees the wolf coming, which is the devil. The devil comes to what? To steal, to kill, and to destroy.

The wolf here represents the inroads of darkness into the heart of an individual. He can see it. Even though he might be a hireling, he still will see that the devil is sometimes making inroads into the lives of some of the people.

Or sometimes the enemy is coming and weaving himself into the very fabric of an entire church body. The church is beginning to murmur. The church is getting bitter and divided.

The enemy's coming and working and separating and dividing. He sees the wolf coming, but he doesn't do anything about it. He goes and hides in the closet.

You see, the true shepherd gives his life for the sheep. He loves them. He will sacrifice his reputation.

He will lay aside all of the projects of the church, even his own ones that are dear to his heart. He will even sacrifice the affection of the sheep for him when he sees the wolf coming. Nothing else matters.

In his heart, he's saying, I've got to get these sheep home. God has put them under my hand, and I've got to stand before God one day and give an account of what I have done with what he's entrusted to me. I've got to get them home.

And so he'll stand and he'll preach in a manner that will even cause people's noses to get out of joint. People will get mad at him, but he doesn't care because there's something in his heart. He wants to get the people home.

If you're sitting under that kind of ministry, thank God with all of your hearts. Thank God that you're not sitting in a place where somebody stands and just butters you up and makes you feel good in your sin and sends you to hell. It's not this way with the hireling.

The hireling will not give his life for the sheep. As long as the tithes are coming in, as long as his personal empire is being built, as long as the projects are going forth, Jeremiah says it the best, he will say still unto them that despise me, you shall have peace. And they say unto everyone that walks in the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you.

The unjust steward, the unjust, the hireling shepherd will not bring a reproving word. Brothers and sisters, oft times God will send a reproving word into the heart of a shepherd. The Holy Spirit sees what's going on in the flock and we don't necessarily always like it.

We come into the barn and we've had a rough week and we just want to get fed. We want our ears rubbed and we want to feel good. That's the natural tendency.

And that's what a lot of people are doing this day. They're heaping to themselves an abundance of teachers desiring to have their ears tickled. That's what the Scripture says.

They just want to come in and feel good. But a true shepherd, when he sees the sheep come in the barn, sometimes some have foot rot and that's got to be dealt with right away because it'll spread through the whole flock. And it's a hard thing.

You've got to sometimes go into the feet and cut them right down until blood's gushing all over the place. That sheep doesn't know what you're doing, but if you don't do it as a shepherd, it will die and be lame and it will kill many others with it. Sometimes sheep come in and they come up to you and I just remember from my own past and they look at you and they're all so happy you're feeding them and you look down and you see a parasite's gotten in under their nose.

You've got to go and you're smiling at them and they're smiling at you and you've got to pull out the knife and sharpen it and grab their head, sit them on their rump and begin to dig in and dig that thing out of the nose and they're looking at you and the tears are falling. Why are you doing this to me? It's the thoughts of the enemy the beast is from the West. The Lord says, My thoughts are not your thoughts and my ways are not your ways.

And so God sends in the heart of a shepherd a true reproof word. It's not intended to condemn. It's intended to heal.

It's intended to bring wholeness. It's intended to get us on the destination that we're going in. Now go to Luke chapter 16.

I'll show you another characteristic of dangerous shepherds. The parable of the unjust steward. Luke chapter 16 verse 1. And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward.

The same was accused unto him that he wasted his goods. He called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest no longer be steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? For my Lord takes away from me the stewardship I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed.

The stewardship that they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his Lord's debtors to him and said to the first, How much do you owe unto my Lord? He said, A hundred measures of oil. He said unto him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.

Then he said to another, How much do you owe? He said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said unto him, Take thy bill and write four score. And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely, for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

And I say unto you, Make yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. An unjust steward is somebody that God has given authority over his house. He sent him with the word.

He sent him to cause those that are under the conviction of the Holy Ghost to come into the fullness of Christ. But here's what these dangerous shepherds do. They themselves are not willing to pay the price of walking with God.

And there's a deep, deep foreboding, I think, in many of their hearts that God is not with them. And that's why they need these continual conferences to reassure one another that indeed he's in their midst. And they go to those that the Holy Spirit is convicting, and they take the word right out of their hearts.

I remember one time I preached at a conference. I preached about the bankruptcy of religion that has no heart for the poor, the bankruptcy of relationship that won't even consider going to the mission field. I preached from Isaiah chapter 58 at this certain convention and gave an altar call for people to give everything that they have to God, to be willing to take up their cross and follow Christ, and to go with him anywhere that he asks them to go.

And people got up. It was a huge gathering. They got up, and they came streaming from all over the place.

Many of the people weeping and broken before God. They were crying out to the Lord, Lord, anywhere you want to send me. God, anything you want from my life.

It was a tender moment when people were willing to give everything they had to God. And then right after me, this unjust steward got up, and he told the people, he said, go back to your seats. Everybody, go back to your seats.

Now, they're all weeping. They're all under conviction. He said, go back to your seats.

He said, now, God doesn't do that. What's happening right now, he says, God doesn't do that. God doesn't make you cry.

God makes everybody happy. And then he went on to tell the people how that God's purpose is to make everybody happy. And the unjust steward says, how much do you owe the Lord? And that's exactly what's in this parable.

There'd be a man that'd come and say, I feel, I feel with all my heart that God's calling me to the mission field. I feel that it's India. I just can't shake it.

And the unjust steward would say, well, sit down and write 50. In other words, you don't have to go that far. You start a ministry right here in the church, and you can work here, and we'll get you involved in something in the church.

Grab a broom or get involved in one of my projects. Another man comes and says, I feel that the Lord wants me to give all to missions. He says, oh, well, just sit down and write half.

They tell the adulterers, don't worry. You're not going to go into hell for living in adultery. And it just goes on and on and on and on.

They sit, they say, enjoy the ride. Sit back, take thy knees. Then suddenly, suddenly, the people who trust in their lives are scattered upon the mountaintops.

And I see that coming to North America. Suddenly, suddenly, people are going to be scattered all over the hills. They're going to be scattered all over the mountains looking for oil, seeking places where there are people who have not based their life and not based their foundation on self-esteem and on riches and things of this nature.

But they have come to God. They have found Christ. They have embraced him with all of their heart.

Thirdly, these pilots, they failed to employ the instrumentation provided to guide the plane safely on course. It's an incredible thing. This was the first time, I think, in years that an airline actually felt to make a public apology for the inexplorable lapses of professionalism in the men that were flying this plane.

There was instrumentation given to them called automatic pilot, and that would have guided the plane safely on its course. Go back to the book of Zechariah right before Malachi in the Old Testament. Go Matthew, Malachi, Zechariah, chapter 11.

Talk again about dangerous shepherds. Zechariah, chapter 11, verse 15. And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land. Now, these are the instruments of a foolish shepherd. I'll raise up a shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off.

Neither shall seek the young one nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still. But he shall eat the flesh of the fat and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idle shepherd that leaves the flock.

Now the sword shall be upon his arm and upon his right eye. His arm shall be clean dried up and his right eye shall be utterly darkened. Now what the Lord is saying about this dangerous shepherd, his arm shall be dried up.

In other words, he has no personal strength in the word of God. He has no strength whatsoever. All he has is just a show before the people.

And his eye will be darkened, utterly darkened, the scripture says. We're living in the day when there are shepherds all over North America and in the western world that have absolutely no discernment anymore. They don't know the difference between good and evil.

They have lived in mixture for so long that they can't bring a clear, they have no strength in the word and they can't bring a clear word of direction to the body anymore. They have no discernment anymore at all. Could you imagine being on a, in a plane and the pilot come on the intercom and say, wasn't that a great wind that just carried us? We're not sure where we're going but we're looking for another wind now.

And then you're flying along and oh, here comes another one and off we go to the left and wasn't that great and we're not sure where we are now and oh, here comes another wind. It's, I wouldn't want to be on a plane like that but there are very many people that have no reservations at all about being in a church like that. Everything that comes along in the wind, they pick it up because they have no direction from God no matter what it is.

It can be absolute stupidity and foolishness. They pick it up. They, they go on healing tangents.

They go on discerning tangents. They, they go on all kinds of tangents. They get into prophesying tangents and then some of the latest things that are happening, they will, they just embrace everything and people are wondering, that's why there's such confusion with so many Christians saying, if these are men of God then why are they embracing these things? And what I suggest to you today is that they might have been men of God at one time but they don't have any discernment anymore.

They don't know the difference between good and evil. When the pilots of this plane finally realized that they were off course, they tried to fly manually. They tried to switch it to a manual pilot but it was too late.

They had already missed the marker and the manual pilot tried to turn the plane around and when they saw that that was happening they took it again and tried to control it by their instincts and steered off again to the right. Then a voice warning came, a horn, a voice sounded and said, terrain ahead, pull up. Terrain ahead, pull up.

Have you heard that voice? I hear the voice of God warning the church throughout all of North America. Those who have been looking to the things of this world to satisfy. Those who have been looking to riches, they've been looking to self esteem, they've been looking to manifestations, they've been looking to men, they've been looking all over the place.

I hear a voice that says, lift up your head for your redemption draws nigh. I hear a voice that says, if you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above and not below. Lift up, terrain is ahead.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. I hear the voice of the Lord calling again to His church. Lift up your heads.

Look unto me. David said, I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help. Not the hill, but over the hill.

I will look for the one, the Holy One of Israel. I'm not going to look and there's such a danger. These dangerous shepherds have people's focus on the things of the world.

They tell the people that you need to be rich to be happy. There are whole movements of thousands of people that are sitting and listening to these lies in the western world right as we sit here tonight. There are others that are telling them you need greater self-esteem to, and that's why Christ came to give you greater self-esteem.

Understand that what my Bible says you need less of yourself and more of Christ. We need more of Him and less of ourselves. We don't need the riches of this world.

The scripture says if riches increase set not your heart upon it. It's here one day, it's gone the next. Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of God.

Don't worry about what you're going to wear or where you're going to sleep. Don't be preoccupied with these things. As a matter of fact Paul says in 1 Timothy those that preach these doctrines of gain being godliness are destitute of the truth.

They're destitute. They've lost. They're dangerous shepherds.

They have no steady course. Are you following? There are people visiting today and people in the future that are going to be listening to this message on tape. My exhortation to you is the question are you following a ministry that seems to have no steady direction? Is it carried about in winds and leaping on one track or tangent after another? And if so you're under the ministry of a dangerous shepherd.

No matter how polished or presented they are the end result is that your life, your family will end up scattered upon the mountains. Ezekiel 34, 5 he says, and they were scattered because there is no shepherd. And they became meat to all the beasts of the field and they were scattering.

There's a lot of talk about all kinds of moves of God going on in the world and some of them are genuine but sad to say many of them today are not and they're going to leave the people scattered and absolutely destitute. Now back in Ezekiel 34 there's a promise of God for all who still want to hear. Ezekiel 34, 10 Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds.

I will require my flock at their hand and I will cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore. I will deliver my flock from their mouth.

I see the delivering hand of God coming. I hear a word coming from the Lord. God's going to begin to raise up shepherds.

They're not necessarily known. They're not men of renown. They may be hidden in secret places all over but God is going to leave Himself with a testimony for all who still want to hear.

The Lord is going to establish a word. I will deliver my flock from their mouth that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I even I will both search my sheep and seek them out.

And that's what the Lord is doing even this day. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so I will seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and the dark day. The Lord, the good news of the gospel for those who are caught in these kind of ministries is that the Lord has provided a parachute for them.

You can get off of these flights. You can get out from under these leaderships. And that parachute is called humility and repentance.

It comes from the heart that says, Father, forgive me for following shepherds that cater to the lusts of my own divided heart. Brothers and sisters, and I speak to those that are going to be hearing this message in the future on tape, you wouldn't be sitting under these ministries if you didn't have a divided heart. That's why you're there.

Your heart's divided. Part of you wants the kingdom of God and part of you wants the lust of your own flesh. Part of you wants the sacrifice of walking with Christ and taking up your cross and following Him.

And part of you wants to live in ease. The carnal nature is enmity against the things of God. The carnal nature does not want to die to itself.

The carnal nature does not want to suffer poverty and settle for the riches of knowing that we have the treasure of Christ within this earthen vessel. The carnal nature wants to sit back, drink a Diet Coke, and fly into heaven with ease, singing the songs of Zion. No thought of sacrifice.

No thought of giving anything up for the kingdom of God. No thought of saying, Lord, what's your will for my life? That's the carnal nature. It would be interesting if we were able to assemble all of the Western Church and have two gigantic churches with two sermon boards out front.

One is Pastor, I don't know what we call him, Pastor Disaster, preaching on success and prosperity, the way to eternal life. And the other one would be Pastor Faithful, sermon topic, you must die in order to live under Christ. It would be interesting to see where the people would go.

It's sad to say in the Western world the bulk of the people would go into Pastor Disaster's church and end up scattered upon the mountains. And that's exactly what has happened. They're following the lust of their own heart.

And if truly we have an undivided heart, we would sit in these places and be horrified. People would sit and be horrified and say, that's not the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's not what I'm reading in this book.

That's not what God's been speaking to my heart. But it's because of a divided heart. In the history of Israel, over and over again, when the people's hearts became divided, God allowed shepherds to be raised up.

He didn't send them. He allowed them to be raised up. They were shepherds that catered to the lust of the heart of the people.

They came in and fleeced the flock, built their own kingdoms and projects, and subsequently left them scattered upon the mountains. Fed them a word of ease, a word of compromise, a word that didn't even make any sense. In many churches now there's not even any word anymore.

They've gotten down now to plays and skits. I haven't seen these things and I don't really ever want to see it unless the Lord wants me to see it. But I understand there's skits and plays now, role acting in the house of the Lord instead of a sermon on Sunday morning.

God help us. We have sunk so far in North America. My heart's cry is, Jesus, in this last hour of time, raise up shepherds once again after your own heart, like David, who came out of nowhere in Israel.

Raise up men and women of God who fear the Lord more than they fear the faces of the people who have only one project in mind and that's to get into the kingdom of heaven and to be faithful to the charge that God has committed unto their hand. Oh God, raise up shepherds once again that will challenge the hearts of the people and bring them into the true place of the Lord's blessing. Oh Father, it's got to be the cry, forgive me for following these shepherds.

I want you to be my shepherd. For those who cry this prayer, the Lord says in Ezekiel 34, verse 13, I will bring them out from the people. I will gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land.

I'll feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be and there they shall lie in a good fold and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock and I will cause them to lie down saith the Lord God.

I will seek that which was lost and bring again that which was driven away. I will bind up that which was broken. I will strengthen that which was sick.

But I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will feed them with judgment. Now how can you know that you're under a ministry that has been ordained by God? I'm going to show you.

Go to Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. David said.

If you truly are a child of God, that's got to be the cry of your heart. Oh Lord, be my shepherd. Oh Jesus, I don't want to be scattered on the mountains when it's all over having lived an illusion that somehow I was going in the same direction as those that are truly called by your name.

Jesus, I want you to be my shepherd. David said it this way. The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want I shall not want. Many of these shepherds, they lead the people by causing a continual longing, in particular for the things of this world to be sold in their hearts. A longing, a longing, a wanting.

They're never satisfied. They have to run to one convention after another. They have to give more to get more.

But in Jesus Christ, if Christ is my shepherd, the longings of my heart shall be filled. There will be a continual revelation of Jesus. Not of the things of the world, not of some new scheme and plan, but a continual revelation of Jesus.

That's what David said. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

The pastor who stands and has a word from God will say to the people, Do you have a need in your life? Then you need Jesus to fill that need. Do you have something wrong with your life or your self-image or whatever the case is? Then you need Jesus to come in and put that thing to death and fill the gap. There

will be a continuous revelation of Jesus.

The book of the revelation, the last book in the New Testament, is the book of the revelation of Christ. And when Jesus came, He spoke to the church of the things that He appreciated about them. But the revelation of Christ will bring into view those hidden areas of the heart and enable God's people to lay them down and to take up Christ and to embrace Him like they once used to embrace the things of the world.

There will be a continual revelation. There will be a lifting up of Jesus in that place. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

David says in Psalm 119, I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Psalm 37, 3 says, Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed. Psalm 34, verse 8 says, O taste and see that the Lord is good.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. I know a sheep can't lie down until it feels secure. A sheep can't lie down until the needs in its heart have begun to be met.

A sheep can't lie down until it's feasted on good pasture. If you're sitting in a place where the Spirit of God is under a ministry ordained of God, this book will be opened continuously and good pasture will be given. You'll be sent to eat up Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and Acts, Romans and First Corinthians, Ezekiel, Daniel, Psalms.

Oh, there'll be a banquet set before you. He makes me to lie down in good pasture. And those who come and begin to develop this understanding of the Word of the Lord will say, How could I have lived on that scarce pasture? How could I have survived on somebody stepping up? And it's gotten to the point today, folks, where they don't even read a scripture anymore.

Just get up and tell stories and even worse, jokes, you know, in the house of the Lord. Get up and joke. And there's no word of God anymore.

And the people that are going to come out of this are going to say, How could I have lived on that kind of pasture? Oh, God, thank you for your mercy. Thank you for your mercy, Lord. David said, He leads me beside the still waters.

If Christ is there, peace. Pastor David talked about it this morning. Peace, the comforter comes into your life.

As we begin to surrender to God, as we give Him our all and all and open our lives and hearts to Him, the peace of Christ, the comforter comes and the peace of Christ comes into our lives. John 14, 27, Jesus said, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not like the world gives, give I unto you. It's a peace that says, Come what may, the Lord is my shepherd.

Come what may, He's going to walk with me. Come what may, He's going to get me home. Come what may, He's going to keep me intact.

He's going to give me strength against my enemies. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

Hebrews 4, 11, The writer says, Let us labor therefore to enter into that breast, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and as a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. He restores my soul.

He not only brings in the oil, but He brings in the knife too as well. If the Lord is leading His shepherds, there will be a knife, as I shared with you earlier, come in and cut the bugs out of your nose and take the rot out of your feet and then pour in the healing oil. Hallelujah.

He restores my soul. God's house is a place of restoration. What did He say through Ezekiel? I'll send shepherds and I will restore.

I will bind up the brokenhearted. I will seek those that were lost. I won't tell them some candy-coated story.

I won't say to them that despise me it shall be well with you. I will talk to them about their sin and as they humble themselves before the Lord, then they will come and I will restore. I will heal them.

I will pour the oil of my presence upon their lives. They will rise up and say, this is our God. We have waited for Him.

This is our God. And the Lord Himself will say, I'm the Lord of the, these are my people. David goes on to say, He leads me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake.

Proverbs 3, 11 and 12 says, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction. For whom the Lord loves, He corrects, even as the Father, the Son, in whom He delights. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Be not like the horse or the mule, the Scripture says, that have to be led with a bitten bridle. Come with a willing heart. And say, Oh God, lead me in the paths of righteousness.

Lord, I'm interested in getting to heaven. I want to get home. And no matter what you send across my life, I know that nothing can happen unless you allow it to happen in my life.

I know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes. Jesus Himself, in surrendering to the leading of God, said unto Pilate, You could have no power over me at all unless it were given to you of my Father which is in heaven. Oh God, lead me in the paths of righteousness.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. He chastens, even as a father to son in whom He delights.

And that's my heart's cry. It's been now for almost 18 years. Oh God, lead me in paths of righteousness.

Lead me that way that you want me to go. I don't care what anybody else is saying. I don't... It doesn't matter where they're going.

Lord, You're my shepherd. Lead me. Lead me.

And oh God, set me in a place where there are men who are following You. Not following their own minds and not following visions of their own hearts and not following the trends of the day and not getting their

messages off of the internet. But Lord God, they're hearing from You and they're walking in paths of righteousness.

Lord, give me somebody to follow that I can follow who will lead me in a path of righteousness. The Apostle Paul said to the early church, Follow me as I follow Christ. Hallelujah.

Then he says, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. When you're in the house of the Lord under the ministry of shepherds of God, there's an assurance of protection and comfort that comes to you.

You had that so evidently this morning. An assurance that through your trial you're not alone. The Lord says, When you walk through the fire, I'll be with you.

When you walk through the water, I'll go with you. It is written in the book of Hebrews, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.

Proverbs says, There's a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Jesus will always be there if your heart's towards Him. When you go through the valley, you don't have to be afraid.

There are valleys in every one of our lives. I pity the poor people that are sitting under ministries today where they're taught that if you go through a valley you experience that somehow you're under the disfavor of the curse of God. What an absolute lie.

Oh no. On the contrary, it's an opportunity to see the faithfulness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When you walk through the valley, you're not going alone.

And David uses the word through. I like that word through. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, not into with no exit but through.

I'm going in and I'm going through. I'm coming out the other side because God is with me. There are dangerous shepherds all over the western world now that are telling the people that there's nothing ahead of us but peace and prosperity and good and wonderful days.

There are others that are saying that the church is going to rise up and conquer the world and then Christ can come back. I feel so sorry for the people under their ministries because the Bible says that everything that can be shaken is about to be shaken. The earth is going to reel to and throw like a drunkard and not be able to rise again.

The Bible says men's hearts are going to fail and for fear of the things that are falling upon the earth. The Bible says there's going to be an increase in plagues. There's going to be an increase in distress among nations.

There's going to be an increase in wars and famines throughout the whole world. But the Bible says in the midst of it all there's going to be a righteous, holy remnant bride that's going to rise up in the midst of it. Hallelujah.

This bride is not looking to the things of the world to satisfy. This bride is looking up unto Him. But I feel so sad for those that are sitting under the ministries that have their focus on the things of the earth because when everything begins to be shaken it's going to happen just like it says in the Gospel of John.

They're going to run around with no oil. That oil is the presence of Christ. That oil comes from having sat under His Word.

That oil comes from a repentant heart. That oil comes out of deep abiding relationship in Jesus Christ to the power of the Holy Ghost. That oil comes through having a vessel that's consecrated to the purposes and plans of God.

That oil comes out of a personal Gethsemane experience. That oil comes out of coming to a place of saying, not my will but Thine. That oil comes out of saying, Lord, I count it a privilege to suffer the reproach of this world.

I count it but done that I may win Christ. That oil comes from saying, Lord, whatever Your cross is for me, whatever pathway You have for my life, oh God, be my shepherd and lead me and I'll walk with You, Lord. If it's through good times, I'll walk.

If it's through hard times, I'll walk. I won't question You, God. I will walk with You.

Lord, I know I'm in the palm of Your hand and You said, nobody can take me out of the palm of the Father's hand. Nobody can take me. Hallelujah.

I will walk through it all. Hallelujah. And come out the other side in absolute victory, not in my own strength, not having looked at the things of this world, but Jesus having looked to You.

Brothers and sisters, we need the oil of Christ to get through the coming days. Hard days are coming on all of the western world. The whole world is going to reel.

We need the oil of Jesus Christ and it comes through surrendered lives. Lives that say, Jesus, touch every area of my heart that You want to touch. Oh God, I won't hold back from You and I know that You won't hold back from me.

What a relationship. Hallelujah. What a covenant relationship with the Holy God.

Hallelujah. And almost lastly, David says, Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. You anoint my head with oil and my cup runs over.

Lunch time. Lunch time. I was flying one time into Texas and I had to take about six or seven or five or six different flights.

I don't remember how many. There was a lot of them anyway. These little planes flying all over the place.

No, actually it wasn't Texas. I'm sorry. It was up in the Arctic.

I had to take all these little planes and land in a town that I had to get up and get in another one and another one and it was these peanut flights you call them. I don't know if those are fly once in a while. They don't have a meal.

They just feed you peanuts and after a day of eating peanuts I told the stewardess she came down I said, what's for lunch? She said, peanuts. I said, I've eaten so many peanuts today I'm starting to feel like a flying squirrel. But I want to tell you when you're under the ministry of True Shepherds of God these men will instill in you a love and a hunger for the word of God.

They will sit you down when you come into God's house to a banquet of the word of God. No peanut flights no peanut flights in God's airline. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. But you're sat down to Luke and John and Acts and Romans and Corinthians and Psalms and Nehemiah and all of the good books like Ezra in the Bible. Hallelujah.

Lunchtime. You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. What do you think the table is? It's the word of the Lord in the presence of mine enemies.

God opened the word to us today and I believe that many of the enemies of darkness have been scattered. The powers of hell have been discomfited that were against many of your lives. You may not even understand it but you embraced the word of God.

You came and you were fed and maybe the devil was preparing a lie and a crafty type thing against your life or your family and you embraced the word of God. God prepares a table in the presence of your enemies. You anointed your head with oil.

That's the anointing of the spirit of God as you surrender to the word of God. My cup runs over. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Truth is in my inward parts. Christ is on the throne of my heart.

My cup runs over. And then David says lastly, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. David is saying I will arrive safely home between the mountains, between all the difficulties, all the snares and traps that the enemy has laid for my life.

If the Lord is my shepherd, I will land, I will dwell in the house of God forever. And maybe you can say... This is the conclusion of the tape. you

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