

Financial Gain Can Destroy A Godly Ministry

'The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. You, man (and woman) of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of the eternal life to which you were called' (1 Timothy 6:10 to 12). The phrase 'pierced themselves through by many sorrows' means they have suffered terrible consequences by giving in to their greed.

Many good Bible teachers have been led astray by the love of money and the desire for wealth. The thought of earning money from preaching lures many good teachers into the sin of greed, where they often distort the Scriptures to earn more and more money until they become wealthy. They love their money more than they love the Lord and much more than they love the unsaved who should be given the Gospel freely and without charge. Jesus said, "Freely you received so freely give. Do not take any gold or silver in your money belts" (Matthew 10:8 & 9). Jesus told His disciples not to be concerned about taking money because a labourer is worthy of his wages (Matthew 10:10). There are many Scriptures telling us we should not become greedy. Genuine teachers of the Gospel earn a wage from the church they teach which is scripturally acceptable. The Levite priests earned their wages from the population. Preachers who travel to teach are paid for their time and travel expenses, which is acceptable. What is not acceptable are the online preachers or so-called 'prophets' who ask for money before they will answer questions about the Bible. The so-called prophetic bulletins and websites are the worst because they reach so many people and lead many astray. Because of greed, once Godly teachers and prophets can become false prophets who teach a distorted Gospel and often speak false prophecies much like fortune telling. The so-called prophetic websites sell their false 'prophetic products'. There is no genuine prophetic ministry in these chat sites. They are all fake prophecies solely spoken to make money. They will seduce unsuspecting novices with a few words before telling you to 'click here to buy' link. They are a scam! Their false prophecies are no more than the evils of witchcraft. They are not from God. God does not need those wicked sites to do His work. Only the devil uses such wicked devices. 'Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. (Be very careful). Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour' (1 Peter 5:8). 'The leaders judge for bribes and the priests teach for a price. The prophets tell fortunes for money yet they (pretend to) lean on God and say, "God is in the midst of us. No disaster will come on us"' (Micah 3:11). Their Gospel and their prophecies become self-oriented and a money making exercise instead of focusing on Jesus and the salvation of souls. Money cannot buy salvation, which comes by faith (1 Peter 1:9).

There are two subtle trends sweeping the world right now that are concerning. They are the spirit of antichrist and the evil spirit behind false prophecies. We have been warned, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God because every Spirit who confesses Jesus has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit who does not confess Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist of whom you have heard it comes and it is in the world already" (1 John 4:1 to 3). We all need discernment to know what is truth and what is false. If the prophecies do not glorify the Lord, they are not from God. If the prophecies raise 'self' as being more important than the sacrifice of Jesus, it is not from God. 'Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus came in the flesh. This is the deceiver, the Antichrist' (2 John 1:7). 'These are the end times and as you heard the Antichrist is coming and even now many antichrists have arisen. By this we know it is the final hour. They went out from us but they did not belong to us for if they had belonged to us they would have continued with us. But they left so they might be revealed that none of them belong to us. You have an anointing from the Holy One and you all have knowledge (from God). I (Apostle John) have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but those who deny Jesus is the Messiah? This is the Antichrist, those who deny the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father. Those who confess the Son have the Father also. As for you, let that knowledge remain in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. Eternal life is the promise He promised us. I have written these things concerning those who would lead you astray' (1 John 2:18 to 26). Any person or religion that denies Jesus is the Son of God Who came in the flesh is antichrist, or in reality, anti-Messiah or they might think they can take the place of the Messiah.

God is certainly working powerfully in the prophetic movement and we are seeing a slow transition from church focus to Kingdom focus and the Lord is using His prophets to usher this in but we need to discern between Godly prophecies and evil prophecies. We are to discern the prophecies, not the prophets. 'Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others discern ... You can all prophesy one by one so all may learn and all may be exhorted. The Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets ... Therefore brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy' (1 Corinthians 14:29, 31, 32 & 39). However, there are false prophets within our churches. False prophecies are the manifestation of the false prophet, the source of all false prophecies.

The false prophet is a real demonic entity that intentionally leads millions away from God and it will have a dreadful end. 'I (Apostle John) saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits something like frogs for they are spirits of demons performing signs which go forth to the kings (leaders) of the whole inhabited earth ... The beast was taken and with him the false prophet who worked the signs in his sight, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur ... The devil that deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever' (Revelation 16:13 & 14; 19:20; 20:10).

Jesus said there would be signs and wonders following when people shared the true Gospel (Mark 16:17 & 18) but those signs were to glorify God and to help unsaved people believe in the power of God, not to seduce people into believing falsehoods. No prophecy should ever speak against Jesus. When someone subtly tries to replace Jesus as the focus, it is the antichrist and false prophet at work. In some areas of today's prophetic movement, the attention has shifted away from the marvellous sacrifice of Jesus to increasingly unnecessary strange signs and manifestations like falling so-called gold dust or gemstones, which encourages greed. Modern false prophetic words focus on the false signs and glory. The fruit of these false signs encourages people to look inward to themselves, their personalities, their desires, replacing Jesus with the false assertion that God wants them to have everything available in the material world. Jesus is being replaced with a carnal focus. There is a danger of the spirit of antichrist being mixed up into a false prophetic movement because people who have grown up with this movement do not have the necessary Spiritual tools to discern between true and false prophecies. We need to have Jesus as the focus and put 'self' aside so God can have the church growth He desires. To counter this movement, people need to spend more time studying their Bibles more closely so the Lord can help them discern truth from error according to His Word.

Many righteous preachers have been caught up in the false 'prosperity' theory and want to make money out of unsuspecting people. That same error happened thousands of years ago. Jude wrote about Balaam, 'These people speak evil of whatever things they do not know. What they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason they are destroyed in these things. Woe to them! They went in the way of Cain and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire and perished in Korah's rebellion' (Jude 1:10 & 11). What was Jude talking about? To see the answer to that question, study the Book of Numbers chapters 22 to 31. Balaam was a genuine prophet who spoke remarkable prophecies regarding Israel and the influence Israel would have in history and throughout the world. He said, "A Star (Jesus) will come out of Jacob (would be born into the bloodline of Jacob). A Sceptre (King Jesus) will rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17). Although initially God used Balaam to utter correct prophecies, greed overtook him and Balaam was seduced by Balak the Moabite king with the promise of great riches and was the instigator of Israel's sin with Moabite and Midianite women for which Balaam was slain and 24,000 Israelites perished. Apostle Peter wrote about Balaam, 'Forsaking the right way, they went astray having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor who loved the wages of wrongdoing but he was rebuked for his own disobedience. A mute donkey spoke with a man's voice and stopped the madness of the prophet' (2 Peter 2:15 & 16). Apostle John wrote about Balaam, 'I (Jesus) have a few things against you because you have in the church some who hold the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality' (Revelation 2:14). Gehazi was a servant of the great prophet Elisha who extorted money from Naaman the Syrian after Naaman had been healed by the Lord through the faith of Elisha. To show his gratitude, Naaman offered a financial gift to Elisha after his healing but Elisha refused to take anything and told him to go home in peace. Greed got the better of Gehazi and he followed Naaman some distance then lied to Naaman and said Elisha had sent him then asked for money and clothing. Grateful Naaman was deceived and gave Gehazi what he wanted. For his trouble, Gehazi was cursed by Elisha and became a leper for the rest of his life (2 Kings 5:14 to 27). Gehazi had been a loyal servant of Elisha for years before that incident. Greed was his downfall.

Greed is at work when the love of money overtakes a prophet and seduces him to sin. Like the spirit of antichrist, it is subtle. A true prophet could easily resist outright greed but when gradual financial gain is available, the lust for money can creep in. Plus, when fame or recognition comes in, the desire for wealth becomes an all consuming problem, almost like an addiction. These people love the attention. They love to be seen doing their great things for God even when those things may not be what God wants. They love to tell everyone what they are doing. What did Jesus say about this? He said, "Be careful you do not do your charitable giving before people to be seen by them, or else you will have no reward from your Father Who is in heaven. When you do merciful deeds, do not sound a trumpet before yourself as the hypocrites do ... so they may get glory from people. Most certainly I tell you, they have already received all the reward they will get. When you do merciful deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does so your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly' (Matthew 6:1 to 4). The

Word of God has a multitude of Scriptures warning us about corrupted prophets. The devil wants to stop people from entering the Kingdom of God so he tries every ruse he can think of. He has replaced the focus of Jesus with anything else that works. The Lord has given us the Bible to keep us on the right path and all we need to do is study the Scriptures and wise up, especially when it comes to prophecy. Faith in God comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith does not come by signs and wonders. Jesus said people who seek after signs are evil (Matthew 12:39). The Word of God has the power to renew the soul but false signs can lead some people astray. Prophecies written in the Word of God testify about our Messiah Jesus. 'Worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy' (Revelation 19:10).

False prophets who glean their so-called knowledge from the forces of darkness cannot possibly have knowledge of future events. The powers of darkness are confined to the realms of past and present and cannot see into the future. God is our all knowing, magnificent Creator God. Only He knows all things. Only He is able to be all over the universe, all through the multiple layers of the heavens, the earth and inside the earth all at once and while hovering everywhere, He is also busy watching us and listening to our prayers. Only He can claim to be the God of yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). 'Remember the former things of old, for I AM God and there is no one else. I AM God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, from ancient times to things that that have not yet happened' (Isaiah 46:9 & 10). If the devil knew the future he would never have inspired the Romans to crucify Jesus. The twelve apostles were eyewitnesses to the miraculous ministry of Jesus. 'When we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, we did not follow cunningly devised fables but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. We were there when He received from God the Father, honour and glory when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." We heard this voice come out of heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. We have the prophetic Word to make Salvation absolutely certain and you do well to heed it, as to a lamp shining in a dark murky place until the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in your hearts. Understand this first, no prophecy of Scripture is from private interpretation. No prophecy ever came by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:16 to 21). Only God is uniquely able to have foreknowledge, to know and understand the future by transcending time and space. God does not live in a time frame nor can He be closed in. He knows the end from the beginning.

No genuine prophecy regarding Jesus or Salvation can come from evil, therefore all the prophecies regarding the first and second coming of Jesus can only have come from God Himself Who instigated Salvation for mankind. This confirms the complete dependence we have on God for our Salvation. Only Jesus has this divine prophetic ability, which proves His Deity. Jesus said, "From now on I will tell you before it happens so when it does happen, you will believe I am the Messiah. Most certainly I tell you, those who receive whomever I send, receives Me, and those who receive Me, receives God Who sent Me" (John 13:19 & 20). Jesus emphasised prophecies as being more important than signs and miracles. Faith in the Deity of Jesus and His Messianic Salvation message came to humanity via the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The Salvation message was given solely to the Hebrew/Jewish nation (John 4:22). Salvation was then extended to Gentiles (Acts 11:18). The Jewish people always have first option before Gentiles (Romans 1:16).

It is prophecies not miracles that give us the testimony of our Messiah. 'Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy' (Revelation 19:10). Anyone who claims to be a prophet of God must be 100% accurate every time or they are a false prophet. "They prophesy falsely to you in My name but I have not sent them," says the Lord (Jeremiah 29:9). 'The false prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who will speak in the name of false gods, that same prophet will die. If you say in your heart, "How can we know the word which God has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of God and if that thing does not follow nor happen, that is the thing which God has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously and you will not listen to him' (Deuteronomy 18:20 to 22). 'Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly ravening wolves ... by their fruit you will know them' (Matthew 7:15 & 20). 'Many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray ... If anyone tells you, 'Behold, here is the Messiah,' or, 'He is there,' do not believe it. There will arise false messiahs and false prophets and they will show great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones (Christians)' (Matthew 24:11, 23 & 24). Sadly, there are many weaker Christians who have fallen for the deception of falsehood and gone astray. However, if a person is utterly committed to following Jesus, they would never ever be led astray. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice. I know them and they follow Me ... They will never follow a stranger but will flee from him for they do not know the voice of strangers" (John 10:27; 10:5).

Amen and God bless you.

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