

Pharaohs in the Church

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Who can discern the wind? Everyday, when we open our doors, we are met by the wind. Sometimes, the wind is slight; sometimes, it's furious. But as the wind passes us by, it touches us without leaving much of an impact on us. We don't think too much about that last gust of wind that seemed to blow our hair and kiss our faces. We just keep on going, making sure our hair remains in place and anything that is weightless hasn't been carried away by the wind. Even though we don't see the wind, we know it's there because we can feel it. And even though the wind is oftentimes harmless, it can pick up disease particles, mites and other dangers and carry them from one place to another, and so can a false teacher.

Most people who God has entrusted to lead His sheep back to Him are fully aware of the effects of false doctrine, pride and selfishness. It's easy to open your Bible and find accounts of lost leaders who were punished because they began to mislead God's children instead of leading them. Nevertheless, many are like the wind. They pick up doctrines along the way and carry them to an unsuspecting people; a people who's learned to fix their hair and make sure they look good while sitting in the sanctuary. Starving people will eat whatever they are fed to survive, and because many believers don't take their daily bread while at home, they starve all week long, waiting for Sunday morning service for a morsel of the Word. After all, Sunday is the only time they feed on the scriptures; howbeit, they have not yet learned to taste and see that the Lord is good. Because of this, the spirit man of many believers has become frail, and they will easily feed on any doctrine that's given to them because they are hungry. Many become respecters of titles and names, but few are respecters of fruit. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:15-20).

We hear the title, and we oftentimes forget that the person bearing the title may or may not be a false teacher or prophet. We've learned not to question titles, and because of this, a religious title often makes a great cover for a devil. Many people have been infected with false doctrines because they forgot to have a relationship with the Lord; they were too busy trying to have a relationship with a person or trying to have a position within the church. Of course, many leaders are God-fearing, God-led and Word-inspired. We love and appreciate them for shepherding us and watching over our souls. But there are some Pharaohs in the church who have led God's people back into slavery.

We know that a pharaoh is an Egyptian ruler. One of the most famous pharaohs was the pharaoh God sent Moses to confront. He held Israel in captivity, and refused to let them go. The Bible tells us that God hardened his heart so he wouldn't release the people. God did this to glorify His Name and show His people that He is God. He wanted them to trust Him again, and He knew they needed to see His power on display. There were many signs and wonders that took place, and Pharaoh's magicians were even able to mimic some of the miracles that Moses had performed before them; nevertheless, they did theirs through the use of black magic. Again, God allowed this because He wants His people to understand that there are powers out there that can look like miracles, but they are the powers of darkness in operation. We have to be prayerful and Word-filled so we don't fall into a doctrine that looks like His Word, just because we've seen a power that looks like His power. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23).

The one thing we remember most about Pharaoh is he would not let God's people go. Additionally, he was eventually drowned in the Red Sea after he and his army gave chase after Moses and the Israelites. Nowadays, there are two types of Pharaohs in operation in the church.

- There is the false prophet who misleads the people of God through false prophecies, false doctrines and speaking in false tongues.
- Next, there is the true man or woman of God who have yet to understand that their members are not their personal properties.

The False Teacher

The false prophets, apostles and teachers are some of the most reviled people within the church arena. Anytime we hear that someone could be a false teacher, we automatically assume that they are aware of their treacheries, but this isn't always the case. Many false leaders truly believe their doctrines are right. "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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

Again, many people who are vessels of false doctrine aren't aware of the fact that their doctrines are false because they many have turned away from the truth. Then again, there are those wolves who intentionally wear a shepherd's clothing with the intention of misleading and devouring the sheep. A few false prophets and leaders you'll find in today's traditional church includes:

- Witches who prophesy for financial or material gain. They title themselves with the word "prophet" because it relaxes a hungry people; a people who do not question what they are being fed as long as it comes from someone with a religious title. These false prophets oftentimes

require money or gifts before they prophesy. Some may ask directly, while others ask indirectly. An example of directly asking would be someone who said that for a gift of a certain dollar amount, they could read into someone's life or release a Word of God for that person. An example of indirectly asking would be someone who pays more attention and prophesies more to the people who give, but oftentimes, ignore those who don't give or those who don't give a lot. Without words, they rebuke those who aren't giving, and teach them that if they want a Word from Heaven, they'd pay for it. Another example would be someone who prophesies first, and then asks for something in return. I've had quite a few to do this with me. They prophesied, and afterward, told me they were in the market for a logo, but had no money. This was witchcraft, and their prophecies were sent forth for the purpose of selfish gain.

- Witches who prophesy for glory. It's hard to fathom that a man won't love money, and that's why many false teachers go by undetected. We see them preaching against the leaders whose churches have grown due to financial backing from their congregations. But there are many people out there who don't care about money; they care about power, and they can oftentimes be the most dangerous of them all. They want titles; they want glory, and they want recognition.
- Devil-filled people who have stopped trying to silence their demons, and have come to believe that the voices they hear are from God. If you meet enough people in leadership, you will run into what the world refers to as the classic schizophrenic. These characters aren't easily discerned because they too can learn scriptures, and they can oftentimes deliver powerful sermons. After speaking with hundreds, or maybe thousands of leaders, I have met some who've told me some pretty outlandish stories, including stories of being followed by the F.B.I., used in scientific experiments or having had monitoring devices placed in their homes by the government. Such characters truly believe they are prophets, and even though they give out false prophecies, they are oftentimes unaware of their own deceptions.

Of course, there are more out there, but we must remain prayerful at all times. The only way to discern a false prophet is by having the true Word of God within you. It is to have an intimate relationship with the Lord, so you'll know His voice. “And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (John 10:4-5).

It is absolutely necessary for us, as believers, to get our Bread daily. We can't just feast on the Word once a week, because the enemy is busy everyday and he knows every scripture in that Bible. He knows his rights and what he does not have the right to do, but when you aren't aware of his rights, he will send false teachers amongst you to lead you towards destruction.

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Galatians 2:4).

The Pharisaic Leader

Another false teacher is one often referred to as the Pharisee. If you'll notice, the word "pharisee" is very similar to the word "pharaoh." The word "pharisee" means: separated one. The word "pharaoh" means: great house. One of the characteristics of Pharisees mentioned in the Bible is that they were just as judgmental as they were hypocritical. They wore the best clothes, and they were respecters of men. They taught scriptures to the people, but denied the Word. They looked for error in Christ, just as they looked and continue to look for errors amongst Christians. Christ called them children of the devil. They wore priestly garments and could quote scripture without fail. They made sure that the members upheld the law of the Old Testament and they observed the religious feasts religiously. Today, you will still find the Pharisee very much alive and thriving within many traditional churches and religions. They mentally imprison the people who eat from their tables. They teach their members what is right in their eyes, and what is wrong in their eyes. Without a relationship with God, they cannot depend on the Lord for understanding of the scriptures; therefore, they do as Saul did. They turn to witches and false doctrine trying to find a Word from the Lord. They practice divination within the four walls of the spiritual brothels they refer to as their churches. They cause God's people to whore after other gods, and they impart what's on their life to the people who raise their hands in surrender to them...and not God. They are wolves masquerading as shepherds, and they devour God's people by leading them astray. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Additionally, such religions often encourage their believers to separate from other believers because they believe they are the great house of the Lord; the only righteous people. Many people have found them out after trying to separate from them.

When a wolf hunts, it often hunts in packs. A wolf prefers its prey to run, and is often intimidated by any large animals that stand their ground against them. You will find many false teachers and prophets using this same behavior. They will oftentimes gather up others to help them attack a believer who is trying to get away from them or their doctrines. They love to come against people in large numbers because their intention are to make anyone who attempts to flee from them feel as if they are not in God's will. In doing so, they paralyze them with fear and poison them with doubt. This makes it easy for the enemy to devour them. Anytime someone feeds on the Word of God in their spare time, they will eventually mature in the Lord. As God matures them, they become aware of the fact that they are being misled. When they attempt to walk away from the wolves that have been misleading them, the leader gives chase with lies, accusations and false prophecies. Oftentimes, they do this in packs (or large numbers), but when the person has grown enough to turn around and confront them, they become intimidated and flee.

Please know these things about a false prophet:

- They love words, but they hate the Word of God.
- They know scripture, but they have no Word in them.
- They love to prey on babes in Christ.
- They love to prey on wounded souls.

- They oftentimes do not encourage their followers to read their Bibles or have a relationship with God, and when they do, they give them other books written within that religion to ensure they don't go outside what they are taught.
- They look and sound like true Prophets of God.
- Their darkness is often revealed when someone they've been preying on disagrees with them or tries to separate themselves from them.
- They are often respecters of persons.
- They often prophesy good things to whomever they respect.
- They often prophesy bad things to whomever they don't respect, or they'll just ignore them entirely.
- They oftentimes prophesy when they see something they want or when in the presence of influential people.
- They are driven by numbers present, not numbers saved.
- They often have trouble hiding the sin within themselves, even though they present themselves as prophets of God.
- They hate holiness and will often accuse a true man or woman of God of being judgmental.
- They hate true worship.
- They hate to be rebuked.
- They rarely send out disciples unless those disciples are bringing souls to their ministry, not the Lord.
- When their disciples go out, they don't just carry Bibles; they carry documents that promote their beliefs.
- Their prophecies change when their moods change.
- They see other ministries as competitors and not brethren.
- They often speak against other men and women of the cloth in an attempt to discredit them.
- To them, their members are personal properties of the church, and have no rights to disagree with them or question them.

Pharaoh-Like Behavior Amongst True Leaders

There are many men and women of God who do fear and love the Lord. Their intentions are to lead God's people to Him, but it's easy to get off track along the way because of the insatiable desires of the flesh. The flesh has to be killed daily; otherwise, it will battle with your spirit man for the lead.

As leaders, there are some behaviors you have to be aware of; behaviors that usually indicate that you are being seduced by a spirit to sin against God. Always remember that you have to keep your flesh in check so you don't end up falling like so many of your predecessors.

1. The people of God are to be taught by you and then released to teach others. Too many leaders begin to grow their congregations or followings, but rarely send out disciples into the streets to win back the souls for the Lord. Remember, the people do not belong to you.

2. Be mindful of your thinking patterns. Anytime you begin to see the ministry as “your” ministry and not God's ministry, you are out of line. God is not a God of division, but of unity. Rebuke those thoughts as often as they rise.
3. Anytime you feel jealousy rising up against someone who has a similar ministry, you are out of line. This often indicates that you have put yourself first, but you use the Name of the Lord to win souls for your team and gain momentum with your ministry. Jealousy does not belong in the church...period!
4. Be careful that you do not lead any members into sin, and don't become accepting of sin for the sake of keeping members. Remember, that's what happened to the church of Ephesus. They had members in sexual sin, but they did not rebuke them. For that, they were chastened. Tell the truth; rebuke the sheep, and they will love you. Anyone who walks away did not walk away from you; they walked away from the truth.
5. When a member leaves your church building, don't assume they've left the Lord, and don't try to pray them down. Instead, pray that God leads them to another place where they can be fed the true and uncompromising Word of God.
6. Understand that members who were once babies will eventually grow up. Don't always assume that you can't receive a Word or rebuke from them because they once dined at your table. Pride keeps so many leaders from receiving a message they've been praying for.
7. Never look down on anyone in your church. People come from different backgrounds, but are all creations of God. Remember, Saul looked down upon David, but when he realized that David would be exalted in his place, he sought to take David's life.
8. Never assume you know God's plan for someone unless He reveals it to you.
9. Stay tuned into God so you won't hold onto a sheep that God has now labeled a shepherd. There are too many shepherds following shepherds, when God needs them to be out there gathering sheep.
10. Don't let anyone come and teach the sheep entrusted in your care, and definitely don't let anyone lay hands on the sheep in your care. Remember, the Bible says you watch over their souls.
11. Many leaders have stumbled because they kept trying to pour out when they needed to be filled.