

**I want to be a true pastor**

**James Kim**

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## Introduction

We are faced with a world where it is difficult to distinguish a false pastor from a true pastor. It has become very difficult to tell who is the true pastor and who is the false pastor, just like a male and a female of insect. The reason is because the false pastor looks so real. That's why the false pastor is so good at covering himself up right now to look like the true pastor. The false pastor seems holy on the outside. He also preaches well and prays hard. He devotes himself in serving the church as well as serving the community a lot. He also focuses on world missions. So people praise him. Not only the church members are proud of him, but also the people in the community call him a "good pastor." Even his family members say they respect their sincere husband and father. But inside, the false pastor is a slave to all kinds of greed. He loves money like a Pharisee. He is only fattening himself. He also loves another woman. He's not only coveting his neighbor's wife, he's even coveting church women. His lust for honor is rising higher and higher. He can't fathom how high he wants to go. He says with his lips that he is fulfilling a great vision for the glory of God. But in his heart he is fulfilling his desire and ambition. Now he is pursuing his own glory, even stealing the glory of God. There are more and more of these false pastors. And the more and more they are, the more they are sinning against God. As a result, more and more believers are getting hurt and suffering from the false pastors. More and more believers are leaving the church because of the false pastors. Even those who have left the faith are now innumerable. There are more and more anti-Christians as well as those who curse, criticize, and condemn pastors.

In this reality, the believers are searching for a true pastor. They want the true pastor. They are looking for the honest pastor. Because they fear God, they long for the honest pastor who deeply examines himself before God. The believers want to meet the pastor who truly loves Jesus, the pastor who loves them with the heart of Jesus Christ, and the pastor who humbly serves like Jesus. They want the pastor who proclaims the word of truth right from the pulpit, and the truthful pastor who struggles to live faithfully in life according to the word of God proclaimed. Many believers, who have lost their will to live their life of faith because of the hypocrite pastors who cannot be an example like the Pharisees, want the true pastor. What if we pastors were false, hypocritical, and not like true pastors?

I took this opportunity to prepare a manuscript for the book "Love, Marriage, Family," and also prepared the manuscript for the book "Church, Pastor, Christ." I have edited the writings I have written so far into three parts: "The true church," "I want to be a true pastor," and "Lord, I want to be a Christian." First, after preparing the manuscript for the book "The true church," I prepared the manuscript with the title "I want to be a true pastor." I am grateful and happy to be able to share this manuscript with you by e-mail or through internet websites. To the pastors who receive and read this manuscript, "Lord, I want to be a true pastor," I hope and pray that you too can pray "Lord, I want to be a true pastor" as well. I hope and pray that those church members who receive and read this manuscript can be able to pray for your own pastor, 'Lord, please make our church pastor a true pastor.'

James Kim

# A false pastor

**“Then they said to him, ‘Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful.’ The priest answered them, ‘Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD’s approval.’” (Judges 18:5-6)**

What do a false pastor and a false church member have in common? When I look at an Korean Newsjoy, I can see several things in common: (1) They can't stand the criticism, contempt, and persecution towards them, (2) They like only complement by people who say ‘You are doing good job!’, (3) They want to show off their righteousness and faith, (4) They are narrow and closed-minded, (5) They know only themselves and get angry instead of repenting their wrongdoing if someone point it out (Internet). What do you think about these five common things? I think there is one more thing in common besides these things. It is none other than that false pastor lies and the false church member believe his lie. The false pastor is a hired hand (Jn. 10:12). He never takes care of the sheep (v. 13). When he sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and flees (v. 12). The false pastor never lays down his life for the sheep (v. 11). Rather, he feeds himself (Ezek. 34:2). Nevertheless, the false church member follows such false pastor. And he or she firmly believes the word that comes out of the false pastor's mouth by saying, “Amen.” As a result, the false pastor and the false church member sin against God.

In Judges 18:5-6, there is a scene of conversation with five warriors of the descendants of Dan (v. 2) and a young Levite who served as a priest in Micah's house (v. 3). The content of this conversation is the request of the five spies to the young Levite and the Levitical priest's answer. The request of the five spies was, “Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful” (v. 5), and the Levite priest's answer was, “Go in peace. Your journey has the Lord's approval” (v. 6). From this content alone, we look like the five spies of the descendants of Dan and the Levitical priest seem to be fine without any problem. But when we look at the context, I cannot help but to think that they are all problematic people. First, when we consider the five spies of the descendants of Dan., the Bible says that “the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle” (v. 1). Obviously, the tribe of Dan, who was assigned their lot by lot under Joshua's leadership (Josh.19:40-46), occupied the land to some extent. But it wasn't long before the Amorites took their land (Judg. 1:34-36). The reason they were so defeated by the Amorites was because of their unbelief. Looking at this, the tribe of Dan was revealed as the most unbelieving tribe among all the tribes (Park). These five spies from the tribe of Dan, the most unbelieving tribe, ask the Levite priest to inquire of God for them to show their faith. But one thing we need to make clear here is that they asked the hired priest (Judg. 18:5). In the end, their unbelief made it impossible to distinguish the true priest from the false priest. How can we know that the Levite priest in Micah's house was a false and a hired priest? When Micah said to the young Levite, “Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten

pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance” (17:10), that your Levite agreed to live with Micah (v. 11). The reason the young Levite agreed with Micah's proposal was because what Micah did for him (18:4). So he had Micah hire him (v. 4). The Levite priest who was thus hired by Micah's house later was asked by the five spies of the descendant of Dan, “... come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?” (v. 19, the Levite priest glad, and took the ephod, household idols and the graven image, and went among the people of the tribe of Dan (v. 20). Is this young Levite really a priest? Isn't he a hired priest? The five spies of the tribe of Dan said to the young priest, “Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going will be prosperous” (v. 5). At that time, the Levite priest said to them, “Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord's approval” (v. 6). Upon hearing this, the five spies who left Micah's house eventually came to a place called Laish, which they saw was very good (v. 9). Why, in their opinion, Laish was a very good land, because “there is no lack of anything that is on the earth” (v. 10). The land was “a spacious land” (v. 10), and “a secure people” (v. 10) who were in it living in security” (v. 7). The people were quiet and secure (v. 27). Because there was nothing lacking in the land, the people living there were prosperous (v. 7). So when they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, they told their brothers “Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over” (vv. 8-9).

As I meditated on these verses, I thought that there is nothing more dangerous if the false church members have their own conviction that the false pastor's lie (prophecy?) has been fulfilled. The reason I think so is because when the five spies of the Danites came to a place called Laish, where there was no lack of anything, and saw the land, they must have been convinced that their way was before God, according to the word of the Levite priest who was living in Micah's house. In other words, I think those five spies from the tribe of Dan, the most unbelieving tribe, were convinced they had reached Laish when they went on the road after hearing the flattery of the young Levite, the hired priest. Even though in reality, the land of Laish was a very good land and there was nothing lacking, but in the end, the Danites there fell into idolatry, the engraved image Micah made (vv. 27, 30, 31). In the end, unbelief not only makes us to see the false priest, but also makes us to hear and believe the false priest's lies and makes us to obey. As a result, unbelief caused the descendants of Dan to disobey God and sin against Him.

Don't you think there are many false church members who disobey God and sin against Him like the descendants of Dan? Worse than that, there are more and more false pastors that those false members are following. And when we see false church members who hear the lies of these false pastors and believe their words and obey them, it is very unfortunate that both false pastors and false church members are being deceived by their lies. In particular, when we see enthusiastic false church members who say that they have received grace (?) by the false pastor's lies and obey them with confidence, it makes us feel really frustrated and pathetic. But how could this be the church members' fault? This is the responsibility of the false pastor. The responsibility is that he isn't preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is because he is preaching the the false gospel. The responsibility is because he spreads cheap grace. The responsibility is because he isn't preaching the truth of God, but rather a flattering lesson that scratches the itchy ears of false believers (2 Tim. 4:3). Why is the false pastor so irresponsible? The reason is

because the false pastor is pursuing a Laish-style life. In other words, the false pastor is looking for a place that is very good for him, a place where he lacks nothing, a place where he can live leisurely and without worries, a place where he can enjoy peace and safety and where he can enjoy wealth. Although the false pastor cries out with their lips, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want” (Ps. 23:1), in his heart he actually he longs for and prefers a life in which there is no lack more than God. The false pastor is truly irresponsible not only before God but also before the members of the church. After all, because of the false pastor's unbelief and disobedience, the false church members are also bearing the fruits of disbelief and disobedience. And it seems that there are more and more false church members in this world because of the false pastors. Although we deserve to be criticized, we are being praised. So what should we do? When we are criticized, we should repent, but instead we are only getting angry. The problem seems really serious.

## **The false pastor and the false church members**

**“Because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives.” (Ezekiel 13:22)**

The false pastor preaches “out of his own imagination” (Ezek. 13:2) like a false prophet. And he preaches like the false prophet “following his own spirit and has seen nothing” (v. 3). The false pastor is “the foolish pastor” (v. 3). He is like a jackal among ruins (v. 4). In other words, the false pastor always destroys people's souls (Park). He says that God has spoken, and speaks of “falsehood/a false vision and lying divination” (vv. 6, 7, 8, 9). The false pastor, like the false prophet, tempts God's people by saying “Peace” when there is no peace (vv. 10, 16). In a word, he speaks the false words of comfort (Park). The false pastor never rebukes like a true prophet. The false pastor doesn't proclaim God's words of warning, rebuke, and God's holy words to point out and expose sins to the church members who are sinning against God. He proclaims the false words of comfort from his own heart because he thinks that the church members who are sinning need comfort. How can there be true comfort when the problem of sin is not resolved by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross? Since there is no peace because of the problem of sin, how can the pastor preach that there is peace? It is like building sand and cover it with whitewash (v. 10). Now, the false pastor is building the members on the sand and making the members appear as if they are whitewashed on the outside. The false pastor is encouraging the church members not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives (v. 22). He is giving false comfort. The true comfort is to repent their sin and return from their sinful ways and so save their lives. At the same time, the false pastor is disheartening the righteous with his lies, when God has brought them no grief (v. 22). Because of this false pastor, there are countless false church members.

The false church members listen to lies of the false pastor (v. 19). They say “Amen” and that they have received grace when the false pastor preaches “Peace” where there is no peace (vv. 10, 16). And with joy, they leave the church and go out into the world and commit another sin with the power of the cheap grace they have received. Still, they live a life of a church member that neither does nor considers sin a sin. However, when the true pastor preaches “There is no peace” or ‘Peace can be found only when you repent and receive forgiveness of sin’ during the Sunday worship, they will be tempted by the pastor's sermon and hate the pastor and eventually leave the church. Their hearts are so hardened and intoxicated with self-righteousness. They don't realize that there is no peace in their hearts because of their sin. But rather they say that they lost peace in their hearts and leave their churches in complaints and resentment because they think they are righteous and the pastor preaches “There is no peace” and ‘Repent of your sins.’ Such false church members like to hear a sermon about peace when there is no peace. They don't put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they gather around them a great

number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3). And even worse, the false church members expect that the lies they have heard to be fulfilled (Ezek. 13:6, 19). How can they expect the false prophets' false visions and their lying divinations (vv. 6, 7, 8, 9) out of their own imagination (v. 2) to be fulfilled (v. 6)? Certainly they are foolish church members. After all, the false church members are destroying their own souls. They continue to walk in their sinful ways because they are encouraged by listening to the false pastor who preaches "Peace" when there is no peace and who make them not to turn from their evil ways. Still, they believe that they are now on the path of righteousness. Therefore, the false church members don't feel the need to confess and repent their sins to their holy God. Even because of these countless false church members, there are countless false pastors.



## **The false pastors and the foolish church members**

**“Their visions are false and their divinations a lie. They say, "The LORD declares," when the LORD has not sent them; yet they expect their words to be fulfilled. ... You have profaned me among my people for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. By lying to my people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live.” (Ezekiel 13:6, 19)**

Now, God's sheep are suffering because of the greed of the pastors. Now, the flock of God is leaving the church because of the pride of the pastors. Now, the holy name of God is being defiled by the sins of the pastors (Ezek. 36:20, 39:7, 43:8). Now, because of the sins of the pastors, they have profaned God among His people (13:19).

In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, the false prophets profaned God among His people (verse 19). How did they profane God? They profaned God by prophesying out of their imagination (vv. 2, 17). They profaned God by following their own spirit and had seen nothing (v. 3). They said “The Lord declares” and their visions are false and their divinations a lie (v. 6). Although they said, “The Lord declares” though God had not spoken, they had seen false visions and uttered lying divinations (v. 7). That is, the false prophets tempted God's people by saying, “Peace,” when there was no peace (vv. 10, 16). This was the lie of the false prophets. How could there be peace for the Israelites who were sinning against God? How could there be peace for the Israelites who ignored God's warnings and rebukes and continued to worship idols and sin against God? Nevertheless, the false prophets falsely prophesied “Peace,” and the Israelites listened to that lie (v. 19). How did the Israelites immediately hear such lie of the false prophets? Perhaps the reason was because just as the false prophets wanted their words to be fulfilled (v. 6), so the Israelites wanted that false prophecy to be fulfilled. In other words, even though the Israelites were sinning against God, they expected peace rather than God's discipline. That is why they preferred to listen to the lies of the false prophets rather than to listen to the words of the true God told through the true prophet Ezekiel. What a deceptive work of Satan.

Even now, Satan is making countless false pastors preach as they please. Now, those false pastors aren't preaching a sermon of repentance to the church members who are sinning. Rather, they are preaching a sermon of blessing. Rather, those false pastors are now preaching encouraging unrepentant members to continue to sin against God. Now they are preaching the sermon of comfort and healing to church members who aren't playing the role of light and salt in the world. The false pastors are “foolish” pastors in the sight of God (v. 2). What is truly absurd is that countless members of the church are hearing the false sermon of the false pastors. What's even more absurd is

that so many church members are now shouting, “Amen, Amen,” as they receive ‘cheap grace’ from the false pastors’ vain words. How foolish are these believers? However, after hearing the false sermon, the foolish church members pray and expect that the lying sermon will come true. This is the culmination of their folly. Now, God is waiting for them to repent of their sins and return. The foolish pastors expect the lies they preached on their own accord will be fulfilled. Even the foolish church members who heard the false sermon are persuaded by the lies of the false pastors, harboring the same expectations and leading a religious life with perverted passion. So how can we serve as the light and salt of the world? On the contrary, we can only profane God.

## The false pastor and the true pastor

**“Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?” declares the LORD. ‘Is not my word like fire,’ declares the LORD, ‘and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?’” (Jeremiah 23:28-29)**

Am I a false pastor or a true pastor? How do you differentiate between the false pastor and the true pastor?

As I meditate on the false prophets and the true prophet based on the words of Jeremiah 23:28-29, I, as a pastor, personally want to become a true pastor by receiving lessons from the true pastor while thinking about the false pastor and the true pastor.

### First of all, who are the false prophets?

The false prophets speak of a dream. Here, “dream” is “a vision” of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord (v. 16). Then, what was the dream that the false prophets spoke of in their own imagination during the time of Jeremiah? In other words, what was the vain thing they taught the Israelites? (v. 16) It was, “You will have peace” and “Calamity will not come upon you” (“everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart”) (v. 17). It must have been a good sound to hear from the Israelites who were sinning against God. The vain thing wasn’t true. It was a lie. The false prophets prophesied falsely in the name of God (v. 25). They stole the word of God (v. 30). Therefore, the false prophets deceived God’s people by using their tongues and declared and prophesied “false dreams” and led God’s people astray (vv. 31-32). They prophesied falsehood and “the deception of their own heart” (v. 26). They led the Israelites astray (v. 13) “by their falsehoods and reckless boasting” (v. 32). The prophets of the northern nation of Israel [“the prophets of Samaria” (v. 13)] were foolish and entrusted Baal to prophesy to the Israelites (v. 13). In other words, they fell into syncretism and seemed to draw near to God with their lips, but in their hearts they were committing idolatry. In the midst of this, they led the Israelites astray by giving them “dreams”, “visions” and “false prophecies” (v. 13). Then what of the prophets of the southern kingdom of Judah? The prophets of the southern kingdom of Judah [“the prophets of Jerusalem” (vv. 14, 15)] practiced abominations by committing adultery (v. 14). In other words, the Jerusalem prophets were morally corrupt. And they made the land “full of adulterers” (v. 10). The prophets who committed adultery were producing many people who commit adultery. Yet, instead of turning away from their wickedness, God’s people who committed adultery strengthened their hands (v. 14). In a word, all the land was polluted by the polluted prophets (v. 15). The uncleanness came out of the defiled prophets and spread throughout the land (v. 15).

Therefore, the conduct of all the people was evil, and their efforts weren't right [(v. 10) "... heir course also is evil And their might is not right"]. The false prophets are evil. They did evil, even in the house of God (v. 11). The false prophets are of no benefit to God's people (verse 32).

The false pastors don't preach the word from God's mouth, but rather "the deception of their own heart" (v. 26). They spit lies out of their false heart. They preached a sermon of comfort to God's people who were sinning, saying, "You will have peace," and "Calamity will not come upon you" (v. 17). The false pastors scratch the itching ears of their listeners rather than preach sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3). There is no correction, no rebuke, no encouragement (v. 2). Rather than turning back God's people from their wickedness, they strengthened them to continue to sin (Jere. 23:14). The false pastors are misleading the church members (v. 13). It has to be because the false pastors themselves are running the wrong way (v. 21). They do evil by defiling themselves, even committing evil deeds even in the house of God. And eventually defilement comes out of them and pollutes the whole church.

### Then who is the true prophet?

The true prophet speaks the word of God faithfully (v. 28). The true prophet listens to God and hears His word (v. 18). He receives the word of God and faithfully delivers it to God's people (v. 28). He never wag his tongue like the false prophets (v. 31). The word preached by the true prophet is "like fire" and "like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces" (v. 29). Therefore, the true prophet faithfully proclaims the word of power that can melt and break the hardened hearts of souls. By faithfully preaching that mighty word, the true prophet causes God's people to "turn from their evil ways and from their evil deeds" (v. 22). He causes God's people to remember God's name (v. 27) and come to Him. Therefore, the true prophet is benefits God's people (v. 32).

The prophet Jeremiah was the true prophet. He was never a dreamer like the false prophets who prophesized false dreams. As a result, the prophet Jeremiah never prophesied lies on his own accord and didn't cause the Israelites to go astray. Rather, he was a prophet who received the word of God and diligently preached the word of God in order to lead the Israelites to the right way. But the Israelites didn't listen to the prophet Jeremiah. Rather, they persecuted the true prophet Jeremiah. Nevertheless, whether they heard it or not, the prophet Jeremiah delivered the word of God to the Israelites who persecuted him. He faithfully obeyed the word of God. The word of God that came out of the mouth of the true prophet Jeremiah was the truth, and the life of the true prophet who preached the truth was true.

I wonder if I am a true pastor like the prophet Jeremiah or a false pastor like the false prophets who prophesized the false dreams. Can you tell the difference between the false pastor and the true pastor?

## **A pastor who likes to drink**

**“Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die--it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations -- and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.” (Leviticus 10:9-11)**

I remember hearing that some second-generation pastors born in America drink alcohol. I was a little surprised to hear that they were drinking alcohol even though they graduated from a conservative seminary. But these days, pastors don't seem to be very surprised about drinking alcohol. Perhaps the reason is maybe because some professors who are famous in seminaries are also drinking alcohol. I was born and raised in a pastor's family, and what I saw and learned was that pastors should not drink and smoke. But these days, at least not only the church members but also the pastors seem to be more open to alcohol than ever before.

In Leviticus 10:9, we see that God is commanding Aaron the priest not to drink wine or strong drink when entering the tent of meeting. This is an everlasting ordinance that Aaron and his sons must follow. God gave this ordinance for fear that Aaron and his sons would be put to death because they drank wine or strong drink. The reason God spoke directly to Aaron was because Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which God had not commanded them (v. 1), and were killed (v. 2). When I think of these words, I receive a lesson that we pastors should serve the church as God commands. But I think the problem is that too many of us, the pastors, are serving the church in a way that God doesn't command. Apart from the church members, it seems that we pastors first are trying to carry out the ministry in too many worldly ways. We cannot deny that there are too many humanistic ideas in the church. As a result, many of us are serving the church according to the people's way rather than the way God wants us to.

Why did God tell Aaron not to drink wine or strong drink when entering the tent of meeting? What was the purpose? I want to think in two ways:

**The first purpose is “to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean.”**

Look at Leviticus 10:10 – “and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean.” The purpose God commanded Aaron and his sons not to drink wine or strong drink was so that they would not lose their discernment. Can you imagine how a pastor who has lost his discernment serves the church? Of course we pastors won't get drunk. But it seems that there are too many temptations around us that blind many pastors as if they are in a state of drunkenness. To give one example, it seems that too many pastors have fallen into the temptation of money and are intoxicated with money, serving the church in a state of spiritual confusion. How many pastors are there in the world who know what Jesus said that it is impossible to serve both God and money, but fall into the temptation of riches and get drunk of money, serve money and become wage workers for money? So, even if we are pointed out by the world as ‘a pastor who is drunk on money’, we have nothing to say and should not have anything to say. Of course, there aren't only the money-drunk pastors. It seems that there are many pastors who are drunk on sex. How many pastors are committing sexual depravity? As a result, the Lord's church isn't able to exert a holy influence on this world because of the pastors who are now drunk with money, and lust for honor and cannot distinguish between the holy and the profane. The pastors must have spiritual discernment in order to exert a holy spirit on this world. And in order not to lose our spiritual discernment, we should never get drunk not only on alcohol, but also on money, lust or honor. We must not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2).

**The second purpose is to “to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.”**

Look at Leviticus 10:11 – “and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.” Another reason God commanded Aaron the priest and his sons not to drink wine or strong drink was to teach the sons of Israel. If a teacher is drunk with wine or strong drink and cannot distinguish between the holy and the profane, the unclean and the clean, can he really teach all the ordinances of God that Moses commanded? Can a priest who lost his discernment and couldn't live a holy life properly teach the Israelites to live a holy life? He might teach with his lips, but he would not teach with his life. To prevent this, God commanded Aaron the priest not to drink wine or strong drink.

Just imagine. Can a money-drunk pastor properly teach the church members not to love money? Can a sexually depraved pastor properly teach the church members to resist sexual temptation? The pastor who has fallen into all kinds of greed and covetousness cannot properly teach the church members to give up greed and covetousness. He may teach with his lips, but he cannot teach with life. Of course, I don't know if I can teach God's word through a superficial life while hiding my sinful life. However, if we pastors live such a life and teach the church members, we will never have good influence upon them. One day, God will reveal them all.

We pastors should be afraid. We must be awake. We shouldn't be intoxicated with things like alcohol. We shouldn't even get close to them. We must be drunk on the word of God, which is like the sword of the Spirit and a

hammer. Rather than get drunk, we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we must distinguish between the holy and the profane and teach the flock that God has entrusted to us. When we do this, we will be able to live out God's holiness in this profane world.

## **A pastor who reveals money too much**

**“Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God. Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me.” (Numbers 22:18-19)**

‘I don’t know why our pastor keeps talking about money in the pulpit. I wish he would stop talking about money.’ It seems that there are many believers who have this kind of thinking these days. So some church members can't stand it any longer and even move to another church. It seems that some members of the church even leave the church because they are tempted by the pastor. For some reason, it seems that money is being proclaimed rather than the gospel of Jesus Christ in the church Sunday worship pulpit. Why did the church come to this point? The reason is because of us the pastors who love money.

Although Jesus clearly said, “You cannot serve both God and Money” (Lk. 16:13), we pastors who love money are serving two masters, God and Money. Even though we have to hate money and love God, we love money and value money very much (Mt. 6:24). Although we who love money preach from the pulpit with our lips, “I love you, O Lord, my strength” (Ps. 18:1), in real life we believe, “Money is my power,” and are busy accumulating money. On the outside, we seem to have a very good faith in God. But on the inside we believe in money more than God. We seem to love the Lord very hard on the outside, but on the inside we love money more. Such pastors are like the Pharisees in the Bible. Now, we outwardly fast (Mt. 9:14), keep the Lord’s Day thoroughly holy (Mt. 12:2, Mk. 2:24), offer tithe (Mt. 23:23), and don’t even eat with “sinners” (Mk. 2:16). On the outside, there seems to be no uncleanness (Mk. 7:5) and looks clean (Mt. 23:25), but inside we are “full of greed and wickedness” (Lk. 11:39). Now we are greedy and don’t know that we never have enough (Isa. 56:11). Now we have become pastors who lack understanding and who seek our own gain (v. 11). From small church pastors to large church pastors, they are all greedy for gain and practicing deceit (Jere. 6:13). Because of that greed, the pastors became a fool (Eccle. 7:7). Now money is corrupting our heart (v. 7). Because of that greed, we are also living a life of debauchery, secretly from our families and church members (Mt. 23:25). Now we even engage in sexual immorality and of any kind of impurity (1 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:3). In this way, we have eyes full of adultery and never stop sinning (2 Pet. 2:14). We are experts in greed (v. 14). That is why we who are now led by greed are standing on the pulpit of the church and revealing money too much. But what's even scarier than this is that, despite the fact that our hearts are full of greed, we stand at the pulpit and don’t reveal the money, and are preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ with our false hearts and lips. At that time, none of the believers who are listening to the



gospel will realize that we are wage earners who love money (maybe our wives at least can guess? For some reason, even our wives may not know). So now, it is difficult for believers to distinguish who is a true Christian and who isn't. And it is very difficult to distinguish who is the true pastor and who is the false pastor. How can we tell them apart?

I have one person in the Bible who confuses me by asking, 'Is this a true prophet or a false prophet?' That person is "Balaam" in the context of Numbers 22:18-19. When I first started to read the Bible with interest in a man named Balaam, as I read these words of Balaam, I thought, 'Oh, this man must be a true prophet: "... I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me ..." (v. 8), "...or the LORD has refused to let me go with you" (v. 13), "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God" (v. 18), "...I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back" (v. 34), "...Behold, I have come now to you! Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak" (v. 38), "...Must I not be careful to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?" (23:12), "...Did I not tell you, 'Whatever the LORD speaks, that I must do'?" (v. 26), "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord What the LORD speaks, that I will speak" (24:13). If we read only these words, wouldn't it be enough to assume that this man Balaam was the true prophet? When I first read these words, I misunderstood.

Then, as I read these verses about Balaam, I began to think, 'Oh, this man is not the true prophet, but the false prophet: "So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him" (22:7), "But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him ..." (v. 22), "...Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me" (v. 32), "For there is no omen against Jacob, Nor is there any divination against Israel ..." (23:23), "When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens ..." (24:1). As I read these verses, I thought that Balaam was "the diviner" who practiced divination (Jos. 13:22) rather than a true prophet of God. However, I was a little confused about how such diviner spoke as if he didn't want the silver and gold that filled the house of Balak, king of Moab, and said that he could not do less or more in violation of God's word, speaking like a person who only proclaims the word of God.

Then, while meditating on Balaam a little more, I saw the words of Balaam written in other places besides Numbers 22-24, and I was convinced that 'this man isn't a true prophet of God at all': "Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD" (Nub. 31:16), "For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you" (Deut. 23:4), "In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination" (Jos. 13:22), "because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.)"

(Neh. 13:2), “They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness” (2 Pet. 2:15), “Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion” (Jud. 1:11), “Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality” (Rev. 2:14). Looking at these words, we can see that the man named Balaam is clearly the false prophet. He was the diviner who practiced divination (Jos. 13:22). He was the one who was tempted by the bribe of Balak the king of Moab (Deut. 23:4, Neh. 13:2). He fell into the temptation of the bribe because he loved the wages of wickedness (2 Pet. 2:15). As a result, the Israel fell by the stumbling block Balaam had set, playing the harlot with the daughters of Moab in Peor, bowing down to their gods, Baal of Peor, whom they served (Num. 25: 1-3). The Israelites went to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved (Hos. 9:10). The result was God's wrath, and a plague broke out in the camp of Israel [“a plague broke out among them” (Ps. 106:29), and 24,000 people died (Numbers 25:1-9).

In the process of reading, examining, and meditating on the words of God, I came to realize that Balaam was not the true prophet of God, but the false prophet. Amid such realization, I read and meditated on Numbers 22:18-19, and had two questions:

The first question is that Balak, king of Moab, sent to Balaam leaders, “more numerous and more distinguished” (v. 15) than “the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian” (v. 7) and said, “Let nothing, I beg you, hinder you from coming to me; for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Please come then, curse this people for me” (vv. 16-17). Upon hearing this, Balaam replied: “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God” (v. 18). When King Balak of Moab said to Balaam, “I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me” (v. 17), Balaam replied, “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God” (v. 18). The question that came to me while reading this was, ‘Although Balak seemed not talking about giving silver and gold to Balaam but he would honor him richly, I wondered why Balaam was talking about silver and gold. Also, in Numbers 24:11, 13, it is evident that King Balak was trying to “honor” Balaam greatly if Balaam come and curse the Israelites (v. 11). But Balaam spoke about “full of silver and gold” at Balak’s house (v. 13). Then Balaam said, “I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord What the LORD speaks, that I will speak” (v. 13). I thought it was like a person who wanted silver and gold more than being honored by Balak. And the Bible verse that confirmed my thoughts was 2 Peter 2:15 – “They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness” (Note: Jud. 1:11). From this word, we can clearly see that Balaam was a man who loved silver and gold of wickedness. In a word, Balaam was the false prophet who loved money and who revealed money too much.

The second question is Numbers 22:19 – “Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me.” As I read and meditated on this Balaam's word, the first thought came to my mind: When King Balak had already sent the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian to Balaam (v. 7), Balaam said to them, “Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me” (v. 8). Then he received God's word, “Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed” (v. 12). It seemed a bit odd that Balaam told the servants whom King Balak sent the second time, “Now stay here tonight as the others did, and I will find out what else the LORD will tell me” (v. 19). Although God had already commanded clearly, “Do not go with them” (v. 12), why did Balaam pray to God again to find out “what else the Lord will tell” him (v. 19) beside what He had already said to him (v. 12). Isn't that a bit strange? Apparently, Balaam said in verse 18, “I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God.” So why did he try to find out what “else” God would tell him beside what He had already said in verse 12? Could it be that Balaam coveted the silver and gold of Balak, king of Moab? As the Apostle Peter said, Balaam was a person who “loves the wages of unrighteousness”, and he was greedy for Balak's silver and gold. So he prayed (?) to God one more time and, in addition to what God had already said, because maybe he wanted to hear the word ‘Go with them’ (Num. 22:20, 35). Of course, we have to ask another question here why did God told Balaam “Since these men have come to summon you, go with them” (v.20), even though He told him at first “Do not go with them” (v. 12) [later, “the angel of the Lord” (v. 22) also commanded Balaam to “go with men” (v. 35)]. And after saying that, God was angry when Balaam “got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab” (vv. 21-22). This is a word I don't quite understand. In the midst of this, the second half of verse 13 came to me: “Go back to your own country, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you.” One of these words of Balaam that particularly caught my eye was the phrase “has refused to let me go with you.”

Here we need to know that theologically there are two things in God's will. The two are God's "direct will" and God's "permissive will." The direct will of God is the will directly proclaimed by God. For example, Samson was a Nazarite who was offered to God, and it was never God's direct will for him to marry a Philistine woman who didn't believe in God. In other words, God's direct will for Samson wasn't to marry the foreign woman. However, Samson disobeyed God's (direct) will and married that Philistine woman. This is the permissive will of God. The word God permitted here means that Samson was able to marry that Philistine woman because God allowed him to break with God's direct will and marry the Philistine woman despite his parents' stubborn opposition. The important thing here is that holy God wants holy saints to marry believers and form holy families. Nevertheless, even if we disobey God's direct will and try to marry an unbeliever, God can allow it. Then why would God allow that marriage? Maybe the reason is that God wants to use us as an instrument to preach the gospel to her so that she may believe in Jesus Christ. In the end, God respects our free will and allows us to make choices that are disobeying God's direct will, so that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). Applying these two wills of God to the words of Numbers 22, God's direct will was that Balaam should not be with the men sent by Balak, king of Moab, and not curse the people of Israel (Num. 22:12). Nevertheless, Balaam, who coveted the King Balak's silver and gold, the wage of unrighteousness, and so who wanted to go with the King Balak's servants, disobeyed God's direct will. And God allowed Balaam to go with the Balak's servants (vv. 20, 35) [Cf.: “God gave

them over ...” (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28)]. So God was angry, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way where Balaam was riding on his donkey with his drawn sword in his hand in order to stop Balaam (Num. 22:22-24). Interestingly, when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field (v. 23) in order to save his master Balaam. But the donkey was struck by Balaam three times with his stick (vv. 23, 25, 27) because Balaam didn’t see the angel of the Lord with his drawn sword in his hand. On the contrary, Balaam said, “You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now” (v. 29), to the donkey who didn’t do anything wrong (v. 28) and who had been faithful to him (v. 30). Isn’t this funny that it wasn’t the donkey that made the fool of Balaam but himself who didn’t see the angel of the Lord with his drawn sword and who didn’t know that his donkey try to save him? Isn’t this funny that Balaam said to the donkey “If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now” (v. 29) even though it was him who didn’t see the drawn sword of the angel of the Lord? Can’t we see this ridiculously funny scene even in the church now?

I remember the late Pastor Han-heum Ok saying that it is very difficult to distinguish a real Christian from a fake Christian, just as it is very difficult to distinguish a male from a female insect. In this day and age, we are living in a world where there are many counterfeit Christians who are very similar to real Christians. In this world where it is difficult to tell which is a real luxury item and which is a fake, in this world where counterfeit products look like the real thing, it has become very difficult for us to distinguish the real from the fake. But I think this fact does not apply only to lay Christians. This also applies to pastors like us. In other words, it is very difficult to distinguish who is a true pastor and who is a false pastor. He looks like a real pastor because he seems to love the Lord and love neighbors very much. Also, his sermons that he preaches from the pulpit are so good and seem genuinely evangelical and reformed. But I think that pastor could be the false pastor too. The reason I think so is because of what Jesus said to “the crowd and to his disciples” about “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees” (Mt. 23:1, 2). Look at Matthew 23:3 – “So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach” (Mt. 23:3). Jesus said not to do what the hypocrites, that the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, do, but to “do everything they tell you”. What was the reason? Couldn’t it be because what they were saying wasn’t wrong (was right) even though they didn’t practice what they preached? Of course, Jesus wasn’t here talking to the crowd and his disciples to do the traditions (the traditions of the elders) that the Pharisees attached to the Mosaic Law. What Jesus was saying was to do the law of Moses, which the scribes and Pharisees had spoken of. In doing so, Jesus told the assembled crowd and his disciples to obey the law of Moses, but not to imitate the hypocrisy of scribes and Pharisees who only talk and don’t do.

In the same way, there are pastors in the church that believers should not imitate. These are the pastors who are hypocrites. Even if these hypocrites pastors don’t live the right life at home during the week, at least in the church, they can proclaim the correct word of God from the pulpit during the Sunday worship service. We can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ from the pulpit even while violating the command to live the gospel worthy of life (Phil. 1:27) (of course, the fact that the gospel isn’t being preached from the pulpit is the most serious problem). Even the pastors, like the Pharisees, love money in their hearts (Lk. 6:14). But they can preach the gospel of Jesus

Christ while preaching from the pulpit and pretending not to reveal their love for money. Knowing that the love of money is the root of all evil, they covet money (1 Tim. 6:10). But at the Sunday worship service, they preach the gospel, the good news, in front of the church members at the pulpit, and even bless them in the name of Jesus. The true believers should not imitate these pastors. In particular, we must not imitate pastors like Balaam, who was a false prophet who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Therefore, the believers should not love money and imitate these idolatrous pastors. They must not imitate the pastors who love money and walk “in a crooked and depraved generation” (Phil. 2:15) without restraining their feet (Jere. 14:10). The believers should not imitate the pastors who serve both God and money (Mt. 6:24). They should not imitate the pastors who reveal money too much.

But what is so surprising and shocking is the fact that God blesses the believers whom God loves even through such pastors who love money and reveal money too much. We can know this from the fact that God blessed the people of Israel three times even through the false prophet Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness (Num. 24:10). This is because God allowed Balaam to go with the servants of Balak, king of Moab (22:12-13, 20, 35), but never allowed him to curse His people, the Israelites (v. 12). God forcibly prevented the false prophet Balaam, who loved silver and gold, from cursing the Israelites (24:11). Why did God do that? The reason is because the Israelites were blessed (22:12). You are the ones who have been blessed by God. Really, the Bible says to all of you Christians, “Blessed are you, O Israel!” (Deut. 33:29) The reason is that there is no people like you who are saved by the Lord (v. 29). God demonstrates His love for us in that while you were yet sinners, Christ died for you (Rom. 5:8). Therefore, the God of love, who is the source of blessings, works powerfully even through such pastors who love money and reveal it too much, and is blessing you Christians today.

## Pastors who boast numbers

**“The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, ... But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. ....” (Judges 7:2, 4)**

I remember hearing a sermon from a pastor. There are two things that the pastors must count every week: the number of members and the amount of offerings. Why does the pastor do that? Why are some pastors so sensitive to the number of members and their offerings? As I remember, when I first started serving as the senior pastor at our church, I didn't include the number of members and the amount of offerings in the weekly service program. Then later, the reason I put those numbers in the service program was because one or two members of the congregation suggested it, and I also agreed with the suggestion. The suggestion was that members had the right to know how many attended the service and how much they did offering. And because of that knowledge, it was necessary to motivate the church members to evangelize even more diligently (as I remember, they didn't mention the offering). Since then, I have been writing down the number of church members attending worship and the amount of offerings in the weekly service program. And I also look at the number of members while making a weekly service program and writing down the number of members in the program. And oftentimes, I'm calculating the total number of members in our three ministries: Korean Ministries, English Ministries, and Hispanic Ministries. Then, it is true that it feels good when the number of people attending the service exceeds 100. But I'm not discouraged by the number of people who attended the service is less than 100. I am praying and looking forward to God in the hope that it would be great if only one hundred people for each ministry gather together while counting the numbers with interest in expanding the kingdom of God by nurturing, building, and sending Gideon's 300 soldiers, which is my prayer topic. Of course, the number 100 doesn't matter. This is my dream and prayer topic to become tools used by the Lord by being raised as those 100 Christ-centered visionary leaders. Nevertheless, it is sometimes very frustrating to see that the number of church members is always fixed. And there are times when I feel guilty as I ask myself 'Is it okay for me to do the ministry like this?'

If we look at Judges 7:2, 4a, God is repeatedly speaking to the judge Gideon. And the repeated word is that 'there are too many men.' God said the 32,000 Israelites who had gathered to fight the Midianites were too many. So God commanded Gideon, "Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead" (v. 3). Then 22,000 people returned, and now 10,000 men were left (v. 3). However, when God saw 10,000 men remaining, He said to Gideon, "There are still too many men" (v. 4). Why did God repeat this twice and say that the number of the Israelites was too many? Why did God twice command Gideon to reduce the number of the Israelites from 32,000 to 300? What was the reason? The Bible says: "... In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own

strength has saved her” (v. 2). In a word, God commanded that the number of the Israelites be reduced in fear that the Israelites would become arrogant and proud of themselves against God.

We must guard against pride in our hearts. In particular, we pastors should be more and more wary of arrogance infiltrating our hearts. The reason is because when we become proud, our lips will appear to boast God, but our heart will boast of ourselves and the number of our church members. And when we brag about the number of our church member, we need to guard our hearts against arrogance, because we are subtly relying on those close to us. As the number of members increases and the amount of offerings increases, the more humble we become, the more we must boast in God and depend on Him. Nevertheless, on the contrary, we become arrogant, boasting more of ourselves than God, and instead of relying entirely on God, we try to depend on those around us. Knowing this sinful inclination, God commanded Gideon to reduce the number of the Israelites. How does this command of God really sound to us?

## **Pastors who steal God's words**

**“Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who steal My words from each other.” (Jeremiah 23:30)**

One day I was walking down a road near the beach in Santa Monica when a man came up to me. He asked me to try one of two paper cups, Coke or Pepsi, and guess whether it was Coke or Pepsi. So I tried. The reason I tried it was because I drank so much Coke a day that I was sure I knew the taste of Coke. But then I picked up a cup of Pepsi, drank it, and answered “Coke”. Haha. Even now, when I think of that moment, I feel that I should not be confident. If that person showed us a glass of water and a cup of Coke and told us to guess which one was Coke, we would be able to guess which one was Coke by looking at it even without drinking it. However, Coke and Pepsi are so similar that it is difficult to tell them apart.

The reason that memory came back to me at that time was because I came to know the meaning of the original Hebrew word for “steal My words from each other” while meditating on Jeremiah 23:30 and reading Dr. Yoon-sun Park’s commentary. Its original meaning is, ‘Each one steals My words from his friend.’ And the meaning of this phrase is that false prophets obtained the words of the true prophet secretly through their friends (also false prophets), and mixed them with their own false ideas. The purpose of doing this is to cunningly make their false ideas look like the truth (Park). They prophesied the deception of their own heart (v. 26).

What a cunning work of Satan. When Satan tries to look like the truth, and mixing false ideas with the word of God, it may not be easy for us to distinguish. It is especially difficult for us to discern what is truth and what appears to be truth unless we stand firm in word of God. This is certainly the work of Satan. Satan steals the word of God and mixes lies to the word of truth. He mixes truth with lies, so that we Christians can't tell them apart. And Satan deceives us with the word of God mixed with lies, and eventually leads us to have mixed faith. In other words, Satan deceives us with truth mixed with lies (v. 32), leading us to a syncretistic faith (religious?) life. So this Satan's delusion is really dangerous and can be fatal to us. If we fall into this delusion, we will serve God and Money with an impure faith, that is, a mixed faith (Mt. 6:24). The really serious problem is that even we pastors who are church leaders are falling for this Satan's delusion. Just imagine what will happen to the members of the church when the pastors of the church fall under the delusion of this Satan and serve both God and Money? If the pastors are shepherding with mixed faith, what will happen to the church's flock? If the words preached by the pastors at the pulpit are the words of God mixed with lies, what would happen to the believers who listen to them? In the time of Jeremiah, the prophets who were called religious leaders were like that. They mixed false ideas with the word of God and prophesied to the people of Judah. They said, “The Lord has said, ‘You will have peace’” (Jere.



23:17). They also say, “as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you’” (v. 17). How could they say that they would be at peace in their hardened heart, and no calamity would come upon them? Obviously, God said to the people of Judah through Jeremiah, the true prophet, “‘If you will return, O Israel,” declares the LORD, “Then you should return to Me And if you will put away your detested things from My presence, And will not waver” (4:1). How could they be at peace, and how could calamity not come to the people of Judah who didn’t return to God, but continued to worship idols with God? It isn’t the work of the true prophet to bring the sinful people of Judah to repentance and turn to God, but rather to strengthen the hands of those who do evil, so that they would not turn from their evil (v. 14). It was the delusion of the false prophets. The really serious problem was that the wickedness of these false prophets came out of them and spread throughout the earth (v. 15).

How is this era we are living in now? Could it be that even in this day and age, the wickedness of the false pastors has come out of them and spreading all over the world? Is it possible that we the pastors are preaching in the pulpit right now by mixing false ideas with the word of God? Maybe we who should proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ are preaching a mixed gospel or “another gospel” (Gal. 1:7). Is it possible that we are teaching our church members to serve both God and Money with a mixed faith, preaching a mixed message to the church members and teaching them to serve both God and Money? If we are doing this, God is telling us: ‘Your course is evil and your might isn’t right’ (Jere. 23:10) and ‘You are polluted. Even in My house and your house, I found your wickedness’ (v. 11). Therefore, God is telling us that He will bring calamity upon us (v. 12). The reason is because we aren’t boldly speaking to the members of the church who are hard-hearted, ‘Repent and return to God’ (Jere. 3:12, 14, 22, 4:1, 25:5, 31:21), but rather are leading them astray (23:13) and are strengthening their hands (v. 14). This is leading God’s people astray by our falsehoods and reckless boasting (v. 32). This is no benefit to God’s people (v. 32). Therefore, we pastors must first repent and return to God. And our mixed faith must be purified even through suffering. Then we must proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in pure faith. We must speak the word of God in truth (v. 28). We must do this because the word of God itself is “like fire” and “like a hammer which shatters a rock” (v. 29). Then, through us, God will bring about a work of true repentance as the hearts of the believers who listen to the word of the Lord are melted and broken through the proclaimed word of God. Therefore, they will turn to God and live in obedience to God’s word with pure faith. They will no longer serve both God and Money. They will no longer be Christians who are scorned by the world. Rather, they will faithfully take on the role of light and salt of the world. I hope and pray that this amazing work of God will happen in our church.

## **The more the pastors increase ...**

**“The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful.” (Hosea 4:7)**

Is it really better to have more pastors? Is it really better to have more believers? Is it really better to have more churches? Although I feel like I have to say “yes” with my lips, I feel like I have to say “no, maybe not” with my heart. The reason is because it isn’t important whether there are many or few churches, members, or pastors. But more important is what kind of church, what kind of members, and what kind of pastors there are. In other words, it's not the quantity that matters but the quality.

In Hosea 4:7, the Bible says that the more the priests increase, the more they sinned against God. What kind of priests are the Bibles saying that the more they increase, the more they sin against God? The Bible says they are priests who don’t know God (v. 6). In other words, the more priests who rejected the knowledge of God, the more they sinned. Then, in the days of the prophet Hosea, what kind of sin did the priests who rejected the knowledge of God committed? Those ignorant priests ceased to follow God (v. 10). This is because their spirit of prostitution led them astray (v. 12). Furthermore, the ignorant priests caused the sinful instincts of God's people whom God had entrusted to them to eventually sin (v. 8). And the priests who rejected the knowledge of God hardened the hearts of the people rather than softened them (v. 16). As a result, the Israelites joined to idols (v. 17). Therefore, because of the priests who rejected the knowledge of God, “a people without understanding will come to ruin!” (v. 14). If I were to say this in today’s words, it means that the more pastors there are, the more they sin against God. What kind of pastor are we talking about here? These are the pastors who reject the knowledge of God. Even though it seems like they know a lot about the Bible, pray diligently, and serve the church well, the pastors who don’t grow in the true knowledge of God causes the sheep that God has entrusted to commit sin. In other words, the hearts of ignorant pastors relish their wickedness (v. 8). That’s why the pastors and the believers sin against God (v. 9). As a result, the understanding of the pastors and the believers, who stop following God, are taken away by the world (v. 11). So they are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer (v. 16), turn to prostitution (v. 14), and worship idols (v. 17). They are sinning against God. They no longer hear the voice of God. Rather, they are determined to follow man’s command (5:11). They are compelled to sin against God because “A spirit of prostitution is in their heart” (v. 4). Their sinful deeds don’t permit them to return to their God (v. 4). Is it better if there are more pastors who have rejected the knowledge of God?

As a pastor, I have a fearful heart as I meditate on this word of God. The reason is because as the number of pastors who have rejected the knowledge of God increases, He doesn’t punish them as He sees the church that

commits sins (4:14). I think it is a blessing for God to discipline pastors who commit sins (2:14-15). But if God doesn't punish them, then I think it is rather a curse. It could be more terrifying. I think that it is a terrible result of sin that God leaves the pastors who sin. But there is still hope for these pastors. The message of hope is the words of Hosea 5:15-6:3 – “Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me. Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. ....” The message of hope that God gives is the promise that God will not forsake the pastors who have rejected the knowledge of God, but will wait until we repent our sins through suffering and seek the face of the Lord. Holding onto that promise, we pastors must return to God and earnestly seek His face. And we must press on to acknowledge God (6:3). God desire acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings (v. 6). I hope and pray that we will be devoted to know and acknowledge God as God wants us to be.

## **Pastor, please be discerning and bless me!**

**“He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.” (Genesis 27:23)**

How many of the members of the congregation will cry out in their hearts, ‘Pastor, please be discerning and bless me!’? And how many of the pastors really hear their cry?

There is not a single person who dislikes God's blessings, whether it is church member or a pastor. But the problem is that we all like to receive every physical blessing because we don't fully enjoy all the spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3). As a result, we are no longer the spiritual men, but increasingly the man without the Spirit, losing our spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 2:14). Now we have lost our spiritual discernment to such an extent that we cannot accept the things of the Spirit of God (v. 14). Therefore, we no longer seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33). The reason is because we don't believe in God's promise, “and all these things will be added to you” (v. 33). Rather, we are now seeking “all these things” backwards first. Now we are concerned about “What will we eat?,” “What shall we drink?,” and “What will we wear for clothing” (v. 31). The Gentile eagerly seek all these things (v. 32), but now we are seeking all these things. That's how much we lost our discernment. As a result, we are being judged by the people of this world (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:15).

According to Genesis 27, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see (v. 1), he wanted to bless his eldest son Esau as much as he wanted before he died (v. 4). But he could not distinguish Esau from his brother Jacob. So in the end, Isaac blessed Jacob (v. 23) who was a deceiver in his sight (v. 12). Of course, as we know, God loved Jacob and hated Esau (Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13). So God blessed Jacob, who was chosen in the sovereignty (Cf.: Rom. 9:11ff.), through Isaac. But that doesn't justify Jacob deceiving his father Isaac [Note: Phil. 1:17 – The apostle Paul rejoiced and rejoiced because it was Christ that was preached. But he never tolerated selfish ambition or vain conceit in preaching the gospel (2:3)]. If Isaac had been young and had good eyesight, would Jacob have tried to deceive his father Isaac?

Now many of us, the pastors, are degenerated. Our spiritual eyes are darkened. So we bless our church members without discernment. Although our church members are obviously living deceitfully like Jacob and living in violation of God's commandments, the pastors are blessing them instead of rebuking them in love (Rev. 3:19; Note: Prov. 27:5). Now, we are asking God for material blessing that the church members whose spiritual eyes have been darkened are asking because our spiritual eyes also have been darkened. Although our church members aren't seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we the pastors are praying for blessings for them so that all these things can be added to them. Isn't this the time for all of us to repent instead of blessing our church members?

Now we pastors with darkened spiritual eyes are leading the church members whose spiritual eyes are also darkened. As Jesus said, the blind are leading the blind now (Mt. 15:14). As a result, both fell into a pit (v. 14). Even though we the pastors and the church members who are spiritually blinded have fallen into the pit, we cannot even discern it. To this extent, we have lost our spiritual discernment now.

How long will we ask God for material blessings? How long will we long for our pastor to pray for material blessings? Now, shouldn't we long for the message of rebuke in love rather than the prayer of blessing from the pastor? Now, shouldn't we receive God's word of rebuke through the pastor and repent in the piercing of our hearts? Why don't we ask our pastors, 'Pastor, please be discerning and bless me!' Why don't we say to our pastors with love, 'Pastor, please be discerning and bless me' and say, 'Pastor, rebuke me in love'?

## Why are pastors giving into Satan's temptations?

**“Again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, ‘Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.’ ... Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.” (2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1)**

One of Satan's temptations toward us, the pastors, is to count the number of members. As Satan makes us count the number of church members, he wants us to make the number seem large so that he can maximize vain pride and arrogance in us. Not only that, Satan stimulates our greed to make us focus on increasing the number of church members even more. Therefore, our church leaders are using all kinds of worldly methods to increase the power of the church. So these days we hear that the church is like a company. It seems that we are not thinking much about whether the method is appropriate in God's sight as the church ministry seems only caring about results. Now it seems that it's not about whether the method we use is biblical or not. It's more about whether the method can bring the desired result of increasing the number of church members or not. Isn't the head pastor of the church even demanding an increase in the number of members from the cell or department in charge of the assistant pastors? After all, Satan is making us slaves to the number of church members. And we the pastors have succumbed to the temptations of this Satan and are now preaching while inflating the number of members to make us proud. Is this really what the Lord is adding to those who are being saved (Acts 2:47), or are we the pastors stealing sheep? Why are we now giving into Satan's temptations?

The Bible 2 Samuel 24:1 says that God "incited" David to go and take a census of Israel and Judah. But in 1 Chronicles 21:1, the Bible says that it wasn't God but Satan who "incited" David to take the census. What does it mean? It means that God didn't prevent Satan from inciting David to take the census of Israel, but leave him alone (Park). In other words, God allowed Satan to tempt David into sin (permissive will of God). Why? This is because God was angry with Israel (2 Sam. 24:1) and was against Israel (1 Chron. 21:1). In other words, God wasn't angry with David and wasn't against David, but rather was angry and was against the Israelites. And the reason God was angry with them and was against them was because they followed Absalom's rebellion for a while (2 Sam. 15:12) and also supported Sheba's rebellion (20:1-2) (Park). In other words, God allowed King David's mistake to be as it was in order to punish the people of Israel for their sins (Park). As a result, God sent a plague on Israel, and 70,000 people died (24:15).

It is said that there are 10 million Christians in Korea (a quarter of the Korean population). I don't know if that's a reliable statistic. I think the number of church members is somewhat inflated. I remember a Christian newspaper article I read sometime ago. The news is that about 24 of the 50 largest churches in the world (with the

largest number of members) are in Korea. I'm not sure if the number of megachurches and the number of members of the Korean church is something to be proud of. On the surface, they are increasing the number of members by calling for salvation of souls, evangelism, and missions. But I don't know whether the Lord is adding those who are being saved to the church or whether we are multiplying those who have already been saved. What will God say when He sees this phenomenon of the Korean church? Why is God allowing Satan to tempt the church leaders to make us proud of the church members' number? Why doesn't God stop this temptation of Satan and leave it alone? Maybe the reason is because God is angry not only with us the pastors, but also with all of our church members and is against all of us. Why is God angry and opposing all of us? Maybe the reason is because we are betraying and rebelling against the Lord. In other words, perhaps because we are betraying the Lord and also rebelling against Him like teenagers. What should we do?

**First, like David, our hearts should be conscience-stricken and we must confess our sins to God.**

Look at 2 Samuel 24:10 – "... 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.'" We must be humble and truthful before a holy God and His holy word. Now we are committing a great sin in the sight of God. It is not a sin to be taken lightly. Now we are doing a very foolish thing in the sight of God. Yet we still continue to deceive ourselves and consider ourselves wise.

**Second, we, like David, should rely on God's great mercy when we are in trouble, wanting us to fall into God's hands and not the hands of men.**

Look at 2 Samuel 24:14 – "David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men." David chose to send a plague on the earth for three days rather than seven years famine or three months of fleeing from his enemies (v. 13). As a result, David loses 70,000 (v. 15) of the 1.3 million (v. 9) (note: 1.57 million in 1 Chron. 21:5). Like David, we too must choose the discipline God gives us. Even if we lose so many church members and they leave the church we serve, we must humbly receive God's discipline. Even so, we should not be obsessed with the number of church members.

**Third, like David, we must love the flock of God that God has entrusted to us.**

Look at 2 Samuel 24:17 – "Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, 'Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house.'" What a beautiful shepherd's heart. Like David, shouldn't we also have this shepherd's heart? Shouldn't we have a heart to love the flock whom God has entrusted to us and a heart to love them with God's love, knowing that one soul is more precious than the world? Are we not longing for and crying out for "many souls" rather than "one soul" to the extent that we do not even

know when we had this heart? Many, big, wide and high... Isn't the realm of greed in our heart constantly changing like this?

**Fourth and last, like David, we need to be determined and act on the promise that we will not worship the Lord without a price.**

Look at 2 Samuel 24:24 – “However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing " So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.” We should never, like David, offer unprepared worship to God without paying the price. Rather, we say, as David said, “I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing” (1 Chron. 21:24), and we must worship God with the full price. Then, the calamity God is bringing on us will cease (v. 25).

We pastors should no longer be slaves to the number of church members. We can no longer pastor according to our greed under the pretext of ‘This is God will’. Otherwise, God will bring disaster on all of us. Maybe He has already brought disaster on us now. Now, the flocks whom God has entrusted to us, the pastors, are spiritually starving and are wandering in the world. Now those flocks are the prey of wolves and Satan. What should we do? We can no longer offer God a show or entertainment service to entertain the congregation in His name. We should no longer preach the truth of God with an untruthful heart. The mature church members who long for the truth and seek the true character of the pastor already know it all. The believers should no longer listen to the unsound doctrine that pleases their itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3). They should no longer follow a great number of pastors who suit their own desires (Cf.: v. 3). They should have a pastor who proclaims the truth of God and wrestles with the truth he proclaimed (just like Jacob wrestles with an angel at the river Jabbok) as he seeks a truthful life. Like David, he sincerely confesses his foolish sin and wants to be disciplined by God's hand. They must worship God together with the determined pastor who truly loves the flock, and as a disciple of Jesus, pay the cost of worship with a willing heart. We must no longer yield to Satan's temptations!



## **A pastor like Jonah, A pastor like Amittai**

**"The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai." (Jonah 1:1)**

**The meaning of the name "Jonah" is "dove", "insensitive, senseless".**

Jonah lived according to the meaning of his name.

He was a indiscreet prophet.

His mind had no sense of direction.

God called on Jonah to go to the great city "Nineveh" (v. 2)

but Jonah arose and free to the opposite direction of Nineveh (v. 3).

This indiscreet and insensitive Jonah disobeyed God's command.

Pastors like Jonah disobey God's commands.

Pastors like Jonah cannot discern God's will.

Pastors like Jonah do whatever they want.

**The name "Amittai," the father of Jonah, means "my truth, my faithfulness."**

The Bible only tells us that "Amittai" is the father of Jonah

who was a prophet of Israel at the time of Jeroboam king of Israel

and he is from Gath Hopher (2 Kgs. 14:25, Jonah 1: 1).

But when I meditate on the book of Jonah,

I can see that God, who is a true father to Jonah who is indiscreet and insensitive,

is true "Amittai"(my truth, my faithfulness) to Jonah.

The Father God of Jonah sent a "great wind" and "great storm" to Jonah (Jonah 1:4)

when Jonah ran away from the Lord, went down to Joppa and went aboard and sailed for Tarshish (v. 3).

The Creator God moved the nature in order to make disobedient Jonah to obey God's command.

Not only that, God also prepared a "great fish" (v. 17) for Jonah when he was thrown into the sea (v. 15).

After that, God spoke to Jonah again,

"Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you" (3:1-2)

so he obeyed God's command [(v. 3) "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD"].

A pastor like Amittai obeys the word of God.

A pastor like Amittai 'Arise and go' (v. 3) and 'cry out' (v. 4)  
when God commands him to "Arise, go" and "cry" (1:2).

A pastor like Amittai manifests God's truth and God's faithfulness.

## **A pastor who receives grace from the non-believers**

**“Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.” (Jonah 1:13)**

Today, when I was preaching the Word of God, the Spirit gave an insight. So after I had prayer time, I came into my office, set in front of the computer and started writing this Quiet Time. The insight was God showed his grace to disobedient Jonah through the Gentile sailors. And that grace was God let Jonah know that ‘God is gracious’. The reason God gave grace to Jonah was so that Jonah, like his God, could be also gracious to the people of Nineveh.

How did God cause Jonah, who was disobedient, to receive grace from the Gentile sailors? We can see in the text Jonah 1:13 that the sailors are gracious to Jonah. Jonah said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea” (v. 12) because he knew that the sailors had met the great storm because of himself. But sailors strive to save Jonah rather than throw him into the sea (v. 13). This is the grace that the sailors had given to Jonah because the sailors should have thrown Jonah into the sea. Since the ship was about to break up due to Jonah’s disobedience and Jonah told them to pick him up and throw him into the sea, the sailors could pick Jonah up and throw him into the sea. But they didn’t. Instead, they tried to save Jonah. Isn’t this grace that the sailors had given to Jonah? Think about it. If all the non-believers have fallen into a crisis because of a pastor and the pastor told them to throw him into the sea, then what should be the normal respond of the non-believers? Shouldn’t it be ‘Because of you pastor we are in crisis now’ and throw the pastor into the sea? But instead of doing so, if the non-believers try to save the pastor by doing their best to row back to land rather than throw it into the sea, isn’t this grace? Isn’t this the grace that the non-believers give to the servant of the Lord? Don’t you think something has changed? Isn’t it normal that Jonah, the servant of the Lord, should give grace to the non-believer sailors? Why did God allow disobedient Jonah to receive grace from the non-believer sailors? I think there is God’s amazing love and grace. That amazing grace and love is that God was telling Jonah that God is a gracious God. Therefore, God wanted Jonah to be gracious to the people of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian, the enemy country of Israel.

But the question is, “Did Jonah know that his God was a gracious God and gave grace to the people of Nineveh?” The answer seems to be "yes" but in reality it is "no". In other words, it seems like Jonah, who prayed inside the belly of a great fish (chapter 2), was saved (2:9-10), a second chance was given (3:1), went to Nineveh and proclaimed to the Ninevites “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned” (v. 4), gave grace to the Ninevites. But when we look at Jonah chapter 4, Jonah “was greatly displeased and became angry” (4:1) because God had compassion and didn’t bring upon the Ninevites, who repented and turned from their evil ways, the destruction he had threatened (3:10). So this was how Jonah prayed to the Lord: “O LORD, is this not what I said

when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live” (4:2-3). In this prayer, Jonah seems to know that God is gracious by his head but not actually in his heart. In other words, the servant of God Jonah didn’t imitate the gracious heart of God. That was why Jonah was greatly displeased and angry, even to the point of wanting to die, because God showed grace to the Ninevites instead of sending calamity to them. Jonah's anger was not right in God's sight (v.4). Although God gave grace to such disobedient servant Jonah through the sailors, Jonah greatly disliked giving grace to the Ninevites. Although God gave Jonah the second chance, but Jonah didn’t want to give the Ninevites a second chance. That was why Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry because God gave the Ninevites the second chance. How selfish is the servant of the Lord who does not know the grace of God?

The more I think about Jonah, the more I see myself. A disobedient pastor, nevertheless, God gives grace to such unworthy servant of the Lord like me through the non-believers around me. Especially, I am receiving a lot of grace and love through my long-time friends. Because I cannot pay back to them, I am just praying to God for them. Why does God give grace to me even through the non-believer friends around me? It is because not only that God is teaching me that God is gracious, but also to build me up to be his servant who imitates the gracious heart of God so that I can be gracious to others. Isn’t this the grace of God?

## **They must know that a true pastor has been among them.**

**“As for them, whether they listen or not--for they are a rebellious house--they will know that a prophet has been among them.” (Ezekiel 2:5)**

The world has become difficult to distinguish between the real and the fake. It's hard to tell which one is real and which one is fake. That's because there are so many counterfeits that are so well made that they look like the real ones. However, it seems that luxury goods are not just money or goods that make it difficult to distinguish the real from the fake. We are in a world where it is very difficult to tell who is a real Christian and who is a fake Christian. The late Pastor Han-heum Ok said that it is very difficult to distinguish a real Christian from a fake Christian, just as it is very difficult to distinguish a male from a female insect. We are living in a world where there are many counterfeit Christians who are very similar to real Christians. But I think this fact does not apply only to lay Christians. This also applies to pastors like us. In other words, it is very difficult to distinguish who is a true pastor and who is a false pastor. Since there are many false pastors in the world, it seems that we are questioning whether there is really a true pastor in God's eyes.

This was also the case in the days when the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied the word of God to the people of Judah. It was a world where it was difficult to distinguish who was a true prophet and who was a false prophet. To be more precise, there were many false prophets in those days, and most people listened to and followed the false prophets. That was why the people of Judah seemed like they regarded the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who were true prophets, as fakes. Therefore, the people of Judah didn't listen to the two prophets (Jere. 11:10, 13:10). And they rejected God's law (6:19). They forsook God's ordinances and didn't follow His ordinances (Ezek. 5:7). Rather, they defiled the sanctuary of God with all their abominations (v. 11). They had committed all their abominations to God by turning away from God with their adulterous hearts and played the harlot after their idols by their adulterous eyes (6:9). They sinned against God like their fathers (2:3). The sons of Israel were a rebellious people who had rebelled against God (v. 3). And they were stubborn and obstinate children (v. 4). God sent the prophet Ezekiel to them and commanded him to preach the word of God (v. 4). Then God said that the rebellious people of Israel, whether they listen or not, “they will know that a prophet has been among them” (v. 5).

As I meditated on these words, I came to think that just as there was a true prophet in the days of Ezekiel, we should know that there are true pastors among us in this age as well. How do we know this? How can we tell who is the true pastor? I want to think of it in three ways:

**First, the true pastor is someone who preaches the word of God as it is, whether people listen or not.**

Look at Ezekiel 2:7 – “But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.” God told the prophet Ezekiel to go to the sons of Israel and preach the word of God whether they listen or not (2:5, 7; 3:11). The prophet Ezekiel obeyed this word of God. Even though he knew that the people of Judah would not listen to the word of God spoken through him (3:7), he spoke the word of God to them. Then, what was the word of God that the prophet Ezekiel proclaimed to them? It was the words of lamentations, mourning, and woe (v. 10). Who would love to hear such a word? In particular, the people of Judah, who were committing sins, not only didn’t like to hear the word of such woe, but also hated it so much that they turned their backs on it (23:25). To such people, the prophet Ezekiel delivered the word of God as it was. Whether they listened or not, he delivered His word of woe to them.

The true pastor preaches the word of God as it is. He preaches as it is whether people listen or not. Whether the word of God is the word of groaning and sorrow that people hate to listen, or the word of calamity, he delivers the word of God as it is. He never adds or subtracts from the word of God (Deut. 4:2; 12:32). Rather, he faithfully preaches the word of God as it is (Jere. 23:28). The reason why we don’t recognize such a true pastor is because we don’t like to listen to God’s word of sound teaching as it is (2 Tim. 2:3). Rather, we love to hear sermons that scratch our itching ears according to our desires (v. 3). So who would like to listen to the word of God from the true pastor that rebukes our sins? We not only hate the true pastor who preaches the truth to us, but also even hate him. But we like pastors with sermons that scratch our itching ears. Even if the pastor’s personality is flawed, if his sermon is pleasing to our greed, we listen to his sermon. And while we hear such sermons, we cry out, “Amen, Amen.” We even say that we have been blessed by that sermon. We who receive grace from the pastor’s sermons who add or subtract the word of God without preaching it as it is, in our lives now, there is only degeneration rather than transformation. Now, we are turning our backs on God and His word, going into the world, and sinning against God. What should we do? We must repent and return to God. And we must listen to what God is saying to us through the true pastor. Whether it is the word of blessing or the word of calamity, if it is God’s word, we must listen. Even if we say that the pastor who preaches the word of God is a hypocrite, if the content of what he preaches is biblical and the sound doctrine (2 Tim. 2:3), then we must listen to the word of God he preaches carefully without imitating the pastor’s actions (Mt. 23:3).

**Second, the true pastor is not afraid of people.**

Look at Ezekiel 2:6 – “And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.” The prophet Ezekiel obeyed this word of God. He received all the words that God had spoken to him with his heart and heard with his ears (3:10), and told the people of Judah without being afraid of them, whether they would listen or not (vv. 11, 27). Even though they were a rebellious people, the reason Ezekiel wasn’t

afraid was because God made the prophet Ezekiel's face as hard as their faces and his forehead as hard as their foreheads (vv. 8-9).

The true pastor isn't afraid of people. He isn't afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Mt. 10:28). Rather, he fears God, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell (v. 28). The reason he isn't afraid of people is not only because he fears God, but also he believes that God is with him and will save him and deliver him from their hand (Jere. 42:11). In other words, the true pastor believes that a great and fearful God is with him (Deut. 7:21). So he isn't afraid of people. He holds on to the word of Isaiah 41:10 with faith: "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord (Ps. 112:7), not afraid of people, but rather says, "What can man do to me?" (56:11). Since the Lord came near to him and told him, "Do not fear" (Lam. 3:57), he believes that word (Mk. 5:36) and obeys it. So he isn't afraid of people. The reason we don't recognize such a true pastor is because we fear people more than God. And because we depend on people more than God and because we are afraid of people more than Him, we don't know the true pastor who isn't afraid of people. What should we do? We must fear God more than people and depend on God more than people. And while we are steadfast in the faith, with the assurance of God's salvation, we should not afraid of people in the midst of hardship and adversity, but rather we should fear God more and more.

### **Third and last, the true pastor is not rebellious like the rebellious people.**

Look at Ezekiel 2:8 – "Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you." The prophet Ezekiel obeyed this word of God. He was not rebellious like the rebellious house of Israel. Although the house of Israel rebelled against God by not changing their ways, continuing not to listen to God's word and disobeying His word, Ezekiel didn't act like them. Rather, he listened to God's word and obeyed it, and was faithful to Him.

The true pastor is faithful to God. Because it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Cor. 4:2), he is faithful even to the point of death (Rev. 2:10). He obeys the word of God, whether God's voice is pleasant or unpleasant (Jere. 42:6). Like Jesus, the Son of God, he learns obedience through suffering (Heb. 5:8). And in the process of learning his obedience, he lay down his will like Jesus and prayed that only the Lord's will would be done (Lk. 22:42). A true pastor not only prays for the Lord's will to be done, but also obeys the His will to death with humble heart like Jesus (Phil. 2:8). The reason we don't recognize such a true pastor is because we want our will to be done rather than the Lord's will. Now because we are imitating this generation that should not be imitated, we don't even know what the Lord's good, pleasing, and perfect will is (Rom. 12:2). In the midst of this, our hearts are not humble and proud, so we insist on our will. As a result, now we are walking in sinful ways, hard-hearted and stubborn, not correcting our own ways and continuing to disobey God's word. A truly serious sinful phenomenon is that we pastors are rebelling against God, not correcting our own sinful ways, continuing not to listen to God's word, rather disobeying His word. What should we do? We must repent of our sins, seeking God's mercy and grace. And we must no longer imitate this rebellious generation. Rather, we must imitate Jesus.

We must imitate Jesus, who was obedient to the will of God the Father even to death on the cross. We must never oppose and rebel against God. Rather, we must obey His word.

These days, the pastors are upset and sad because of other pastor(s). Even among the same co-workers, we are disappointed with each other. And we are even ashamed of each other. The reason is because the sin of a small number of pastors is quickly and widely known through the media. So, even after the members of the church heard the news, they don't think very well about those pastors who have sinned against God. I am sure they cannot think well about them. And even church members criticize and condemn those pastors. At the same time, the foolish church members prefer pastors who scratch our itching ears with sermons rather than pastors who preach the word of God rightly. And they like a pastor who fears the church members more than a pastor who fears God. That is why they like pastors who imitate this generation like themselves, disobeying God's word, and pursuing their own will rather than God's will. Even in this circumstance, the wise believers know that there is a true pastor among them. They believe that the true pastor is he who preaches the word of God as it is, who isn't afraid of people, and who isn't rebellious. We have come to an era where we miss such a true pastor.



## The pastor's tears

**“My sorrow is beyond healing, My heart is faint within me! ... For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. ... Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!” (Jeremiah 8:18, 21; 9:1)**

Even a pastor sometimes sheds tears. The reason is because it's sad. Why is it so sad that the pastor sheds tears? The reason is because a soul whom God loves and who is entrusted to him for shepherding is spiritually ill. Not only that, also the pastor's heart is sick. When the pastor sees the poor sheep who are spiritually ill and goes its separate way, leaving the Lord, the true Shepherd, the pastor's heart aches from anxiety. And he is also afraid. He fears that perhaps a holy and just God will punish that one soul. In this fear, the pastor weeps before God. The pastor sheds tears in front of God because he wants that one lost soul to return to the Lord even after being disciplined by God in love. And he believes that Heavenly Father will see and hear the tears of his earnest prayers and answer his prayers according His will in His time. And he believes that God will wipe away his tears and make him dance. So, in the end, he sheds tears of thanksgiving before God.

When we look at Jeremiah 8:18, 21 and 9:1, we see that the prophet Jeremiah was sad. He wept with sorrow and broken heart. He wept day and night for his people. This was because the prophet Jeremiah foresaw the tribulation that the people of Judah would face in the future. Why did the people of Judah have to suffer? It was because they sinned against God and didn't repent. They didn't even know what sin they were committing against God. That's how much their hearts were hardened. The prophet Jeremiah was sad and wept when he thought of God's chastisement on the people of Judah who didn't consider sin as a sin nor could they do so. Of course, he shed tears and mourned for the tribulation that would come upon the people of Judah. But the real reason that the prophet Jeremiah truly grieved and wept was because of the unrepentant people of Judah. Think about it. Why is a father sad? Why does he cry? Doesn't he cry when he sees his child in pain when he disciplines the child with love? But what makes him even sadder is when he sees his child who is being disciplined, but don't realize his wrongdoing and doesn't repent. When the father sees that, his heart is filled with sorrow and brokenness. That was the case with the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah fell into deep sorrow when he saw the people of Judah who didn't repent because they didn't consider sin a sin. More than that, he fell into deep sorrow when he saw the unrepentant people of Judah because they didn't consider sin a sin. Therefore, he said, “I might weep day and night For the salin of the daughter of my people!” (9:1)

We pastors should be in deep sorrow. We must weep for God's people. But we have more reason to weep than that. The reason we must weep is because of ourselves. We should weep over our sins: The sin of not proclaiming the word of God directly to His people, the sin of forgetting the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ and spreading the false gospel, the sin of living a lukewarm life of faith because the passion for the gospel has cooled down, the sin of not valuing one soul even though it is said to be precious, the sin of not teaching in life the secret to being content with the Lord alone as the shepherd to the flocks God entrusted to us by pastoring in greed, the sin that hardens our hearts so that we don't even realize the sin that we are committing against God and thus we cannot repent of, and the sin of drying up not only the tears of repentance but also the tears of gratitude, and so on. Because of these many sins, we must weep. We earnestly pray that God will have mercy on us.

## **A pastor who knows how to use it as a mirror**

**“Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.” (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11)**

Those of us who believe in Jesus need to look in the mirror often. In particular, we the pastors should look in the mirror more often than the lay people. We should properly look at ourselves in the mirror face to face. Therefore, we must know ourselves. And we must not live a life of going to far with our thoughts, our words and our actions. If we neglect to look in the mirror, we will no longer be a voice crying out in the wilderness. But like David, in the kingdom in the middle of the city, we will become proud and sin, and will bring the holy name of God down to the ground and hide His glory. We should diligently reflect ourselves in the spiritual mirror of God's holy word. And we should always in fear that we may sin against God in our own arrogant thoughts, which we unknowingly have gone too far.

Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ must be those who can use it as a mirror. In particular, we pastors should be able to use it as the mirror more deeply and wider than the faithful lay people. What should we really use as the mirror? The discipline of God's holy love, which we received for our past sins, should be used as the mirror in our present life. Of course, because we repent of our past sins, God has forgiven us. And even though God doesn't remember our sins, we should remember. We must remember that we were disciplined by God for the sins we committed at that time. Even if we no longer suffer from the rods we received at that time, God's precious lessons from the discipline we received at that time must be engraved in our hearts. In particular, as we remember our God revealed to us at that time, and as we remember His justice and holiness, and His holy love, we must not commit the same sin again.

In 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11, as the apostle Paul wrote a letter to the believers in the Corinthian church, he mentioned about the sins that the Israelites committed in the Old Testament Exodus time. He mentioned about some of the Israelites who were idolaters (v. 5; Exod. 32:6), committed sexual immorality (1 Cor. 10:8; Num. 25:1-9), tested the Lord (1 Cor. 10:9; Num. 21:4-6), and grumbled (1 Cor. 10:10; Num. 14, 16). And he said, “Now these things occurred as examples ...,” “These things happened to them as examples ...” (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). He also said to the Corinthian church believers that the reason the Bible records what happened to them is to warn them, “on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (v. 11). Why did Paul speak to the Corinthians church believers like this? The reason for this is because Paul tried to prevent the Corinthian church believers from setting their hearts on evil things as the Israelites did at the time of Exodus (v. 6).

We should not enjoy sinning. Rather, we should fear sinning. The reason is because a holy God will reveal His holiness to us when we enjoy sinning against Him. Of course, this holiness of God will be revealed to us in discipline. But we must feel God's holy love through this discipline of God. Then, we will use God's discipline as a mirror for us so that we will not commit the same sin again in our present life. Therefore, if we think that we are standing firm, we must be careful that we don't fall (v. 12).

## **Lord, I want to be such a pastor.**

**“Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, ‘Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably.’ But Micaiah said, ‘As the LORD lives, what my God says, that I will speak.’” (2 Chronicles 18:12-13)**

I heard the honest confession of a believer who wanted to hear a sermon of comfort and a positive sermon, even for at least one hour of worship on a Sunday, living in a world that is so difficult. So, a pastor says that he preaches ‘safe sermons’ (a sermon that he can preach and he doesn’t have to preach). But another believer says that ‘safe sermon’ is dangerous. The reason is because the safe sermon is a sermon that the church members can nod moderately while listening to it, but it disappears from their heads as soon as they leave the church building, and it doesn’t cause any anguish or conflict within them. That’s why they say that the pastor should preach ‘a dangerous sermon,’ a sermon that clearly reveals what is true and what is false rather than a sermon that will never change any soul. It is as if the people who listen to Jesus are extremely divided and angry and want to kill him, or whether his words change their entire lives. What do you think?

According to the context of 2 Chronicles 18:12-1, before Jehoshaphat king of Judea and Ahab king of Israel went together to fight against Ramoth Gilead (vv. 1-3), King Jehoshaphat asked King Ahab to ask him what the word of the Lord was (v. 4). Then King Ahab gathered 400 prophets and asked them, “Shall we go against Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?” (v. 5). Then the 400 prophets said to the two kings, “Go up, for God will give it into the hand of the king” (v. 5). And among these 400 prophets, Zedekiah son of Chenaanah went so far as to say, “Thus says the LORD, ‘With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are consumed’” (v. 10). At that time, many prophets prophesied likewise, saying, “Go up to Ramoth Gilead and succeed, for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king” (v. 11). In a word, these 400 prophets all spoke favorably to the king (v. 12). Then Jehoshaphat, king of Judea, asked, “Is there not a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?” (v. 6) Ahab, king of Israel, who heard this said to King Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah” (v. 7). Who likes a man who always tells him bad things? Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat, king of Judea, wanted to hear the prophecy of the prophet Micaiah (v. 7). So Ahab king of Israel called one of his officials and said, “Bring Micaiah son of Imlas at once” (v. 8). The official, who had received the command, went to Micaiah and said, “Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably” (v. 12). How tempting is this? If the prophet Micaiah had listened to the official and, like the other 400

prophets, had spoken good words to King Ahab, he would not need to suffer (v. 26). He would not need to be put in prison if he prayed to God, 'God, I am going to lie just once. I am sorry,' and spoke kindly to King Ahab, in order to escape the crisis (v. 26). And he would not have had to be slapped by Zedekiah (v. 23), nor would he have been bullied by the other 400 prophets. But the prophet Micaiah didn't. He spoke what the LORD spoke of disaster against the king Ahab (v. 22). The word of the disaster was that "the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of" the King Ahab (v. 22), spoke favorably to King Ahab, and eventually enticed King Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there (v. 19). God's prophet Micaiah said, "only what my God says" (v. 13). Whose prophecy was really fulfilled? Was it the prophecy of 400 prophets or the prophecy of one prophet Micaiah? King Ahab of Israel went up to Ramoth Gilead (v. 28) and fought the army of the king of Syria, and died (v. 34), just as the prophet Micaiah had prophesied. Who is the true prophet of God? Are the 400 prophets who spoke favorably to King Ahab? Or, the prophet Micaiah, who prophesied "always bad" in King Ahab's point of view (v. 7), and who spoke "As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what my God says" (v. 13)?

We, the pastors, should pray to God like this: 'God, make me a pastor like the prophet Micaiah.' We must be a pastor who says what God is saying to us through the Scripture. Even if there are some believers who listen to our sermons who live in a world that is too difficult and want to hear a sermon of comfort or a positive sermon, even for at least an hour of worship on a Sunday, we should only preach the word of God as truth (Lk. 20:21). If the word of God proclaimed comforts us, it will comfort us; if it is a word that rebukes us, it will rebuke us. What is important is not comfort or rebuke, but the word of God itself. Therefore, as Christians who love and adore the word of God, we must humbly accept it, whether it is positive or negative, good or bad (from our point of view as listeners). And we must become those who hear the word with a noble and good heart, keep it, and bear fruit with patience (Lk, 8:15). I earnestly hope and pray that the Lord will raise us up as pastors like the prophet Micaiah.

## **I want to be such a pastor.**

**“But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD.” (Ezekiel 44:15)**

First of all, I don't want to be such a pastor.

### **First, I don't want to become a pastor who goes astray and wander from God.**

Look at Ezekiel 44:10 – “The Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray and who wandered from me after their idols must bear the consequences of their sin.” The sin that the Israelites committed was going astray and wandering from God. At that time, the Levites, who held the office of priests, should have proclaimed a message calling for the people of Israel to repent and return to God from their sinful ways. However, the Levites followed the erring house of Israel and went astray and wandered from God.

One of the strange phenomena that can be seen in the church these days is that the pastor follows the believers who are going astray. There is no distinction between who is the leader and who is the follower. The pastor has the responsibility to lead God's people as a leader anointed by the Lord in the organization called the church. But rather, the church members are leading the pastor, showing the opposite phenomenon. This opposite phenomenon seems to occur especially when the church members are going astray. When most of the church members choose the wrong path and try to move forward, the pastor is also swept away by that wrong wave. This happens because the pastor refuses to lead as a leader. Just as when the serpent tempted Eve, Adam should have led Eve as the head of the family, but rejected it and committed the sin together with his wife, even within the church right now, the pastor seems to be refusing to lead the church members. As a result, not only the church members but also the pastor go astray, and the church has no choice but to drift. The ultimate responsibility lies with the pastor. Because the pastor is wander away from God, he is swept away by the wave of erring believers and goes astray too. I don't want to be such a pastor.

### **Second, I don't want to become a pastor who forgets the grace of God.**

Look at Ezekiel 44:11, 14: “They may serve in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it; they may slaughter the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people and stand before the people and

serve them. ... Yet I will put them in charge of the duties of the temple and all the work that is to be done in it.” Although the Levites must bear the consequences of their sin because they had gone astray like the house of Israel and wandered from God after their idols (vv. 10, 12), yet God continued to put them in charge of the duties of the temple (vv. 11, 14). If this is not God's grace, what is it? Of course, God caused them to bear the consequences of their sin (vv. 10, 12) and thus removed them from their glorious positions before then sinned. But God had compassion on them and gave them even lower levels of duty than they had before (before they sinned) (Park). Therefore, the Levitical priests who went astray and wandered from God were deprived of their office, and were assigned to be in charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it, and slaughtering the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people (vv. 11, 14) (Park). If this is not God's grace, what is it?

Another strange phenomenon that can be seen in churches these days is that the pastors continue to minister even after committing the sin of adultery. They are ministering while committing adultery with a woman or women. Now, it seems that the wrong climate of cheating among the church members is spreading like an epidemic among pastors too. But even more frightening, I think that the epidemic that spreads among the pastors is a disease of spiritual dementia that forgets God's grace. As they serve the Lord's church while suffering from this kind of spiritual dementia, they have no choice but to do a ministry without humility, gratitude, and strength. I don't want to be such a pastor.

#### I want to be such a pastor.

#### **First, I want to become a pastor who keeps the holy office that God has given me.**

Look at Ezekiel 44:15 – “But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD.” In this verse, the Bible says that even when the house of Israel went astray from God, the priests of the Levites, the descendants of Zadok, faithfully carried out the duties of God’s sanctuary. The Levites, the descendants of Zadok, kept the office of God's sanctuary even when the house of Israel and all the Levites, who were supposed to be their spiritual leaders, went astray and wandered from God. The house of Israel defiled the sanctuary of God by bringing the Gentiles into the sanctuary of God (v. 7). The Levites also took lightly the holy office God had given them, so they let the Gentiles hold their office in their place (v. 8). But the Levite priests, the sons of Zadok, kept the office of God's sanctuary. These Zadok descendants of the Levite priests were servants of the Lord who faithfully fulfilled their God-given office.

One of the sad things we see in the church these days is that we take our office too lightly. That is why, rather than using the given position for the glory of God and building the church, some of us are using our offices to receive our own glory and establish our own names. It is a holy office given by God, and now we take it lightly. Furthermore, now we are abusing that office. Especially, some of the pastors are abusing the office of “pastor.” In particular, those pastors who have lost the authority and power of the word of God are abusing their office recklessly.



As a result, even the members of the congregation take the office of pastor lightly. Even in the midst of this, there are clearly some pastors like Elijah and the 7,000 prophets left behind by God who don't compromise with sin and keep the holy office God has given them. Even if everyone erroneously takes the God-given office lightly and turns away from God and sins, there are certainly pastors in this world who keep the holy office God has given them, like the Levites, the descendants of Zadok. I want to be one of those pastors. I want to become a pastor who keeps the holy office God has given me.

## **Second, I want to become a pastor who comes closer to God and serves Him.**

Look at Ezekiel 44:15 again: "But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD." The Bible says that the Levites, the descendants of Zadok, kept the office of God's sanctuary, so they drew near to God and ministered before God. They were to stand before God to offer sacrifices of fat and blood. This verse contrasts with verse 11. According to Ezekiel 44:11, the Levites, "who wandered from me after their idols" (v. 10), were by God's grace to serve in God's sanctuary by slaughtering the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people. On the other hand, God said, the Levite priests, the descendants of Zadok, who faithfully kept the office of God's sanctuary, would not stand before the people but rather stand before God to minister (v. 15). What a privilege of grace it is to become a servant of the Lord who comes close to God and minister before Him rather than standing before the Israelites and serve them.

One of the foolish phenomena we see in churches these days is that the pastor is going too close to the church members rather than to God. It is foolish for the pastor to draw closer to people than to God. First, we must stand before God and serve Him. But since we, the pastors, are standing in front of people and ministering to them, the church, first, how can the church become a Lord-centered church? It has no choice but to become a people-centered church that smells like people. I don't want to do that. First of all, I want to become a pastor who draws closer to God. And I want to become a pastor who stands before Him and serves the Lord.

## **Third and last, I want to become a pastor who teaches God's people the difference between the holy and the profane by life.**

Look at Ezekiel 44:23 – "Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." God entrusted His people to the priests of the Levites, descendants of Zadok, who were faithfully fulfilling their duties in God's sanctuary even though they all went astray and wandered from Him. God told these Levites, who were faithfully in office, to teach His people the distinction between the holy and the profane. The reason for this is because the Levites, who went astray because even themselves could not distinguish between the holy and the profane, could not develop in God's people the discernment to distinguish between the holy and the profane. How could God entrust His people to priests who have

lost such power? That is why God entrusted this work to the Levites, the descendants of Zadok. He entrusted another ministry to the priests who were keeping the office of God's sanctuary. This is very natural.

One of the sinful phenomena that can be seen in the church these days is that the wall has collapsed and the waves of sin are overflowing in the church. One of those sinful waves is humanism. The church is becoming more people-centered even though the church should be the Lord-centered. Besides this humanism, the sinful wave that overflows in the church is syncretism. It has become difficult to distinguish what pure faith is. It looks like it's all mixed up. Now, it seems that we are living a life of faith by mixing Confucianism, Buddhist thought, New Age thought, humanistic love, etc. in addition to the truth of God. We are now in a time where it is very difficult to distinguish between believers and unbelievers. The number of saints setting a holy example seems to be diminishing. In the midst of this, the number of pastors who are becoming secularized seems to be increasing (at least superficially). It is becoming so secular that it seems that the ability to distinguish between the holy and the profane has been lost. And it seem that the church is continue to produce church members who have lost that ability. This is our responsibility who are becoming secularized. We, the pastor, must repent. And we should increase that power through the Holy word by praying to God for the ability to distinguish between the holy and the profane. And by that power, we should pursue a holy life. And we must show the saints a holy life not only with our lips but also with our lives. In this way, we all will be able to distinguish between the profane and the profane. And we will have the ability to throw away the profane things. I want to become a pastor who teaches the difference between the holy and the profane by living like this.

At the early Morning Prayer meeting on this Saturday, the Holy Spirit gave me a heart to fear God when I prayed after proclaiming God's word centering on Ezekiel 44:9-15. As I prayed with that fearful heart and meditated on the preached word again, I got the title of prayer, "I want to become such a pastor." And in order to give the subject of this prayer more concretely, I meditated on these verses again, focusing on verse 15. In the midst of that, I have divided the grace of God into two categories: (1) I don't want to be such a pastor, and (2) I want to be such a pastor. I don't want to become a pastor who go astray and wander from God far away and a pastor who forgets God's grace. Rather, I want to become a pastor who keeps the holy office that God has given me. And I want to become a pastor who comes close to God and minister before Him. In the midst of this, I want to become a pastor who teaches the saints the difference between the holy and the profane by life. Lord, raise me up to be such a pastor!

## Conclusion

The false pastors lie. They preach the false gospel. They steal the word of God and mix their false ideas with His word and preach it. They are so cleverly preaching that the truth is mixed with lies to the extent that members of the church cannot distinguish them. Their sermons look like the truth. But they are actually preaching something crafty in their heart. Therefore, they continue to produce church members who have mixed faith. Not only that, the false pastors spread cheap grace. They deliver a flattering lesson to scratch the itching ears of false believers who hear and follow lies. The false pastors speak false words of comfort. They don't proclaim God's words of warning and of rebuke. And they don't preach the God's holy words that point out and reveal sins to the members of the church who are committing sins. In other words, the false pastors aren't preaching the word of repentance to the church members who are committing sins. Rather they are preaching 'a sermon of blessing', 'a sermon of comfort', and 'a sermon of healing.' They are encouraging unrepentant members to continue sinning. The false pastors are empowering the church members to continue to sin. The reason is because the false pastors themselves continue to sin against God.

The false pastors are indulged in all kinds of greed and covetousness. They are addicted to money and women and fame. Therefore, in their spiritual stupor, they lost the ability to discern between the holy and the profane. Also, false pastors are arrogant and proud of themselves against God. They seem to boast of God with their lips, but with their heart they are proud of themselves and the size of their church members. The more these false pastors become, the more they are sinning against God. The more false pastors who don't know God, the more false pastors who have abandoned the truth and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the more false pastors who have stopped following the Lord and are deceived by an adulterous heart, they commit sins. Therefore, the false pastors are dishonoring God not only among the saints, but also in this world.

The true pastor speaks the truth. Now, the true pastor is growing in the knowledge of God. He presses to know God. He is committed to God, His word, and prayer. He meditates on the word of God day and night. He enjoys tasting the honey of God's word. The true pastor listens to the word of God. And he diligently examines himself in the spiritual mirror, the word of God. Therefore he confesses his sins to God with his conscience pierced in his heart by His word, the sword of his Spirit. And he sheds tears of repentance before God. And he sheds tears of gratitude and devotion for God's grace. He learns obedience by suffering. He lays down his own will and only prays that the will of the Lord be done. He draws near to God and ministers before Him. The reason is because the true pastor remembers the grace of God.

The true pastor preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. He works hard to spread the gospel by the power of God's grace. He faithfully proclaims the word of God that is like fire that melts the hardened hearts of the saints and like the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. He diligently preaches the word of God to lead the saints to the right path. He preaches His word as it is, whether people listen or not. Even in the presence of church members who like

to listen to sermons that scratch their itching ears according to their greed, the true pastor doesn't add or subtract from God's word, but preaches it as it is. The true pastor boldly proclaims the word of God, even though he clearly knows that they will hate him. Therefore, he turns sinful saints from evil ways and evil deeds. The reason he does this is because he fears God and is not afraid of people.

'Lord, I want to be a true pastor. Please make me a true pastor.'