STEALING FROM SHEPHERDS

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Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi
Coordinator

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Topic:

STEALING FROM SHEPHERDS

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 1:12

Introduction

Today's teaching is a general teaching and still speaks more to those who are in the ministry or called into the ministry. It speaks to young ministers and those who have been in the ministry all these while. It also exposes the secrets of the devil and his plans for those in ministry. Please, I beseech you to follow keenly and be in the Spirit too.

Bible Text

1Cor.1.12 - Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

Study

You may be surprised to see this kind of topic, but I believe that as time goes on, you will fully understand what it is all about. Firstly, before we look at what it means to steal from shepherds, let's know who a shepherd truly is.

Who is a Shepherd?

- A shepherd is a person who tends sheep; a person who guides or guards in the manner of a shepherd.
- A shepherd is someone who lays down his life for his sheep and takes good care of them. He avoids any from getting lost.

A great example of a shepherd in the bible was David. He kept the flock of his father, Jesse and at a point in time, He laid down his life for his sheep when he fought a lion and a bear.

1 Samuel 17:34-36:

"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

Many would have run away when the lion attacked the flock and they would have still been saying and posting online that "thank God for safety from being killed by a lion". It may sound funny, but that's the truth. However, David ran after the lion and bear and saved the sheep from them. He didn't only fight with those wild animals, he also delivered the sheep from them which means he acted so fast after the wild animals hijacked the sheep because it doesn't take a lion hours to kill a sheep and start feasting on it because of how carnivorous they are. But, David was able to deliver the sheep without the sheep being harmed. That is a perfect example of what a shepherd does. Now that we have known who a shepherd truly is, we can now move to what it means to steal from shepherds. Right from our definitions, we will see that what it means to steal from a shepherd is to take away the sheep forcefully or in a deceitful way for personal interest.

A lot of people are stealing from others and they are not even aware that they are stealing. Don't be surprised, some are subconscious thieves while some are deliberate thieves. After this study, you might even discover that you have been stealing subconsciously from others.

Let's look at our text;

1 Corinthians 1:12-13:

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

In Christendom, sometimes, we find the true body divided because of how we tend to segregate ourselves. I know that there are some churches that are not true churches of Christ and I am not referring to them now. I am referring to true churches of God. It's a pity that even in the true church of God, we have people who are always stealing from Shepherds. And, how do these things happen? I will show us the major set of people that steal from shepherds. We will be hitting the point directly today and I want you to take note of the words seriously.

Let me show you the three major sets of people who steal from shepherds.

Three major people that steal from shepherds

1. **The devil:** This is not disputable and this is commonly known to all, because the primary aim of the devil is to kill, steal and destroy.

John 10:10:

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The devil does not like it when true sheep stay with true shepherds that will keep leading them the right way. This is why the devil rages against true churches because he always wants to scatter the sheep and penetrate into the fold. It is a pity that despite the effort of true shepherds these days, some of the sheep (Christians) allow the devil to gain entrance into their midst through playing with sin and immorality and this has opened the door to the devil in their midst. The devil does not directly come through the door into the fold. He comes through other openings and loopholes which are created when we keep allowing the works of the flesh to dominate our midst. The devil is the first and the pioneer who begins to steal from shepherds. He steals from pastors, teachers, evangelists and other ministers who are not watchful enough to keep their sheep under their wings. You must understand that as a shepherd, you are accountable for the sheep under you and if you lose any, you will give account on how you went about it.

Therefore, having established this fact, let's move on to the second set of people who steal from shepherds. Don't be surprised at who they are.

2. **Pastors and ministers of God:**

Don't be surprised to see that ministers and pastors are also stealing from other shepherds. You might be wondering how possible that ministers of God are caught up in such an ungodly nest. You will know why now

1 Corinthians 1:12-13:

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Firstly, why do you think the body of Christ segregated themselves here? They were causing divisions that Paul had to address? It was majorly because of the way the ministers and teachers handled them. I will show you how.

There are ministers who are invited to other churches to minister and after menstruation, they counsel people and begin to tell them to come and attend their church. Though they may not say it directly, they keep telling the church members of the church where they were invited to minister that the church members should come and start attending their own church. This is a way to steal from other shepherds and it causes division in the body of Christ. The moment a minister begins to use "scope" to lead other members from another true church of God that they are attending, such minister is stealing sheep from other shepherds. And, some do this just to increase the amount of the offerings and tithes that are entering their own church. This is why they use social media platforms to compel and "force" people to their church or ministry. We are not saying you can't invite others to your church programs but check your heart well, are you not bent on just making them come and join your church to increase your members?

Many young ministers are guilty of these in this present day. They started ministry just a few years ago and want to populate their ministry. When they are invited to minister in a place, they begin to talk about how God is doing miraculous things in their ministry, just to draw people to their ministry. And, when they later achieve this, they desire to keep these sheep with all their strength and might go off the track in the process of pleasing men.

What a pity! Shepherds stealing from their fellow shepherds!

The last set of people are;

3. **False ministers:**

This set of people are working hand in hand with the devil to steal from shepherds. They use enticing methods to populate their ministries and even unsuspecting christians sometimes fall for their prey because they also perform signs and wonders. It's a pity that we have so many false ministers these days whose churches and ministries are very large with a great population of stolen sheep. Some have left their fold where they hear the undiluted word of God and are now attending such false ministry without them knowing. They are everywhere and the population of false ministers now are greater than true ministers. Why? Because many that are in ministry these days were not called by God but by their stomachs and pockets. Therefore, many of them get their little powers from the devil and pretend to be true ministers whereas they are not. And, it will take discernment to be able to know those who are true ministers from false

ministers. The devil has planted them in true churches too so that they can manipulate things and if the true shepherd of such a church is not watchful and careful, he will fall into the hands of them. This is why the bible says;

1 John 4:1:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Before you are compelled to follow any ministry or stay in a church, be convicted and sure that you have tested the spirit backing such ministry. Don't be like the blind, following the blind because they will both fall into the ditch. I believe we have seen the three major sets of people who steal from shepherds. However, there are consequences of stealing from other shepherds which we will look into now, before we round up today.

Consequences of stealing from other shepherds

1. **Division:** Just like the division that occurred during apostle Paul's time, such will also happen. Divisions will occur between ministers and churches when shepherds begin to steal from shepherds. And, the devil penetrates through this.

2. **Reduced spiritual growth:** In a situation whereby a person is supposed to be in a particular ministry but was stolen by another shepherd, it might hinder the growth of such a person because the person is not in the right place. A lot of churches even preach their church when they go for evangelism instead of preaching Christ. This is very wrong! You are to preach Christ and not church. If it happens that the person does not have a bible believing church close by, then you can tell the person to consider joining your church. Not that you will go out there for EVANGELISM and the first thing you do is to tell them to leave their church and come to yours.

3. **It causes hatred between ministers:** When a minister discovers that the minister he invited to his church once upon a time has taken many of his members, he might start feeling hatred and bitterness towards such a person which God does not want. We should also grow into spiritual maturity that we do not allow such to move us.

4. **It makes one move out of the will of God:** When a person concentrates so much on gaining members than keeping their souls in Christ, it begins to shift such a person's focus from what really matters which is dangerous. It can move a person out of the will of God.

5. **It makes such a sheep to have a wrong mindset towards his/her home church:** When a sheep is stolen by another shepherd, such a sheep might begin to have a wrong mindset towards where he/she left. Even if where they left was a true church, they might still find something to point to due to how different the new place they are is.

Invitation

If you know that you are still living in sin and you are ready to repent and begin to live your life in strict obedience to God so that you can overcome every sin in your life to make heaven, please place your right hand on your chest and say this prayer with your mouth.

Say,

"Lord Jesus, I accept You as my personal Lord and Savior. I believe that You died for me and took away my sins so that I will not face the penalty of them. I surrender my life to You today, and I make a decision to obey and follow You. Come into my life now and accept me as Your child. Thank You for saving me, in Jesus Christ's name I pray, Amen."

Congratulations, now you are saved. If you prayed this short prayer, please WhatsApp +2347067511039 and let me know that you have just been saved. I want to have a word with you. God bless you!

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