

Title: **FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED**
Text: Zechariah 11:15-17
Subject: *The Character and Instruments of
 A Foolish Shepherd*
Date: Sunday Evening — July 1, 2007
Reading: *Merle Hart and James Jordan*
Tape # Zechariah #59b
Introduction:

In the last three verses of Zechariah 11 all false prophets, all self-serving religious leaders in every age are portrayed under the emblem of one foolish shepherd.

(Zechariah 11:15-17) “And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. (16) For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. (17) Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”

Zechariah was commanded to take unto him the instruments of a foolish shepherd, to appear before the people of God as a typical representation of a false prophet. God commanded him to take the instruments of a foolish shepherd and stand before the people, so that we might see visibly how to identify those ministers of Satan who transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.

How often we are warned of our God to beware of false prophets, foolish shepherds (Matthew 7:15; Colossians 2:8-10; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 1:9-10; Jude 1:3-4, 11-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-15).

(Matthew 7:15) “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

(Colossians 2:8-10) “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

him, which is the head of all principality and power:”

(2 Peter 2:1-3) “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

(1 John 4:1-3) “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

(2 John 1:9-10) “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:”

(Jude 1:3-4) “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (4) For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Jude 1:11-13) “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. (12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; (13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

(2 Corinthians 11:2-4) “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. (3) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (4) For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.”

(2 Corinthians 11:13-15) “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

A FOOLISH SHEPHERD

Whenever and wherever the Lord Jesus Christ removes his two staves, Beauty and Bands, whenever and wherever he takes away the gospel of his grace and the ordinances of the gospel that bind his people together and bind us to him, whenever and wherever he removes the candlestick of a gospel church and ministry, you can be sure, a foolish shepherd will appear. A foolish shepherd steps in to convince people that God is with them, when he has utterly forsaken them.

That is the significance of the word “yet” in our text. The Lord Jesus had taken away his instruments of good; yet another shepherd appears with the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

What is a foolish shepherd? Why does our Lord refer to the false prophet as “a foolish shepherd”? The word “foolish,” means “perverse, ungodly, silly, insensible, and wicked.” The foolish shepherd is a wicked, unregenerate man, a man totally void of spiritual understanding, destitute of

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

that heavenly wisdom that only God can give. — Nicodemus was a foolish shepherd.

“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” — “Fools die for want of wisdom.” — “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Titus 3:3).

A foolish shepherd is an ignorant, ungodly, unregenerate shepherd. He is a natural man lifted up by education, pride, covetousness, or presumption, into a pulpit, and devoid of spiritual illumination and heavenly wisdom. Pulpits are full of foolish shepherds!

THEIR INSTRUMENTS

The “*foolish shepherd*” has certain instruments, instruments Zechariah was commanded to take in his hands as emblems of a foolish shepherd’s character. What those instruments were the Holy Spirit does not tell us here; but told us plainly what those instruments are in other parts of Scripture.

1. **The first instrument and badge of a foolish shepherd, is a mask.** The mask of deceit and pretense is as old as the times of Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians, who withstood Moses (2 Timothy 3:8). It flourished mightily at the court of Ahab (His 400 prophets denied Micaiah’s prophecy — 2 Chronicles 18:5). Many wore the mask in Jeremiah’s day (Jeremiah 28:10-11; 29:26-27). Paul spoke of this mask of deceit when he said, “Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:13). So we read that the prophets shall no more “*wear a rough garment to deceive*” (Zechariah 13:4).

To wear a mask is to play a role that is not true, to assume a fictitious character, to be an actor on a stage, imitating someone else. **The foolish shepherd makes the pulpit his stage, his holy countenance is his mask, and his false zeal, loud speech, and impassioned rant his wardrobe. Thus, by craft and cunning, he entangles the simple in his net.**

2. **The next instrument which I shall put into his hand shall be a scepter** — the badge of authority and power, to show that he is a lord over God’s

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

heritage (1 Peter 5:3), and rules the flock with force and cruelty (Ezekiel 34:4).

3. **The third instrument shall be a pair of sharp shears**, for we read that “they clothe themselves with the wool” (Ezekiel 34:3). He must have shears to get the wool. It is true that the Lord has “*ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*” But to receive that which is freely given is a different thing from fleecing sheep.

4. **His fourth instrument shall be a long whip**, that reaches to every corner of the pen. His whip is the law. With it he constantly whips people into acting as he desires. — “Do or be damned.” — “Obey or lose your reward.” — “Tithe or God will get you.” — “Come to church or your children will get sick.”

5. **His fifth and last instrument shall be a bow and a quiver full of arrows, to reach those at a distance who are beyond the lash of the whip**. The arrow is for those at a distance, the whip for those that are near. The latter is applied to those within the church house walls. The arrow is aimed at those who are without. These arrows are bitter words, as the Scriptures speak, “*who wet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect; suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not*” (Psalm 64:3,4). And again, “*they bend their tongues like their bow for lies.*” — “*Their tongue is an arrow shot out*” (Jeremiah 9:3, 8).

6. **The foolish shepherd’s sixth instrument is corrupt doctrine, any doctrine that denies the doctrine of Christ**. The doctrine of the foolish shepherd is always the same. It always makes...

- The will and purpose of God insignificant.
- The will of man omnipotent.
- The work of man righteousness.
- The work of Christ a shameful waste.
- The grace of God meaningless.

THEIR CHARACTER

Go back to Zechariah 11, and you will see that as foolish shepherds all have the same instruments, they are also always of the same character.

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

(Zechariah 11:16) “For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.”

The Lord says, “I will raise up a shepherd.” He raises up as an act of divine judgment, to punish those who will not receive the love of the truth (Isaiah 66:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-13).

(Isaiah 66:4-5) “I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not. (5) Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-13) “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That they all

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (13) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

1. The first thing said of this foolish shepherd is, that **“he shall not visit those that be cut off.”** Who are these people here said to be “cut off?” They are the same people whose mournful complaint we hear (Ezekiel 37:11), “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.” That is, they are such as by a work of the law in their consciences are **cut off from all creature righteousness, all false refuges, all deceitful hopes and rotten props, from finding any good in self, or resting on the testimony of man.** We read, (Romans 11:24), of the branch being cut out of the wild olive tree, and being grafted into the good olive tree, which is a striking figure of the way in which a vessel of mercy is cut off from the original stock, and grafted into Christ by way of manifested union. The law working wrath, guilt, condemnation, and fear, is the knife in the hands of the heavenly husbandman that cuts the branch clean out and clean off from the original stock; and before this bleeding branch can be inserted into the good olive tree, it must lie upon the ground with all its native sap oozing and draining away.

So must a soul lie helpless and often well near hopeless, until the heavenly husbandman takes up this bleeding branch, and inserts it into Christ, by way of manifested union. Then it “partakes of the root and fatness of the olive-tree,” spiritual grafting differing from natural grafting in this, that in natural grafting the fruitful scion is inserted into the wild stock, but in spiritual grafting the wild scion is inserted into the fruitful stock. But in both this grand truth holds that there are two distinct and successive processes, the entire disunion from the old stock, and the entire union with the new.

But the margin gives another rendering, “those that be hidden.” The people of God are a hidden people. They are, therefore, called, (Psalm 83:3), **God’s “hidden ones;”** that is, not merely hidden in his hand from eternity, and hidden in the secret of his presence from the pride of man (Psalm 31:20), but hidden from general view and observation. They are not those who blaze forth in a false glare of sparkling profession, nor rush presumptuously forward to take the topmost room, but through a deep sense of spiritual poverty, need, guilt, and pollution, are gladly to hide themselves

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

from all but a heart-searching God. Thus they “hide the Word of God in their heart” (Psalm 119:11); and the Word of God is in them like the leaven in the three measures of meal, (Matthew 13:33), hidden from the general eye, but working powerfully in secret.

These cut off, or hidden ones, then, the foolish shepherd “does not visit.” **I do not understand by this word “visit,” a going about from house to house. The old Geneva translation reads, “shall not look for.”** In these visits, so called, there is often much more gossip and slander than unction and power, more unprofitable conversation than speech seasoned with salt, and we often separate more burdened than benefited. **The figure is clearly taken from a shepherd taking his rounds through the fold, and examining each sheep as they are there collected together. The sheep are not scattered one in one field and one in another, but gathered into one fold, so as to be all in one place under his eye. He visits them, then, when he goes through the fold, and stops to examine with particular attention every one that needs his care. So, spiritually, the pastor best visits his flock when they are all assembled before him, and he takes a view of them from the pulpit, as looking up to him for food and instruction.** He visits the cut off when he comes down to their exercises, trials, and temptations, when he does not pass them by, but drops such words of encouragement and consolation as are suitable to their case. But this the foolish shepherd does not. He may, indeed, be most diligent in what is called visiting from house to house, and may fly about on wings of false zeal, or run through a weekly round of religious, “pastoral” visitations, and after all, as those who “creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins.”

But he never visits from the pulpit those that are cut off in their feelings from eternal life. No, he only shoots at and wounds such. “Away with your doubts and fears. Don’t stand poring over your corruptions. Look to Jesus, take food at his word, lay hold of the promises. Religion is not gloom and melancholy, but joy and peace.” **Thus the foolish shepherd wounds and lacerates tender consciences, instead of binding them up.** But the wise shepherd finds out, and visits such by describing the feelings of a cut off soul, he, himself, having experimentally passed through it; and by tracing out his experience and removing his stumbling-stones, is often blessed to his deliverance, or at least to his consolation. My congregation lies so widely scattered, some at twelve and fourteen miles distance, that what with that, and what with my weak health, I could not possibly visit all my

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

spiritual hearers personally, but the desire of my heart is to visit them from the pulpit, by going round to the cases of all and each.

2. “**Neither shall seek the young one.**” This is the second black mark with which the Holy Spirit has stamped a foolish shepherd. This “young one” is, doubtless, one of the “**newborn babes**” spoken of, (1 Peter 2:2), who are said to “desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.” The distinctive mark of these is, that they “have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” They are not such as are fully delivered into gospel liberty. They have tasted, not fully drunk; have had a crumb and a drop, but not been brought to the banquet and the fountain.

The foolish shepherd, then, does not seek “the young one.” With him it is all presumptuous confidence and unwavering assurance, and he that does not stand upon this high mountain, he believes to have no standing at all. The early bloom of faith, hope, and love, when the green buds push into leaf and flower, the spring-time of the soul, like the present smiling season, when all is bright and flourishing, the days of our spiritual youth, when the secret of God was upon our tabernacle, when there was a spirit of prayer, and an appetite for the word, and a zeal for God’s glory, and a pure affection to his family — of this sweet, though usually short season, the foolish shepherd knows nothing. He leaped into full assurance at once, and became a man without passing through the stages of infancy and youth. Thus this “young one” he never seeks. He knows nothing of his feelings, and, therefore, cannot describe his case. He has no milk for such babes, nor can he condescend to those of such low estate.

But the wise shepherd seeks out such. He knows just where they are; both **their hopes** and their **fears**, their standing and their **dangers**. Thus, as he goes his rounds through his flock, he seeks to trace out the work of grace in such, neither damping their hopes, nor pushing them beyond their real standing, strengthening all their spiritual encouragements, and yet not thrusting them presumptuously forward; keeping them among the lambs, and not sorting them out among the sturdy rams and traving ewes. He will seek to warn such against trifling with convictions, being lifted up with pride, giving heed to every plausible professor, being entangled in the snares of Satan, and the lusts of the flesh, running here and there with their comforts, until they have all dribbled away; and, as a tender nursing father, he will counsel and instruct them to the utmost of his ability of all the dangers and difficulties that beset their path.

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

3. The third dark mark against this foolish shepherd is that **he does not heal that which is BROKEN**. I think that we have in these different characters mentioned in the verse successive steps of experience. We have, first, the “cut off”, that is, those who are under a sentence of guilt and condemnation; then “the young ones;” those that, by some sweet discovery of his love, have tasted that the Lord is gracious — and now we come to “the broken;” these seem to represent those that have lost their first love, that have inwardly backslidden from their God, that have become entangled in some snare spread for their feet, that have been drawn aside into worldliness, carnality, and pride, and so have swerved from the simplicity of the gospel, from the fervor of their warm affections, from the sincerity of filial obedience, and from their submissive yielding themselves up to be molded as clay by the hands of the heavenly potter.

Thus, their affections, hopes, and desires, their simplicity and godly sincerity, their spiritual loveliness and uprightness, seem marred and defaced. Their vigorous health is broken; and they, instead of being sprightly lambs cropping the tenderest foliage, and bounding up and down the fold, have become sickly and diseased. They are now where Job describes himself to be — “My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart” (Job 17:11). Thus, their purposes of living to God’s glory, of loving him with pure affection, of walking with him in communion, of serving him with pure obedience, are all broken and defaced. Their “judgment, also, is broken,” as is said of Ephraim (Hosea 5:11). Not that they doubt the truth and reality of the doctrines of grace, but their judgments respecting themselves, where they are in the divine life, their own state before God, the reality of their own experience, the certainty of their own salvation — in these deep soul-matters they are broken in any judgment which they can form concerning themselves. In a word, all their religion seems broken up, and they themselves broken down.

Now, this broken sheep the foolish shepherd never instrumentally heals. **He knows neither the disease nor the suitable remedy**. His judgment has never been broken, for, knowing the truth clearly in the letter, no confusion takes place in his head, the seat of all his religion. His arms are not broken, for he can always take God at his Word; his legs are not broken, for he can run when and where he will, though God has never sent him; his back is not broken, for he still stands upright, and has never put his mouth in the dust; and his heart is not broken, for the hammer of God’s Word has never yet

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

fallen upon that rock (Jeremiah 23:29). Thus, he can never instrumentally heal that which is broken.

But the wise shepherd has been more or less taught these lessons by painful experience. He has been broken as a vessel in which God seemed to have no pleasure, and been in some measure bound up. Therefore he can bring suitable remedies for the broken of the flock. The atoning blood of the Savior, the tender compassions of his bosom, his glorious justifying righteousness, the freeness of grace super-abounding over the boundings of sin, the unchangeableness of God's mercy and love — these, and similar remedies, the wise shepherd brings before the broken of the flock, and when divinely applied they heal his wounds.

4. Here is the fourth thing the foolish shepherd will not do. **“He feeds not that which stands still.** Some of the Lord's quickened family are reduced to such straits in soul experience, as to be able to move neither forward nor backward. They dare not go forward, lest they rush into presumption; they dare not fall backward, lest they tumble headlong into despair. Nor dare they turn to the right hand nor to the left, lest they swerve from the king's highway. **Thus they are forced to stand still, not from cowardice, not from sloth, not from unwillingness, but from sheer inability to move.** They are cast down on their backs, and cannot get upon their legs. Now to this sheep food is to be brought. He is not to be kicked up as lazy, nor struck with the crook as stubborn, nor thrown over the hurdles as dead, but he is to be “fed.” Nor are nettles and thistles to be brought to him, but as Agur prayed, “food, convenient for him,” that is, food suitable to his state and condition. The tenderest herbage, and the softest and clearest water is to be brought to him, not that trodden down and fouled with the feet of the fat and the strong, (Ezekiel 34:18), but “the latter growth” that is, the spring crop, the Hebrews beginning the year in the autumn, “after the king's mowings” (Amos 7:1).

But the foolish shepherd has no food for him who stands still. If the sheep cannot get its own living, he will not bring food to what he calls “a lazy Antinomian,” though **he has no eyes to distinguish sickness from sloth, spiritual inability from carnal unwillingness, and the standing still through godly fear from death in sin.**

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

Such are the four negative marks of a foolish shepherd — that is, the things which he does not do. But there are added by the Holy Spirit two positive marks, that is, there are two things which he does do.

5. **“He shall eat the flesh of the fat.”** — That is, he shall not take that which comes, that which is offered him, but he must go through the flock, and select the fattest for his own eating. The priest’s joints were the breast and the shoulder (Exodus 29:27, 28) not the leg and the loin. He was to have good food, and enough food, but not the fattest and best joint of the whole. **The Word of God sanctions an honorable and competent maintenance for a minister, but it is to be freely and voluntarily given. But the foolish shepherd manifests a grasping, covetous, insatiable spirit. He seeks not the good of the flock but the fleece — and he will sacrifice truth, mangle the gospel, and preach to please professors, with the sole end of filling his own pocket.** To take thankfully what is given freely is one thing; to be dissatisfied with what is given, and be clamorous for more, is another. To eat the flesh is allowable, to grasp after the flesh of the fat is discreditable; to feed the flock as a shepherd, and eat of the milk thereof (1 Corinthians 9:7) is honorable; to feed the flock as a grazier is disgraceful.

6. **“And shall tear their claws in pieces.”** — That is to say, they try to take away what strength the sheep have, constantly tormenting them, trying to take away the grace, faith, hope, and love with which they would worship and serve their God (Exodus 10:26).

7. **The foolish shepherds are all “idol” shepherds** (v. 17). They are “idle;” and they are idolaters. The only god they worship is their own belly! — *“They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Romans 16:18).

8. **When they have thoroughly fleeced the flock, they leave it** (v. 17). Fleece and forsake is their policy and their practice. Once they have gotten everything they can from a congregation, they get a sudden call from the Lord to move on to another place, where they are “needed.” — Strangely, the other place is always bigger and richer, and more promising!

To such self-serving deceivers the Lord God promises utter destruction (v. 17; Micah 3:5-7).

FOOLISH SHEPHERDS IDENTIFIED

(Zechariah 11:17) “Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”

(Micah 3:5-7) “Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. (6) Therefore night *shall be* unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. (7) Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer of God.”

May God ever deliver his church from such men, for Christ’s sake. Precious Savior, in mercy, send pastors, faithful pastors, to your people, pastors after your own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding. Make me such a pastor!

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7) “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; (2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. (3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

Amen.