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## **THE PEARLY GATES**

Then, *“the pastor”* (Pastor John) died and stood before God:

**G O D**: John, tell me why I should allow you entrance into my Kingdom.

**JOHN**: Thank you Lord for giving me this opportunity to speak. I will happily and confidently answer thusly: First of all, by your mercy, I repented of my sins and am saved by the blood of Jesus. Blessed be His Name! By your grace, I pursued holiness and was a follower of the Lamb and of your Word. After completing my ministerial and theological training, You called me into the ministry and I obeyed that clarion call to be a preacher of your Word. I left my job and have been shepherding the church you gave me, feeding my flock the word every Lord’s Day; overseeing them and giving to them my pastoral counsel and guidance.

**G O D**: A *“follower of the Lamb and my Word”* John? Really? First of all, since when is My flock your flock?

**JOHN**: Well,.....I mean uh,.....Your flock Lord.

**G O D**: Also, just when did I tell you to quit your job which goes against the example that was left by my servant the apostle Paul who clearly kept working night and day and did his preaching on the side?

**JOHN**: Well,...uh, I thought that working a day job would take away from my full time ministry. How would I ever be effective?.....Sir.

**G O D**: "*Your full time ministry?*" Oh, I see. I left you examples to follow but you thought better than I did! Interesting John.

**JOHN**: But Lord, how was I going to support my family? I didn't think I had to have an outside job with all the tithes coming in.

**G O D**: "*ALL THE TITHES COMING IN??*" Really John? You don't want Me to go there. Believe me!

**JOHN**: Ok, so I misunderstood a couple of things in Your word. But really Lord, I was faithful in shepherding your people and I had a nice building complex to worship You in!

**G O D**: When did I ever tell you to be a shepherd of my people? The One whom I sent is the Shepherd of My people! Have you not read what David said: "*The Lord is My Shepherd!*" There is only One Shepherd; One flock. All others are thieves and robbers. You do greatly err, John.

**JOHN**: I didn't know Lord. This is not what I was taught.

**G O D**: And something else: what's this thing about "*a nice building complex?*" When did I ever tell you to build church buildings? On the contrary, I told the Samaritan woman in John 4 that true worshippers shall worship Me in spirit and in truth. This is what I seek; not a geographical locality or appointed structure. How many times have I said that I dwell NOT in temples made with hands and neither am I served by men's hands, as though I needed anything! Have you ever really tried reading My word on this, John?

**JOHN:** I'm so sorry Lord. All of my teachers and counselors,...you know,...Calvin, Owen, Spurgeon, the Reformers, the Puritans, plus all of my present day teachers were all examples to me. I followed all of their ways and teachings, especially in regards to the pastoral ministry. I also studied and followed the great creeds and catechisms. I thought that I was set apart; you know, something special. I was clothed with divine authority, right? I was called "*Pastor*" and "*Doctor*." I was one who exercised authority in the assembly. All of these things I was taught to do Lord.

**G O D:** John,.....John. Yes, you're right on that. You were surely taught to do that, but NOT BY ME! You've been duped! But I wonder. Were you really duped, or did you really love acting and doing the things you did. But again John, did you ever really study My Word on your own,.....EVER??

**JOHN:** Well Lord, I did have my devotions every morning and I did work at preparing my Sunday messages to some degree!

**G O D:** What did My Son say about "*exercising authority*?" He could not have been more clearer on the issue. In regards to exercising authority, He said clearly "*NOT SO SHALL IT BE AMONG YOU!*" You can clearly see that in Matthew Chapter 20; Mark 10; and Luke 22. And it can also be clearly seen in the example of My Son throughout His entire ministry. Why.....He even washed His disciples feet, kneeling before them one by one, until every dirty foot in the room was clean and then said, "*Do you know what I have done to you?*" "*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*" This is the model for leadership, John. Not "*exercising authority!*" Did you ever read that portion of my Word, John? Why do you practice just the opposite?

**JOHN:** I must have read it many times, but I just didn't see it Lord.

**G O D:** I can see what some of your problem is John. Did I call you to study Calvin or Owen or Spurgeon, Whitfield, Luther or any of the other theologians past or present? Since when did I call you to study these people? The men whose writings I called you to study were of a much simpler sort. They were tradesmen who I trusted with writing My Word as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Though they were humble men, their names are well known: Peter, James, John, Matthew, Luke, Jude, Mark and the apostle Paul, who determined to know nothing but Christ crucified and counted all previous knowledge as dung. John, these are the men that you ought to have studied and followed and not the others.

**JOHN:** Hmmm!

**G O D:** And another thing: Where do you get the idea of having all these pompous, religious titles in front of your name as well as letters after your name? In Matthew 23, I clearly gave the command that no one is to be walking around with titles. In just a few sentences, I made it very plain what the nature and quality of leadership in My community was going to be. Leaders would NOT assume titles or positions. "*But you, do not be called Rabbi!*" Remember that John? They were not to assume the title or position of Rabbi (master, teacher). As if that was not basic enough, I continued in this manner by saying also, "*And do not be called leaders.*"

This is a division. I commanded that there should be no divisions among you, for one is your Teacher and you are all simply brothers. Why didn't you follow My Word on this, John?

**JOHN:** I'm so confused Lord. How were the people to know that I am the pastor?

**G O D:** You just don't get it, do you John? For once in your life, search My Word, John! There is no exalted office or position of "*the pastor!*" Nowhere! You have succumbed to the false teaching of "*office;*" "*control;*" "*ministerial dignity;*" "*power;*" and "*authority*" that false teachers love to shove into My Word. These charlatans have rejected the command and example of Jesus and have done just the opposite in putting themselves on par with the elite, at the peak of the pyramid! But John, it's not there. It never was and it never will be.

**JOHN:** Well Lord, I was part of the eldership who had oversight over the flock and even conducted pastoral visitations with all of the members in order to check up on their spiritual state!

**G O D:** "*Eldership*" John? Yeah, I know about that, John. I know it all too well. And who authorized you to do these so-called "*pastoral visitations*" anyway? Me? I don't think so John; at least, not in the sense and fashion that YOU carried them out: Sticking your nose in my peoples' personal affairs which is frankly none of your business; quizzing them about their "*giving to the church,*" as though this is commanded by Me, which it IS NOT; manipulating them with "*your directives*" which are no where found in scripture; encouraging them to spy on each other and open up every aspect of their lives to your "*microscopic scrutiny?*" Is this your idea of "*pastoral visitation?*" Why John? Again I say, why John? To foster mindless servitude amongst my people? Is that it, John?

**JOHN:** But Lord, this is what other churches do!

**G O D**: ENOUGH JOHN! And then, what about some of my people who dared to question you? What is their fate, John? What did you do to those folk, John?

**JOHN**: Oh NO!

**G O D**: Let me tell you something about that John. So, for example, what did you do in a situation where a spouse questioned your sermon or dared to disagree? You started to tamper with their marriage, didn't you, John? HOW DARE YOU TAMPER WITH THE MARRIAGE INSTITUTION!!! For what John? For a spouse questioning your sermon???? Is that it, John? How dare you put asunder what I have joined together! You call yourself a Christian, John? You call yourself a Pastor, John? You call yourself *a follower of the Lamb and of My Word*, John? I know what you have done John, along with your "*fellow workers*" of iniquity across the earth; how you deliberately inserted yourself between a husband and wife and purposely pitted one against the other all because one of them dared to "*step on your toes!*" Shame on you, John! And if that was not enough, you then would "*counsel*" one spouse to actually separate or even divorce from their mate in order to teach them and the assembly a lesson (the lesson being – *not to question the pastor*). Right, John? Where do you get this from My Word John?

**JOHN**: Lord, what can I say? Lord,....uh.....I'm speechless. I don't know how to respond. The mother church had done all of these things and I just went ahead and followed their example. I don't know what to say other than I did try to teach Your word; I remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy; I tried to keep the church membership pure and undefiled and I did many other wonderful works in Your Name.....

**G O D**: None of that will wash, John! Teaching a concocted and twisted word does not count. You still have not given Me one good reason why I should allow you to enter My Holy Kingdom,....not one. Everything we just discussed that I commanded in My word, you have just twisted and made up something else altogether!

I even sent some of My true servants to warn you about all of your dastardly deeds. But what did you do, John? You mocked them as being irrelevant. You slandered them. You lied about them and then cast them out of your presence and even prevented your followers from having any dealings with them as well!

John, it's sad to see what you have become. You've worked almost your entire life, following the words of men; climbing the ladder of imaginary ecclesiastical positions,

only to realize that there have never been any such positions in My assembly and that you have been living in total rebellion against the Truth.

So here's your judgment John.....

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