



**QA: Should I Listen To A Preacher With Wrong Motive?**  
by [John T Polk II](#)

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

**QUESTION: "Should I listen to a Preacher if his/her motive is wrong?"**

**ANSWER: How can you accurately judge another's "motive?"** As Paul wrote:

For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? (**1 Corinthians 2:11**)

**No one knows "motive" unless a person reveals his/her "motive." A Preacher's motive is internal, doctrine is external.**

**1. Willingly Is Best.**

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. (**1 Corinthians 9:16-18**)

No Gospel Preacher contracts pay before preaching! A Gospel Preacher is not a "professional," but a "professor," i.e., preaches the Gospel of Christ out of earnestness, not earnings. After Jesus taught two disciples Scriptures "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets... in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (**Luke 24:27**), they said, "Did not our heart burn within us" (**Luke 24:32**). True Gospel Preaching must come from knowing the Scriptures and burning hearts.

**2. Paul revealed his "motive."**

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. (**Philippians 1:12-14**)

Paul's determination to continue preaching the Gospel was manifested when one saw "the things which *happened*" to him (**cf 2 Corinthians 11:21-28**). His sincere conviction had impressed "the whole palace guard, and to all the rest" and "most of the brethren in the Lord" gained their courage by his example.

### 3. Doctrine Matters.

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

**(Philippians 1:15-18)**

Regardless of the preacher's motive, whether from "envy and strife" or "good will," Paul's concern was that "Christ is preached." "Envy" causes some preachers to try to outdo or stand out for their own "selfish ambition." Even Pilate "knew that the chief priests had handed Him [Jesus, *jtpll*] over because of envy" (**Mark 15:10**). "Envy" causes "strife" or competition. Gospel Preachers can manifest their motive by cooperating with each other, instead of competing!

Just like the Devil has deflected people's "faith" toward the thief on the cross instead of the cross of Jesus, he has rendered many Gospel Sermons ineffective because the audience judged a Preacher's "motive," and not their own necessity!

— *jtpll*, January 30, 2022