

LIVING AS SHEEP AMONG WOLVES

Based on the command of Christ #22 – “Be wise as serpents”.

He Said “Win `Em”... Not “Venom”!

One of the things that Jesus told us to do was to pray for laborers in Matthew 9:38.

Matt 10:16-22

16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

18 You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

21 “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

I. Behold!

“behold” (idou) = “pay special attention to what is about to be said.

Judges 6:14 - The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?”

Judges 6:15 - “But Lord, ” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

Judges 6:16 - The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.”

II. Be as wise as serpents!

Col. 4:5–6

5. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

6. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Wise (phronimos) = "to rein in or to curb."

III. Be as harmless as doves!

"Harmless" (akeraioi) = unmixed or pure.

1 Peter 3:19-225

19. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.

20. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

21. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

23. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

24. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

25. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Philippians 2:14-16

14. Do everything without complaining or arguing,

15. so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

16. as you hold out the word of life--in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

Romans 16:19 - Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

IV. Beware of men!

"Beware" (prosechete) = "Be on your guard against them."

- a. Do not naively intrust yourselves to men.
- b. Do not, without good cause, make them angry.
- c. Do not fall into the traps of their catch but pray for grace to give them the appropriate answer.
- d. Do nothing that you might enable them to bring a valid charge against you.

1 Peter 4:15-16

15. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

16. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

1. You may experience persecution from religious sources.

Verse 17 - for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

Romans 2:13 - "Bless those who persecute you..."

2. You may experience persecution from those in government.

verse 18, 'You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.'

3. You may experience division within the family.

Verse 21- 'Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.'

4. You may experience persecution from society as a whole.

Verse 22, "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

V. Do not worry about how or what you should speak!

Matt 10:19-20

19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;
20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Proverbs 15:1 - A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Romans 12:18-21

17. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

18. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

19. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

20. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

End Pic: When sheep grow fangs