

Living As Sheep In The Midst Of Wolves

Win `Em"... Not "Venom!

Matthew 9:38 (ESV) - therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Matthew 10:16-22 (ESV)

16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues,

18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.

20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,

22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one 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 (ESV) - And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"

Judges 6:15 (ESV) - And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

Judges 6:16 (ESV) - And the Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."

II. Be as wise as serpents!

Col. 4:5-6 (ESV)

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

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

III. Be as harmless as doves!

"Harmless" (akeraioi) = unmixed or pure.

1 Peter 1:19-25 (ESV)

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you

21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,

25 but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Philippians 2:14-16 (ESV)

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing,

15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,
 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Romans 16:19 (ESV) - For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

IV. Beware of men!

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

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

1 Peter 4:15-16 (ESV)

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

1. You may experience persecution from religious sources!

Matthew 10:17 (ESV) - 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues

Romans 12:14 (ESV) - Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

2. You may experience persecution from those in government!

Matthew 10:18 (ESV) - and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

3. You may experience division within the family!

Matthew 10:21 (ESV) - Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death...

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

Matthew 10:22 (ESV) - and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

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

Matt 10:19-20 (ESV)

19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.
20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Proverbs 15:1 (ESV) - A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Romans 12:18-21 (ESV)

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."
21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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End Pic: When sheep grow fangs