

Sheep, Wolves, and the Son of Man

2024.07.21 Morning Sermon in Matthew 10:16–23

¹⁶“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ¹⁷But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. ¹⁸You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹But 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; ²⁰for 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. ²²And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

Main Idea: Christ takes His servants into, through and out of persecution.

Introduction: the Lord sends His sheep through persecution to show that wolves are wolves and that He is the King, the Son of Man

1. What Christ is doing

1. Giving preparation by telling them beforehand (v16).
 1. Courage. Knowing what you will face. (we are not taken by surprise)
 2. Comfort. Remembering that this comes from His love and wisdom. (He is not taken by surprise)
 3. Confirmation. Faith is strengthened every time His Word proves true.
2. Giving practice.
 1. The Lord gives them a limited time/space/scope mission before opposition is too intense, while telling them about the bigger (v18)/more opposed (v17, 21) mission that will come.
 2. The Lord often does this with believers. Learn well from the instruction that you receive and the providence through which He brings you.
3. Giving help in the moment by the same Spirit through Whom He gives study, training, preparation.

2. What they are to beware of

1. Those who were reputed to be worthy may yet reject Christ’s servants and Christ’s word because they are wolves (cf. 7:15)
2. There are verified wolves into among whom the Lord will send them.
 1. Civil judicial attack (councils)
 2. Ecclesiastical judicial attack
 1. “their” synagogues uses the language of OT apostasy “their” sacrifices, prayers, worship, etc. The quickest persecutors are the ones who follow what they “like” in religion. Such follow innovation (or tradition, which is just innovation that got old), rather than Scripture. These are doing something other than receiving/obtaining the Lord Himself in the way that the Lord Himself is pleased to give Himself

2. Religious people who are operating out of hate (v22) feel compelled to justify themselves for their hate, and justify their attacks by making spiritual cases against the Lord's servants (cf. v25)
 3. Attack from those who are nearest (v21), attack in the severest way (v21, death), attack that is most hurtful (v22, hatred), and attack that may come from anyone (v22, all).
3. **What they are to do (as they preach)**
1. Wise as serpents—prudence not to seek confrontation, e.g. seeking the worthy in v11 and fleeing in v23a
 2. Innocent as doves—not attacking in kind, when confrontation comes; simplicity to stay on mission
 3. Do not worry! (v19–20). Trust the Spirit through Whom Christ prepared you to help you in the moment
 4. Endure to the end (v22)—never give up your witness; be willing to suffer and even die, if it comes to that
4. **What Christ will ultimately do (v23b)**
1. Immediate fulfillment: He Himself will be following up their ministries.
 2. Broader, effectual promise: their message from v7 will come true for many via Christ's attending His Word
 3. Enduring promise: preachers (and all believers) will not run out of kingdom work to do before Christ returns.

Conclusion: the Lord Jesus prepares you for persecution. He has finished giving His Word. He has been faithful for two thousand years. Study, prepare, train, plan, and trust Him.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 10 verses 16-23. These are God's words. Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents. And harmless as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up to councils. And scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before Governors and Kings for my sake.

As a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 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 for. It is not you who speak But the spirit of your father.

Who speaks in? 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. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end. Will be saved.

When they persecute you in this city, Flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you. You will not have gone through the cities of Israel. Before the son of man comes. So far the reading of God's inspired. In an errant worked. Rejoice to know. He glorifies himself and blesses us.

And the preaching of it, please be seated.

If the Lord were not the Lord, Faithful and true Christian Ministry. And faithful and true Christianity. In a world that as we just read in first, John 5, Lies under the sway of the wicked one. Would be a suicide mission. Without the I in the first sentence of verse 16.

That sentence. Would be amazing to us. Behold. I send you out as sheep. In the midst of wolves. The Lord Jesus's plan. For retrieving lost sheep, who are currently. In the character. Of wolves. Is to send out sheep. To retrieve them.

Some of you might if you had sheep who were beset by wolves, you might send out a dog. The new you and knew the sheep and Could do a good job of Defending. Although, dog verse wolf is not a great. Um, well, it's better than sheep. First of all.

But this is what the Lord says that he is doing. He is not surprised. By the attacks upon Those whom he sends to preach the gospel. And this isn't just for, Those who are preachers either. The Apostle Paul, in the end of Romans 8, Where he says wonderful things like We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to his purpose and Um, Those whom he foreign you, he predestined called Justified glorified, wonderful things like he, who did not spare his own son, will surely.

Give us all things together with him. Wonderful things, like, in all these things, we are more than conquerors. Wonderful things, like nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is one of those places where it's good to memorize the whole passage. Because he also says wonderful things like, We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

For your sake. We are killed. All day long.

And so what Christ is doing? To show the greatness and glory of his kingship and his kingdom. To show the power and love that he has for us as The Shepherd of his sheep. As he sends not just as is the primary focus of our passage. Ministers out as sheep preachers Apostles.

And later, Those whom he calls and sends as preachers Elders. Out as sheep in the midst of wolves. But this is a principle that is true for all Christians. Christians. Become more and more convinced of scripture and devoted to the Christ who has loved them and saved them. Have often found that they are hated Equal opportunity, hated by all not.

All without exception. Praise God. There are such things as other Christians. And even those who God in his Mercy, restrains in the common operations of his But not all without exception but all without distinction. A faithful believer, will be shocked. Sometimes That those who hate them. For the Lord, Jesus's sake.

Even. And especially including their own families. And so yes, the Lord Jesus here. Sending particular sheep out in the midst of wolves to preach. As verse 7 says, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, But what he does and what he sends these Apostles out to do in their preaching.

Is also the common experience of Believers. Who simply for adhering to Christ who are not content. To have freedom of worship. But freedom of religion. And for the believer, that means Every part of, Because religion is not compartmentalized. The Christian is someone who has met his creator. Who knows that the God who created him and the God, who upholds, all things by the word of his power is the one who became a man to make atonement for his sins and gather him to himself.

And if you are determined to be a Christian, In any country. That does not confess Christ as king. Even if it is known as a Christian Nation, But the more devoted you are unto Christ. The more conformed you are, To him by in accordance with his word. The more you will find that.

This is true of you. This is what Jesus says. By his Spirit, by his servant. Paul he say, Everyone who deserves, who desires to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus. Will be persecuted. And at the time, He's writing to a young Minister about what it's going to be like in the church.

When he says that, And it's true in the church. It's true in the visible. Rather, it is true in the world. This is how when Paul and Barnabas at the end of the first missionary journey, you remember, hopefully not too long ago. When we were hearing the book of Acts preached and they had planted all the churches and then they went back around and they were ordaining the Presbytery.

Appointing Elders in in every city in, in all of those churches, all at once and strengthening them, encouraging them, you remember? How they strengthen them and encourage them what they said. Through many tribulations. We must enter the kingdom of God. How encouraging? Well, bless God. It is Because they're going to go through the tribulations.

It's the we must enter the kingdom of God part that's encouraging. It's the knowledge that the Lord Jesus is not surprised. This isn't an accident things. Haven't gone wrong. This is plan. A this is what he's doing. This is why when the ancient serpent the devil that dragon in Revelation 12 in his Fury because he cannot touch Christ.

Isn't that wonderful? The child of Revelation, 12 Lord, Jesus is sitting on the throne of glory and indeed, he is now he cannot touch Christ. And we have just heard another wonderful parallel truth. He cannot touch your new man. Did you hear that? In first John 5, just now If you're in Christ, there's you're in Christ by fulfillment of this preaching that we've seen in Matthew, repent, be converted be changed in your nature for the Kingdom of Heaven, as a hand, and that change of nature actually comes from God himself.

And the devil cannot touch the new nature. Jesus has given you by his Spirit, if you're a Christian. But in Revelation 12, the that dragon is furious. And he attacks on Earth the woman. The visible. And her children. All of the Covenant members. Of the visible. You know, if you're a communicate member, you're still a covenant member.

You know, graduate to communicate member from Covenant member and stop being a covenant. The devil hates you and attacks you. Even if you're just a member of the church, You don't even have to be. One of her children. By the new birth. My life in Jesus Christ although he hates you for that too.

And he attacks you for that. But how do they who have Heavenly birth, how do they, who belong to the son, who is caught up to heaven? And is sitting on the throne and descending out his ministers as sheep among wolves and whose whose subjects who's redeemed are accounted as sheep for the slaughter and for his sake are killed all day long.

How does he give them to overcome? Well, they overcome by the blood of the Lamb. And the word of this testimony. And they love not their lives, even unto death. Sometimes we are more than conquerors as we died. You know, the Victorious, life of faith in Hebrews 11. Includes such things as being.

Fed to lions and sawn into. Was this real Christianity, according to the Bible? It's not the pleasant easy life in which everyone sees what a wonderful new person you're becoming in

Christ Jesus and they're so impressed that they're so impressed with you that they they would like a piece of how you got to be that way too.

That's often how Christianity, and the spread of it and evangelism was Presented in. Church in which I grew up. Well, here, the Lord is sending out evangelists and what does he tell them? Behold. I send you out as sheep. In the midst of wolves. And so as the Lord sends them out.

He show. That his ministers are sheep. And that his disciples, all those whom he save are his sheep. He shows that those who are not. Are wolves. And he shows. That he is the king. The son of man. This is all by Design. He's displaying the truth about all three parties.

That the Believers are sheep. And so they must be wise as serpents, but innocent as doves, Not wise as serpents and venomous as serpents. Shows the truth about his Saints whom he sends out, he shows the truth about the world. Into which he sends them. Including that part of the world that is in the visible.

The synagogue is not a safe space. For the one who desires to live Godly in Christ Jesus. Any more than the visible church is a safe space. For the one who desires to live Godly in Christ Jesus. But he shows the truth about himself. That he is the son of man, the Ancient of Days.

The one that Daniel sees coming on the clouds. The one that he testifies himself to be and that his own trial and is therefore condemned. Says, are you the Son of God? Are you the one who was with Daniel's friends earlier in the book in the furnace? The one like a Son of God?

It says he is in fact he's the one that Daniel wrote about later in the book in chapter seven When he had the vision and he saw the son of man coming on the clouds in his victory and authority and glory. Ruling over all of the kingdoms of the earth.

This is what Jesus is saying, by the way, whenever he calls himself, son of man. Now do not misinterpret it like I did for years without better instruction and just Insincerity. But ignorance as a Christian child reading, my Bible and I read the gospels and Jesus says, son of man.

And I would read it human one. Well, it's true. He's a human one but it's a particular one of those humans. It's the Glorious one. Who is also Son of God? And so, that's what we have in this passage. We consider this truth about Those whom he sends and the truth about those unto whom he sends them.

And the truth about himself is the son of man under these three headings first. Uh, what does Christ doing As he gives them this discourse, this instruction as he's sending them out. What is he doing? And, Second as we drill down when he says, but beware and he gives them several things to beware of, what does he tell them to beware of Because we too must be aware of similar things.

Um, We're not called to be Apostles certainly and very few of us. Uh, will be called to be preachers. Although some of you might be, but all of your Christian experience in this world. If you are one, who is called to be a preacher young men. All of our Christian experience in this world is preparation for that, that which they did to Christ and that which they did to Christ's preachers, they are quite happy to do to Christ's subjects to Christ's kin.

So what are they to be aware of? And then what are they to do? How are they? To respond. Which, Those of us who are under Fire at work or Under Fire with our families. I might may come just generally under Fire by everyone. We want to know how to respond.

It's amazing. We live in a society. They can say. That a man is literally Hitler. For eight years. And then be surprised when someone tries to take him out. But dear Christians. We live in a society. Where if you say Christ alone is King and he is the creator of the world.

And that morality is objective. And that what he says is good is good and what he says is evil. Is not a lifestyle. It's evil. And that those who say such things. Are worse than Hitler. They engage in rhetorical and emotional violence. This is how they speak about you.

And your Redeemer and his word and his religion. So don't continue in the same, kind of ignorance and think that there is not coming a day. When those who kill Christians in the state will consider themselves doing a service unto the society. And those who kill Christians in the parts of the visible church, as Jesus warns them in John 16.

Will not think to themselves that they are doing a service unto God. And so, it's very important that we be prepared that we get first. This view of Christ, what he is doing here. That we get second. What to be aware of? What does he tell them? Is going to be done to them, not just in this little, you know, couple of weeks, whatever it was, the, you have two sendings descending of the 12 and the sending of the 70, Luke records both.

So we know that there are two separate things. And you have descending of the 12 here. And this is really a A dry run preparation for what it's going to be like when they end up before Governors and Kings and Nations, right? Governors and Kings and nations isn't happening now.

So as the Lord Jesus is giving us this portion of instruction in verses 16 to 23 is he's giving the 12 this portion of the instruction. He's letting them know that what they are going to experience as they go out is going to be much more intense later. The opposition to Christ has not really ramped up yet even during Jesus's Earthly Ministry at this point.

It's kind of, like, Lab hours. When you go and you study and you get the theory and and now he's giving them some some lab hours, some clinical training, And how to be persecuted because later they're going to be persecuted unto death, none of them get killed at this point.

It was important for us to pay attention. Because what the Lord would eventually send them to? He sends all of his sheep to. In this world. First, then what Christ is doing? He's giving them preparation by telling them beforehand. Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Knowing what you will face. So that you are not taken by surprise knowing That the one who sends you knows that you will face it. And he is equipping, you and training you. And in this case, we'll be with you. That gives you courage. Courage. Is not pretending a way, the danger, or the difficulty, or the Peril of the opposition.

It's snowing and going and doing it anyway.

And so he's given them courage, he's giving them Comfort. He loves them now, he is wise now, he is powerful now, and he is telling them now that it will be sheep as as sheep in the midst of wolves. So that when you get into it, and you are not taken by surprise and you know, that he is not taken by surprise that he is still loving you then.

That he is still wise, then that he is still powerful, then. There has not been an interruption in those things. He can hold to him in the midst of the fiery trial and the midst of the hatred by all. The midst of the Various attacks that we'll see in point to In this way, not only does he give us courage.

In the face of persecution and comfort in the face of persecute. But confirmation If you were sent out as a soldier, And hopefully not sent out to die, but if you're sent out, And, The particular job that you have been assigned. The particular part that you have been assigned in the battle is one in which, you know, you will take more casualties.

Because of what it will do to the enemy. And how it will be used by your commanding officer. And you go out and you start doing what he said you should do. And then the enemy starts doing What he said they will do. You don't say, oh no. The enemy is doing what he said, they will do.

You say? The one who sent me and the one who told me is right. And wise and faithful. It's just like he said. So that the Lord has told us in his word. What the Christian experience will be like, so that when we experience it, not only will we be courageous in the face of it and be comforted by him, still being himself in the midst of it.

It will actually confirm our faith. Because our faith is not a blind irrational. Trust, Our faith is being sure. That whatever Jesus says is true because he said it. And every time we experience something, that is the way that he said it would be He gives us to be confirmed in our faith.

That it is true. Whatever he says is true. So, these 12 go out and You know, they find someone who seems to be worthy has a reputation for being worthy. You remember that from last week they get into the homes and they say, greetings in the name of Jesus.

And, The there's their peace is not received. It's like Jesus said. Is right. His word is true. So he's giving preparation. He's also giving them practice. We've mentioned this. Uh, already. Uh, they do not receive the Um, The sorts of opposition during this brief sending out. And he says, Beware of men, he is now building upon what he had just told them in the end of last week's portion, that there will be those who who gave lip service.

Uh, to Jesus and the coming of the kingdom. And this new religious movement, that seems to be starting in Israel, but when an actual Apostle showed up and wanted an actual room and actual meals, That was a little bit too much. And it was not so well or happily received.

And then he says, Behold, I'm sending you out his sheep in the midst of wolves. You think that was bad? Beware of men, they will deliver you up into councils that scourge you in the synagogues. You are gonna be delivered up to death. By brother, or parent or child?

Verse 21. So there's there is bigger. Opposition coming. So he's giving them practice these clinical hours, these lab hours that we mentioned before the Lord often does this with Believers. When you are going some through something that you feel like is the greatest trial of your life. Let me suggest to you that in your thinking before, God, and you're meditating upon what he's doing.

And you're asking him for help you add a little three letter word. Yet. This is the worst thing I have experienced so far so far. This is the worst thing I have experienced yet. This is the most viciously I have been attacked yet. This is the greatest grief, this is the greatest pain.

This is the hardest thing to do. Yet. For such as often the way with Our Redeemer, he brings us through things and he shows us his faithfulness in the midst of those things. And he shows that his word is true in the midst of those things. And he builds up in us things like courage, and comfort and resolve and persistence in the midst of those things, because he intends us to, he intends toward us to bring us through more difficult things.

And it's in his kindness. That he brings us through the Preparatory of work first. Isn't it a kindness of the Lord Jesus here? As he's preparing these 12 Apostles. One of him ends up betraying him. Another of whom doesn't die, but the other 10 of whom are going to be martyred in the way that he describes here, and even the, the one who doesn't spends the rest of his the latter part of his life, in Exile.

Because he was delivered up to a council. That took from him. Getting to be with his church that he loved getting to assemble with them and preach the gospel to them. And God, giving us. In his Exile. Um, The Book of Revelation. The Lord often does this with Believers?

And so, as he takes you through things, Don't only bless him for the courage and the comfort that he's giving you in the midst of it. And the, the confirmation of his word that you're finding to come true in the midst of it. Also, seek from him to train you by it, to grow you in those Graces that he is using in that trial because you do not know what he has yet assigned for you.

He hasn't come to us, like he like he's come to these Apostles and said, all right, here's here's what you're going to get later. You don't know what you're going to get later, you know, that he knows, and, you know, that the one who knows what you're going to get later is the one who's putting you through, whatever you're going through now.

And so make good use of your afflictions. Learn the lessons, learn him in the midst of it, and learn to respond. In the way that he teaches you. So what is Christ doing? He's giving preparation. He's giving practice. And he's going to give them help. Even in the moment later.

By The Same Spirit. We need to. Uh, deal with verses 19 and 20 because they're so often. Abused says, 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 for.

It is not you who speak but the spirit of your father, who speaks in you. And on that verse, Generations. Of lazy. Irresponsible Unfaithful. Preachers. And Christians. Have said, you don't need to study his word, you don't need to learn your theology. You don't need to practice and learn and plan.

How to present the gospel, or how to teach the truth or how to preach the truth. They think that it's super spiritual not to prepare. The instruction is not. Don't prepare. The instruction is, don't worry. And it comes in the middle of Jesus preparing them. And when he comes to promise, especially the work of the Holy Spirit in places, like, John 14, and John 16.

He tells them that the spirit is going to be as it were a Seminary, Professor to them. There are things that Jesus has said that they need to remember that they need to memorize and the spirit is going to bring them into the recall of those things. There are things that Jesus has not yet said that remain to be said, and when the spirit comes, he's going to give them the rest of that rest of those words, the rest of that theology.

This is not a passage that is against study and training and preparation and planning. This is a passage in which Jesus is training those things. It is however, a passage against worrying. Because the same Jesus who is telling them in advance, the same Jesus, who is teaching them the same Jesus who is training them?

Has promised that the spirit that he has from the father. The spirit that John had promised, that he would baptize those who belong to him with. That he would help you in the moment. And so you have, for instance, the Apostle Paul often asking for prayer. That he would speak plainly the things that are true.

Or that he would speak boldly. Yeah, both what he should say and the manner in which he says it. Because it's in response to prayers like that. It's in God's using his means to equip you. But then in God, coming in the moment. And helping you by the Holy.

This is a text for those of you who have that, loved one that you know, you have to have this conversation with And you're studying and you're thinking and you're getting counsel from your elders and running it by other brothers, who know the Bible. Really well, those who would turn to you because They and, you know, the Lord's testimony, like we heard towards the end of our Psalm selection, the beginning of the service.

And you're doing all that preparing and there is in our remaining flesh in our remaining sinfulness. There is that temptation to fret to be anxious to worry? About what that conversation is going to be like, he says, don't worry. Don't worry your sheep in the midst of wolves, but don't worry.

So that's what Christ is doing. Uh, giving them preparation, giving them practice. And he is going to in the Rhythm, what are they to be aware of? They are to be aware of those, even who appeared as if they were sheep. You know, the worthy ones but they turned out to be wolves.

They turned out to be the ones who verse 15 at the end of last week. Uh said it'll be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the day of judgment then for that City. That didn't receive them.

There to be aware of the Wolves among him, the Lord would send them what kind of attack. Can a Christian expect. And can a preacher, especially expect. He can be expect to be delivered up to councils. Brought up on civil charges. He can expect to be. Delivered up and to and scourged.

Let's, A public whipping. In a synagogue note, he says. Synagogues. This is language. That is borrowed from. That's a way of speaking. That is borrowed, from especially the the latter prophets. Their worship. Their prayers, their religion, their sacrifices. It's a way of saying that. When men start, when men prefer their own Traditions or Innovations is the same stuff, Traditions are just innovations that got old.

There are Traditions from scripture. And then there are traditions of men. That when men follow those things, when the church starts to become their Church, According to their preferences. Rather than Christ's, Than if you are following Christ. But it's not Christ's Church to some extent. It's more and more their Church.

You can expect The following Christ. Will get you attacked in the church. Maybe even brought up on charges, maybe even Well, we don't have whipping as Church Center.

Religious people who are operating out of hate. Who despise you and wish to attack you. Or wish to attack. What Christ wants in his church, and if you identify Uh, if you identify with that, you can expect yourself to be attacked too. Those who attacked Christians and especially who are hateful, they feel compelled to justify themselves for their hate.

No one says to himself, I really hate that guy and it's Uh, it's fine. For me to be so hateful. No, they justify their attacks by making spiritual cases against the Lord's servants. By making legal cases so that they can feel righteous. I'm serving God by doing this attack.

I'm serving the state by doing this attack. So, he says, they'll deliver you up to councils and they'll Scourge you in their synagogues. Look at the intensity of the attack. That he says, to

beware of and Uh, I see what the time is. So Uh will not dwell on each of these just point them out.

Attack from those who are nearest brother, brother, father, child, children parents Verse 21. That's an intense attack. Um, Psalm 41, which we've been singing, Um, this month, some of which you can only sing in Union with Christ. Raising me up so that I can repay him well. It's prophetic of Christ.

It's repaying belongs to Jesus vengeance. Is his But attack from those who are nearest, my familiar friend. The one who shared my bread lifted up his heel against me attacking the severest way. It's unto death in verse 21. Brother will deliver a brother to death. Children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

It's intense, not just in who does it and the outcome of it. But the motivation that you see behind it, you will be hated by all for my name's sake. It is miserable. It is painful. It's often worse than than the, the feeling of death is the feeling of being hated.

And that is most hurtful. It's intense because it can come from anyone. It's equal opportunity. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. And so there's there's no other Allegiance other than Christ. That can spare you. They might be from your family, they might be from your Uh with the same political inclinations, they might be from the same social class.

They might be from the same ethnicity. Any one of them is going to hate you for Jesus's sake. Do not think that you are safe. From. So that's what to be aware of and what to do with them. Be wise as serpents. He says. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as does.

No, he doesn't say wise as thus serpent. He's not talking about. Um, cunning Uh, or shrewdness in, in the way of Calculating, and Figuring out how to twist the situation to you. Serpents snakes in the ancient near East were proverbially wise because they knew to avoid conflict. They were skittish.

Uh, they they did not run into situations in which they would be in danger. They generally speaking would be under rocks, or behind things, or There is a wisdom, a prudence here to not seek confrontation. Confrontation will find you if you're a Christian. If you're a faithful Christian, you don't have to go looking for it.

The one who is going and looking for and provoking. Confrontation. Is not obeying be wise as serpent. He tells them when you go into a town, he doesn't say. Pick the first person, you see and say I must stay at your house. And he says, inquire after who is worthy.

And seek them. He tells them when they persecute you in this city, flee to another There's other Christian work to do. You're going to be resisted. That's fine. But if you are in danger, flee, we actually see the Apostle Paul do that on multiple occasions in the book of Acts, don't we?

He's not there being cowardly. In many situations he stays for a long time when he's vigorously opposed but when it comes to the point of death or danger, there's other places to preach the gospel And so, why is the serpents don't seek confrontation but innocent as doves? When confrontation finds you You have to switch.

You don't continue being like a serpent because the confronted serpent. What happens kids, if you turn over that rock and there's a snake and you start poking at it, Well. A rattlesnake. And you start poking at it. All right, so Christian is not supposed to be like the serpent at that point.

He's innocent as a dove. He's the word is simple-minded. Single-minded. He is on Mission for the Lord. If he gets attacked, he doesn't go into attack back mode. He does not attack in kind. When the confrontation comes, he stays on Mission, he is harmless as a dove. Not stupid.

Lucky deaf.

So, what are you to do? You're to be wise as serpent. To be innocent as a dove. Stay on Mission. Be Christ's Proclaim Christ. Welcome them to Christ even as they're killing you on account of Christ be like Stephen.

Would talk about Jesus after synagogue every week and they would dispute with him and even and none of them could Prevail in their arguments with Stephen. Eventually they get so mad, they bring him up on trumped-up charges. And he's, he's asked about, he's asked one question at his trial, and he uses it as an opportunity to preach.

Just about the Jesus from just about the entire Old Testament. It breaches it preaches, the gospel and they start killing them. That his innocent is enough, he prays to Jesus for the Salvation, really for the application of the preaching of the Gospel, that he's just been doing at his trial.

You stay on Mission. Don't attack back. Avoid the confrontation, the confrontation will find you when it finds you do not attack back.

Don't worry. Don't worry verses, 19, and 20, we already covered that indoor to the end verse 22. You will be hated by all for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. If you have recently been through the Book of Revelation or maybe you have a good recall of it, you'll remember how constantly Endure to the end.

And the one who endures to the end receives the Crown of Be wisest serpent innocent as Dove. Don't worry and endure to the end. Why? Because of what Christ will ultimately do. Says when when they persecute you in this city, flee to another for, surely I say to you you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before.

The son of man comes And the commentators throw up their hands and they say, what in the world does that mean? Because it sounds like the second coming, some of them say and it sounds like he's talking, he's back to talking just about the sending of the 12 that this particular time and And yet the sort of persecution that he's describing, doesn't seem to be something that they experienced at this particular time.

Well, he fulfills it in multiple ways. And sometimes the easiest way to see what Christ means is to see what happened. That fulfilled his word because he knows what's going to happen and he tells you what's going to happen and sometimes well all the time for us prophecy is easier in hindsight.

There is an immediate immediate fulfillment, he himself follows up their Ministries. When they're not welcome. They can go on, he's coming behind them and he's actually fulfilling what they said. Because they come. And what are they preaching? According to verse 7, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And then preach the Kingdom of Heaven as a hand.

They're not, well, received they shake off the dust of their feet. They go on to another city. Jesus comes behind them. What just happened? The king has arrived. The Kingdom of Heaven was a hand. He's here. Okay. So it's not their job to make the kingdom come. It's not their job to make people.

Acknowledge and respond to the coming of the Kingdom. It's their job to preach where he gives them to preach and when they have to flee, go ahead and flee. He's gonna come There's a broader fulfillment. Because except by the son of man coming expect except by the Lord Jesus coming in power and giving No one would ever believe.

And so, there's There's a promise here in the way that Jesus attends his word, especially by his Spirit. Remember what he says in John. That when he sends his Spirit by his Spirit, the father, and the son come, and make their home with people. But there's also an enduring promise here, and I think this one is probably primary in verse 23.

And that is preachers and all believers will not run out of Kingdom work to do before Christ returns. As I persecute you in one city, flee to another, it's okay to move on. There's Kingdom work to do somewhere else because you will not finish all the kingdom work to do.

And Especially in verse 23. If you are continuing to heed the instruction that we had in Romans 11 Desiring that the remnant of the Jews would continue to be saved and that they would be gathered into faith in Jesus Christ. There's something very particular here about the cities of Israel.

God is not going to give up saving Jews until Jesus returns. And so, Whether it's in Israel or whether it's around the world. There's going to be Kingdom work to do. Until Jesus returns.

Beloved Christians. Those of you who, Trust in Christ, belonged to him. Experience resistance on account of him. The Lord Jesus prepares you for persecution. He has given us now. His completed word. He has been leading Christians into persecution. And through persecution in the midst of persecution and out to persecution.

For 2000 years. His word is faithful. And he is faithful. What you're experiencing is not new. The 12 experienced it two thousand years of Christians, have experienced it and you have the same Christ and The Same Spirit. Caused this to be written so that you might hear it from just one of the more recent Of his servants whom he sends to preach.

So study and prepare and train and plan. But do not fear. Do not seek the confrontation be wise as a serpent. And when the confrontation comes, Be neither afraid nor vindictive. Be innocent as a dove. Not strike back. Preach the gospel of Christ for that must continue. Until he returns.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your help. And we thank you for. Sustaining. Even physically. Sending us in the common way that you sustain all men. In our souls. But we thank you, most of all. For sustaining us graciously redeemingly by your spirit helping us in the preaching and the hearing of your word breached.

Now we pray that you would keep helping us by your spirit's use of the word in our heart and in our mind We ask Lord, especially for those who To whom you have brought home a word of comfort. We pray that the Comfort would not easily dissipate Those who might have been brought.

Conviction to do something or to repent from something Grant to them by your spirit to follow through. We pray Lord for those of us who do not even know the attack that is to come this week, but for which you gave us to hear this sermon for that purpose.

Lord, your Providence is perfect. And we're grateful to you, for personally, interacting with us in your word, help us, Lord. To personally interact with you. As we apply this word in our lives, we ask in Jesus name, Amen.