

Sheep Among Wolves

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon is a powerful call to the church to embrace the wisdom and innocence needed to face spiritual warfare in the 21st century. Drawing from Matthew chapter 10, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being as wise as serpents, navigating challenges with discernment, and as harmless as doves, maintaining purity and sincerity in all actions. The message highlights the need for believers to be prepared to endure persecution, opposition, and hostility while continuing to boldly preach the gospel amidst a world filled with 'wolves'.

Scripture: Matthew 10:16, Luke 10:3, James 3:17, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 2:23

Topics: "Wisdom in Spiritual Warfare", "Endurance in Persecution"

Description

This sermon is a powerful call to the church to embrace the wisdom and innocence needed to face spiritual warfare in the 21st century. Drawing from Matthew chapter 10, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being as wise as serpents, navigating challenges with discernment, and as harmless as doves, maintaining purity and sincerity in all actions. The message highlights the need for believers to be prepared to endure persecution, opposition, and hostility while continuing to boldly preach the gospel amidst a world filled with 'wolves'.

Transcript

Praise God. Welcome to our meeting here this morning. We're turning in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 10.

Matthew chapter 10 and there's one scripture I want to preach from this morning. We're going to read a few scriptures in around it but I just want to preach from one scripture. This is part six of spiritual warfare and what I'm going to deal with many or most will not think is spiritual warfare but I am utterly convinced it is a major part of spiritual warfare.

Most Christians in today's church, all they knew about spiritual warfare is the spirit of Jezebel. They don't even keep it in context. They don't realize she was a false teacher in a church that brought immorality in.

It's not a spirit. All of that is foolishness, nothing to do with spiritual warfare but what we are going to deal with here isn't an imaginary thing but it's scripture, real warfare, rock-face spiritual warfare, not carnal but real at the heart and center of God's purpose. Listen to my title here this morning as we go to read from Matthew chapter 10, sheep among wolves.

Read them from Matthew chapter 10 and this scripture verse 16 was dropped into my heart at the beginning of this week about Monday and it rolled and rolled. I couldn't get away from it so this message has chosen me. I didn't choose it.

I just couldn't escape it and I very quickly realized it was God's will to preach especially from verse 16. Reading from Matthew chapter 10 from verse 16 and we'll go through to verse 26. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves but beware of men for they will deliver you up to the councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake for a testimony against them and the gentiles but when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak for it is not ye that speak but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you and the brother shall deliver up the brother to death and the father the child and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake but he that endureth to the end shall be saved but when they persecute you in this city flee ye into another for verily I say unto you ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel to the son of man become the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his lord it is it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord if they have called the master of the house bells above how much more shall they call them of his household fear them not therefore for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known let's pray together here father we do thank you for the word of god that we are sent forth as sheep as lambs amidst wills lord god you have commissioned us you have sent us it's not accidental it's not out of your power we're not only waiting for this happening but you're sending us commanding us to go forth with the gospel of blood redemption the gospel of salvation the gospel of repentance the gospel of the mercy of god father you have sent us and lord god i pray that that commission would burn as a fire this morning my god i pray break fear in this meeting this morning break inhibitions break strongholds in the minds lord god i pray this commission will come from the lips of the great shepherd himself lord god that you are with us even until the end of the age lord god i pray let the power of your holy spirit come upon us that we won't be cowards hiding in the trench but lord god we will be sheep going forth boldly into the midst of the wills lord god knowing that you are with us that you have sent us that we are going in your name in your authority with your commission my god teach us that this is real spiritual warfare it's not the games of religion not the traditions of men not the charismatic games of our generation but this is the word of the lord the real church going out into persecution not just running from it not just hiding but lord god going forth into this 21st century with the power of god upon us with the word of god upon our lips my god raise up a real church again to make the hour lord god raise up a church in this hour that's fast turning towards persecution that you'd send forth sheep like we find in this text of scripture in jesus mighty name be glorified and help us lord god we're only sheep and lambs but we know that you're the great shepherd we love you with all of our heart in jesus name amen my message sheep among wolves it says in matthew 10 16 behold i send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves be ye therefore wise as serpents harmless as doves we are given this beautiful command in matthew chapter 10 and verse 16 but it's given again in luke chapter 10 listen with me in verse 2 therefore said he that is jesus unto them the harvest truly is great but the labors are few pray ye therefore the lord of the harvest that he would send forth labors into his harvest and notice the context verse 3 go your ways behold i send you forth as lambs among wolves we see here in these two scriptures in matthew 10 and again in luke chapter 10 the same instructions given i send you forth as sheep in the midst of the wolves and this is our message here this morning sheep among wolves what a beautiful statement given in these two chapters and over in luke chapter 10 it's

worded slightly different i send you forth as lambs among wolves notice here they are commanded not to pray for safety not to pray for an easy life not to pray for a life without troubles but they're commanded here in such an hour as we are living in here this morning they are commanded pray for labors because there's too few out in the harvest field what are we to do in this hour this 21st century 2021 when we see everything closing in around us in politics in society in laws in legislation are we to pray for our protection absolutely not according to the lord jesus christ this is an hour at time this is true spiritual warfare how are we going to meet this hour how are we going to meet this age are we only going to be concerned about food growing our own food protecting ourselves what are we going to do with money in the bank what about our house is that what we're going to be consumed with in such an hour of wolves rising up in every area of society you know what saints you know how we as a church are going to make this hour and i pray everyone listening into this message throughout today and this week i pray we're going to begin to make the hour by praying lord send out labors into the harvest if you close the book and said it's all over there's going to be no more revival no more missions no more evangelism no in gathering of the harvest i want to assure you that is utterly unbiblical it is an hour now to say lord send the labors but brother keith we're not allowed on a plane lord send the labors but we're not allowed to meet and gather as we had one lord send the labors but how are we going to evangelize our cities when we're not even allowed to go near people you know what christ said start to pray and the answer is going to come notice here we don't pray for our own safety and protection it's not ourselves that we're concerned about it's the souls of men in an hour where persecution begins to arise when this world begins to turn against the church when laws are being made that are going to target the church we don't begin to think about ourselves we begin to think about the souls of men lord send us forth into the harvest field send forth labors into the harvest field send forth those that are going to preach and evangelize in the homes and the cities on the streets and the schools and the workplace lord send the labors notice that in luke um chapter 10 it is the 70 being sent in matthew chapter 10 it is the 12 being sent first the 12 that sent with this command about being sent out amidst wolves then in luke chapter 10 it is 70 and notice although the 12 are named we know something of them not all of them but we know something of their birthplace their father's name who they are or their work or profession we know something of those 12 but the 70 we don't know their names they're nameless we don't know all they done we don't know how god used them there's no history books left from the 70 and yet the 70 went and done the exact same as the 10 and so in matthew 10 we have the 12 being commissioned like this and luke chapter 10 uh we have the 70 being commissioned with this you see he speaks in both of these chapters of persecution of persecution here in matthew 10 where we are christ goes on and i want you to read the entire chapter to keep the context of this verse after this gathering he speaks in this chapter about persecution but in fact in reality when the 12 were sent out into galilee on this mission we don't read of any persecution on this particular mission then notice as well in verse 5 and 6 he says go not into the way of the gentiles and into the city of the samaritans enter not but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of israel now notice the 12 are being commissioned don't go to the gentiles don't go to those half-baked samaritans only go to the house of israel and yet a few verses later in verse 18 he says ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake for a testimony against them and against the gentiles so he's saying i'm sending you only to israel but he's talking about this evangelization of the entire gentile world then he also the holy spirit was not yet given to him pentecost had not happened but yet in verse 20 he talks about the holy spirit giving them the words to speak when they're brought or persecuted in front of kings in verse 22 again it says and you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake but he that ensureth to the end shall be saved do you know what we begin to see in matthew chapter 10 that this commission this teaching the promises the warnings they're not only given to the 12 disciples on this particular mission at this particular time in galilee it wasn't only for them we see it also given to the 70

who went forth into judea the exact same commands commissions warnings and promises and yet we see something further in all of this that was not fulfilled by the apostles was not fulfilled in the first century you see i believe matthew 10 is not just to the 12 apostles not just to the 70 not just to the early church not just to the church throughout history but to us at the end of the age look what it says in verse 23 ye shall not have gone over the cities of israel till the son of man is come these promises and warnings actually extend right down to the coming of the lord down to the end of the age down to a time where every nation will actually turn on the church and hate true genuine believers we see a taste of this in the book of acts but it applies specifically to the future this entire chapter is prophetic look into the future an hour of opposition a time of persecution look in this chapter the persecution that's going to come against the sheep in verse 17 it's it comes from the religious establishment the synagogues so he warns them you are going to suffer at the hands of the established religious system around you in verse 8 he points to the government by speaking about governors and kings are going to persecute then in verse 20 he talks very personally about your family or those of your own bloodline it says and the brother shall deliver up the brother to death and the father the child and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death thank god in this chapter there's also promises three times he says fear not in verse 26 verse 28 and again in verse 31 he also says in verse 30 but the hairs of your head are all numbered there's beautiful promises about the sparrow and how god cares about you that amidst all of this change and scene of society do not fear do not worry be praying for labors to go out don't get distracted from the great commission since this is an hour a year that we are entering into we must not forget the great commission we have a calling that's far greater than our own safety far greater than our own personal needs far greater than our own fears there is a commission that we as the church need to be gripped with you see opposition is also a time of opportunity there is not only rejection in this chapter there is also reception by the lost sheep of israel there's not only wilson this chapter but there are lost sheep who need the lord jesus christ there's not only dangers but blessings not only persecution but miracles all of this goes together and i believe it's a great part of spiritual warfare in the church of jesus christ this chapter matthew 10 and the promise i'm gonna are the instruction i'm gonna preach on right now in this message and give you four points from it is a promise for this hour in a remarkable and a unique way it gives us the wisdom of god for this very hour that we are in let me say before i start the vaccine that's been promoted promoted across our nations is not the mark of the beast neither have the six or seven seals of revelation began to be open yet we're not in the first seal or the second the third of the fourth they have not begun to be opened yet we are not in the great tribulation i want to assure you but i do want you to realize the hour that we live in we are living in the days just prior to all of these things we are in the beginning of sorrows we are seeing the entire world system change religiously politically and socially and it is coming together you see i believe you and i are going to have to preach and be christians and function as the church and as individual christians and preachers in an hour of utter hostility but we've been called for this the church of the western world in the 20 21st century has been asleep it has almost drowned in comfort it's forgotten what the commission was it's forgotten what true spiritual warfare is it's forgotten what a real christian is we forgot we're soldiers of jesus christ that we have been born for persecution that we can endure through all of these things since i want to tell you we're living in an hour where the church had better wake up and begin to realize what we've always been uh called to the church in the first century was born amidst opposition ridicule slander persecution imprisonment murder amidst blood fire and toil that's where the church originated its function and it's a reproach on us that in the western world in recent days we thought god would never let us suffer for our convictions i want to tell you the day of thinking that is over and we're going to see who the real church is the 12 were sent into galilee the 70 were sent into judea but i want to tell you those 70 were not apostles they were not named but they were sent by the

same master to the same task with the same instructions and so are you and i we have the exact same promise let me bring you to matthew chapter 10 and verse 16 here behold i send you as sheep in the midst of wolves but be ye therefore wise as serpents and as harmless as doves in this one simple verse four animals are actually mentioned sheep wolves serpents and doves these four animals now we know in the new testament men are often defined by animals in fact preachers and those in the church claiming to be christians sometimes they're called sheep sometimes goats other times wolves the uptime fox many times pigs and certainly there's dogs so we encounter people within the church world not just out in the world but in the church we encounter men and women who the scripture when applied actually gives them the name of an animal a real christian is always a sheep always a sheep all the time but here in this chapter we have a fascinating display of animals of country trends within this one verse we have four animals we have a serpent a wolf sheep and doves and that's what we're going to look at this morning i've got my four points on these four unique animals and i believe i've just given you the context this is the context and it's for you and i in this hour if you have ears to hear hear what the spirit of would say unto you this morning point one sheep scent among wolves whoever heard of such a thing sheep scent among wolves notice here in this verse that we have sheep sheep real christians are called sheep what is a sheep it's an inoffensive animal it is harmless it is innocent it is no ability of self-defense they haven't taken judo lessons or some other uh protection means they don't possess a rifle no they're innocent defenseless they need to be cared for when the bible speaks about a sheep it's talking about an individual in relation to salvation here in this verse when jesus says that i he sends his sheep out amongst wolves he is sending those who know real salvation sheep is talking about salvation conversion the new birth and as far as it relates to salvation redemption and the gospel of jesus christ these are sheep and he sent sheep out amidst the wolves but i want to tell you being a sheep being born again having your sins forgiven washed in the blood believe in the gospel is not sufficient for the spiritual warfare spoken about in this verse over in luke 10 verse 3 it says go your way behold i send you forth as lambs among the wolves not only sheep but lambs you know the 70 that were sent out were not as advanced as the 12 they were not as greatly gifted in apostolic ministry as the 12 they were lambs called lambs christ not only sent mature sheep out amidst the wolves he actually sent lambs those that were younger in their faith those with less experience those with less gifted ministry they were partakers all of this and yet we have christ saying i send you forth among wolves whether your sheep or whether your lambs you may say i don't have much experience you know what there is one who commissions you and who sends you notice who sends i send that simply means i set you apart i send you out on a mission the greek word is apostella where we get the word apostle an apostle is a sent one but in fact every christian is a sent one you've been set apart if you're a sheep if you're a lamb if you're born again if you've experienced salvation you are also set apart to go to be sent the commission is for every christian not only apostles not only preachers not only the mature it's for the lambs everybody has received the gospel the commission go preach the gospel he says behold i send do you know what the word behold means it means stop right now and take note what i'm going to say in this scripture notice this verse 16 this is how it begins behold another word sit down listen for a moment take note of this verse underline this verse meditate on this verse feed on this verse feast on this verse get to know and understand the meaning of this verse it's imperative it's absolutely important it's a command i send you it's a command it's not but it's not just a command to do something as you go it's something about what you are to be as you go he doesn't just say i send you to go preach he doesn't say that he actually says i send you and he explains the condition and then he explains what he wants you to be as a sheep you are a sheep you're born again but he wants to tell you where he is sending you he wants to tell you of the dangers and he also wants to explain what's what he wants to work within your heart you say to go is not enough to hear the commission is not enough to go and say something is not

enough what are you what are you in your heart this is a deliberate instruction it is a mission through the sheep he sent sheep out amidst the wolves whoever received a commission like this whoever would have sent a flock of sheep out into the midst of wolves christ did he actually did it who is he he is the great shepherd of the sheep the tender shepherd the good shepherd the great shepherd and yet he is commissioning the sheep that he's washed in his blood saved by his grace he knows how harmless they are what are sheep they're harmless they're innocent they're defenseless you know when a sheep falls on its back it'll die like that unless some kind shepherd comes and puts it back on his feet you know what sheep are like if one jumps over the hedge all of them will jump over the hedge if they're on the road at the very last second if you're driving past them right at the last second it'll run out in front of your car this is the nature of the sheep not aware of its own safety its own danger it's got to be led into green pastures it can't even choose the right ground to eat at but here you have christ taking these innocent harmless defenseless sheep and he says i am sending you i command you not to obey this sender will place you in a particular situation a situation of danger a situation that is not um normal if you obey jesus christ you don't need to obey this command you're a sheep but my sheep hear my voice he's talking about them advancing the kingdom amidst adversaries in other words i want you sheep to live in a hostile environment i commissioned you to this you are sheep therefore you can exist in a hostile environment i'm calling you to preach amidst enemies i'm calling you to go forth willingly deliberately obediently i want you to come to a place where you hear my voice you're not doing this recklessly you're not doing it out of your own thinking you're not doing it foolishly but actually it's out of hearing me out of obeying me out of a desire in my heart i want you to go forth i want you to go forward into the enemy territory i'm not hiding you away from the enemy i'm not scared that a wolf will simply get you i am sending you out into the territory of the enemy i'm gonna send you innocent sheep behind enemy lines like paratroopers being dropped do you know what christ doesn't send the sas he doesn't send the parachute regimen he doesn't send elite forces you know what he does he sends sheep and lambs into the most dangerous territory of the enemy and you know what by the grace of god you will conquer you will establish the kingdom of god in some of the darkest hardest habitats on the face of the earth you there's nowhere too hard for jesus christ kingdom but he doesn't send elite troops he sends the sheep and the lamb they're innocent they feel weak they know how vulnerable they are they know how dangerous it is they know that by themselves they they are wolf food uh uh first grade uh food for uh uh for wills and yet here they are going forth it's not your desire but it's because you love the lord jesus christ what are you going to find in that environment why would you ever obey a command like this why would christ ever give a command like this for you to go out in the midst of wills why would he send you and i into out into the midst of wills why would he do that someone like you and i those wills are dangerous you see you and i desire to walk in love and kindness and goodness and to pray for our enemies but why would christ send you out there you know why look at verse six but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of israel they're in search of lost sheep and you know where you find the lost sheep you find them in dark places hostile environment you find them associating with wills those lost sheep are in the midst of wills and we are sent out to rescue them to reach them with the gospel of jesus christ i assure you we are commissioned to this notice i send you out into the midst of wills the word midst there means right in the middle you may think i'd be a fool to go do you know the safest place to be on the face of the earth is in the will of god if jesus christ sends you to go and stand in the midst of wills you're the safest man in all the world can i tell you that to be in the will of god doing the will of god reaching soul for jesus christ there's not a safer place on the entire earth you may say but the will still devour me maybe not maybe not a wolf can come into this church and devour you but you know what you could go forth into this world your workplace your family the high street into some other area some foreign field mission field if you go out you're far safer than you are hiding on the back row of a church do you

remember in the old testament how jonathan and his servant put out a fleece and they said lord if you want us to go up there and fight the philistines they're on top of a hill they're dug in there's a number of them together and jonathan saying you know what it could be god's will for us to go up and fight them he speaks to his servant convinces him and said are you ready for this will you come with me i sure will you know the first servant musta went i sure hope he knows what he's talking about i sure hope he's walking with god i sure hope he's prayed through this morning but i'm gonna stick a very hard to him we know that jonathan went up there and it was like an earthquake and he defeated the enemies of god what about young david the shepherd boy 17 years old he goes out with a packed lunch for his brothers a message of his father he's obeying his father and as he goes out there to the battlefield he said who is this uncircumcised philistine all the souls armors ten tens of thousands of his soldiers are all in the trenches they're scared they're scared of god do you know what young david does he was a sheep a lamb sent out into the midst of wills you know what we're told in the bible that he ran a glass he ran a glass all of those thousands of soldiers trained with their armor marching in rank and file and yet they couldn't do anything but one shepherd boy ran a glass and slew him i tell you these sheep can do a lot of damage in the world's territory but if no one goes however are we going to rescue the sheep notice they're set in the middle in the midst of wills surrounded they're going to obey a command they're going to fulfill the will of god that's going to put them right in the midst of wills you know what wills are there it's an unfriendly cruel world out there you're going to be under constant danger this brings me to my second point wills surrounding the sheep not only sheep sent out amidst the wills but wills surrounding the sheep another words wills all around the sheep out in that natural world world it's it's natural for one wolf to attack a sheep herd that's their nature one wolf is enough to match a thousand sheep easily a thousand sheep will not stop one wolf and yet what do we have we have sheep and lambs surrounded by wolves in this verse not wolf infiltrating the church but listen to me the church going forth to infiltrate the realms of wills you see any normal wolf will say sheep will never come into this environment lambs would never come out here where it's so dangerous it would be a foolish thing a foolhardy thing a crazy thing an impossible thing a thing you couldn't imagine that you would get lambs going right into the domain of wills to steal sheep that they're about to devour who could ever imagine it why wills why is it that remember we're not talking about physical wills or just spirits we're not doing that we're talking about men sheep represent men born again what do wills represent now notice lost sheep represent sinners they're still called sheep but they're sinners they're out there one day they're going to meet christ they need salvation but they're lost sinners they're lost sheep we are sheep what are wills then what are goats goats you don't find them out in that world you find them in the church imitating the sheep they're hypocrites they're false believers what are wills wills are those out in that world that have a devouring nature they are men and women that are utterly set against the gospel against kindness they're not loving they're not good they're devouring by nature you know when you're in the midst of wills they do not understand your activity they do not bless or agree with your activity they will oppose you evangelizing sinners in this world they do not sympathize with your message they don't believe it they hate it they're against it they'll curse you they're not going to bless you they do not care about you they don't care about your feelings if you find someone and their actions and their words reveal they don't care about you they don't care about the church they don't care about sheep do you know what that shows there's something wrong there's something wrong with that person when you're dealing with someone that has no natural affection they will damage you they will attack you they're not bleating like a sheep they're howling like a wolf you know what it's a sign of you're dealing with a wolf when you're dealing with someone who doesn't care about anybody else you're not dealing with the sheep you're not even dealing with a carnal sheep or a lamb you're actually dealing with a will you see this will doesn't care about your safety no matter how innocent you are godly kind gracious these wolves will

slander you they will abuse you they will attack you they will misread your motives they will falsely accuse you they will hinder you they will steal your time they will attack you that is the nature of wolves and yet christ says i am sending you i am commissioning you personally the shepherd of the sheep i want you to go out and it seems unless you know what you're doing don't be silly don't put yourself in a drug stand when you shouldn't be there don't go and sit in a bar stool to try and evangelize when you shouldn't be there i'm not talking foolishly here i'm not saying try and find a dark hole and go in there i'm not saying that when we're going to see that as we go on here that would be foolish to do that but i'm talking about christ himself commissioning the local church notice the 12 went out together they didn't go alone not as individuals the 12 went out in twos the 70 went out in pairs notice here that this commission to go out amidst the wolves isn't for you to be foolish isn't to put yourself in the road of danger he's not talking about that at all but he has actually shown us that there is a call and a commission for the local church over 100 years ago 130 40 years ago there was a man called cecil polehill he was highly educated he had a rich inheritance that was awaiting him and he was there in oxford in england going through his education when he got born again and saved by the grace of god a rough evangelist came to his university called dl moody and as dl moody preached he heard the gospel and was smoked to his heart it started a process of conviction when moody come back a second time cecil polehill joined the cambridge seven with hudson taylor he was one of seven young men that left their inheritance left their careers left their futures and safety in england and they went forth to the hostility of china to evangelize you know as they began to evangelize they were stoned from village to village after cecil polehill married his wife and on their honeymoon got on a donkey and rode out into a very treacherous place in china that's where they began their married life this is sheep going out amidst wills this is the lambs going out amidst the wills well they started to evangelize in an area and a famine hit that area the chinese blamed the white man the missionary and captured them and beat the husband and wife would have killed them since i'm talking about sheep and lambs amidst the wills you see we care too much about our safety we care too much about our comfort we care too much about ourself that very few in this hour are willing to endure persecution in matthew chapter 10 christ actually says you will be persecuted you will be hated now we're shocked when any such thing happens can i tell you wills surrounding the sheep there is an actual commission thank you for this thank god for the cecil polehills who allowed his wife to endure that the missionaries who went out into the dark places of the earth do you know 250 years ago when those old-fashioned methodist preachers began to evangelize court and limerick and dublin and revival came they were few they were persecuted they were hated they were scourged they were driven from town to town all across iron this is before the methodist movement reached new york do you know what started in new york they left on a from limerick landed in new york and the methodist began to evangelize in the city of new york and a revival a methodist revival came to america well it started with a few saints leaving this very city in limerick do you know what those early methodists in limerick and in cork were like they were persecuted terribly on my shelf i've got books of the methodist church town in cork they would go in early in the morning 9 30 they're going into church to pray they're going to spend all day on the lord's day in the house of god do you know what they met there were hundreds crowds of hundreds were waiting for them at the door of catholics stirred up by catholic priests hundreds of them and as those individual christians would walk into the house of god every single sunday there were hundreds either side of them throwing muck on them pouring water on them throwing dead cats at them cursing them blaspheming accusing them threatening their life well they stayed in there prayed sought the lord encouraged each other prayed and and asked for god's grace and after they'd spent several hours together they would come out of that building again again the crowds would be there the same happened in limerick city they were persecuted but they were on fire for god since we have lost this we are scared the church of the 21st century is scared

of martyrdom scared of stoning scared of persecution we've lost the ability saints i'm telling you there's something in this message this morning i'm warning you of an hour that we're going to face matthew chapter 10 isn't just for the 12 or the 70 it's for you and i read it study it spend time in that entire chapter it is speaking to you the sheep of god in the 21st century if you don't think that jesus would allow you to suffer if you don't think he would allow governments or religion or your family to attack you don't you know that you're commissioned by jesus christ to go preach the gospel in those hostile environments since it is real thomas walsh was john wesley's greatest evangelist here in the in limerick city john wesley said thomas walsh won more souls to jesus christ than any other methodist preacher in the world and he was a limerick man he got saved on these streets of limerick and become a great soul winner only for seven years and he wore himself out with labors and beatings and persecutions and eventually died in his deathbed in dublin city but what a man the power of god was on him he would ride in on his horse to little towns and villages in ireland and the catholics and the protestants would get him and they'd take him to the well and they'd say look you can either become a catholic or a protestant but you're not staying a methodist preacher we'll throw you down the well we'll kill you if you come back into this village we're gonna kill you you can become anything even a protestant in ireland but you're not going to remain a methodist yous aren't like any of us in this town and community thomas walsh he would ride out flee for his life he would turn around get on his knees say lord help me and ride back in and preach in the very same community he evangelized ireland from the top to bottom from west to east he evangelized all over this island only in seven years and he raised the preachers everywhere oh give us sheep like this again give us lambs like this again we're hiding behind church walls we're scared less anyone disagrees with us we don't want anyone to defriend us on facebook we are ashamed of the lord jesus christ in this chapter 10 he says if you're ashamed of me i will be ashamed of you sheep in the midst of means hatred slander betrayal scourging arrest and death those sent forth in mission risk their reputations their freedom their families their health and even their lives where is such a church in this hour and generation there are wolves out there there are wolves and you're commissioned to go preach you you may say a wolf could never get converted that's not true look at soul of tarsus that ravenous wolf thank god there was people who prayed for him thank god he's seen a stephen die through stonin and that stephen says father forgive them father forgive them there was a lamb through his martyrdom soul the tars of tarsus was led to conversion i'm persuaded soul would separate husbands from wives would remove parents from children you say the lord jesus would never let the church of the 21st century suffer that would he not he allowed the first century church the church in jerusalem he allowed it the church through galilee and judaea the church in the roman world and you say he won't allow christians like you and me to suffer this could be our greatest hour we're scared of what biden is going to do we're scared of what our politicians is going to do of what schwab is going to do what's going to happen through the great reset what if we lose our liberties that's where the church began what if the law is against us that's where the church was birthed in an upper room what if religion turns against us what if we get thrown in prison what if they don't like our message what if they hate us what if someone should die of martyrdom where are the martyrs of the 21st century where is the spirit of self sacrifice that says i will evangelize that muslim world you know why muslims are not being converted in europe do you know why they're being converted in iran there is a mass revival in iran in egypt in sudan elsewhere in china china is seeing a revival you know why there's christians who think of suffering as their meat and bread it's all a part of preaching this gospel i don't care what they do to me i'm going to preach this gospel i am not ashamed of the gospel of the lord jesus christ thirdly i want to take you further do you know what he says in this scripture he says behold i send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves but notice the next and these are my true next points he's telling them to be something you can't go as mere sheep you can't go out there and do this as mere lambs you need something more

no sheep is equipped or armed to face wills none of them and so he gives instruction true instructions be ye therefore as wise as serpents and harmless as doves my third point wise as serpents you are commanded by the lord jesus christ the lamb of god he commands you be as wise as serpents you dare not go out into the midst of wills you dare not face wills unless you're as wise as a serpent he doesn't tell you to take up the sword or take revenge or smite them back on the cheek if they smite you he doesn't say that he doesn't say fight them on the high street do you know what he says he says be wise as serpents if you want to know how to survive wills how to live in the midst of wills how to minister in the midst of wills how to be surrounded by wills and yet walk out of that if it be the will of god do you know how you've got to be as wise as serpents the serpents are usually thought of in the context of satan we don't like to think of serpents and yet here is christ saying i want you to be as wise as serpents you see god's grace is able to reach into the serpent and draw out this one attribute of the serpent and apply it to a sheep and say all of my sheep ought to have the wisdom of the serpent you see if you're going to survive dwelling ministering in the midst of wills you must have this wisdom wisdom is the great weapon of sheep to walk in the midst of wills we knew back in genesis chapter three and one it says now the serpent and think of it as an animal not a satan but a natural animal a normal animal created by god god's design now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field more subtle you know what that means cunning prudent aware that's what a serpent a natural snake an adder god designed the serpent he made it wise he made it cunning he made it very aware of its environment he made it that it could think ahead there's some animals are so dumb they'll walk on their own legs they're so dumb god has allowed them like the ostrich to be like that but the serpent he made wise you know that serpent thinks ahead watches remembers avoids it does all of these things it's very very cunning he is saying we're to have the wisdom of the serpent we're to have a sharp eye the ability to see ahead discretion in all of our movements patience to wait just to stay where you are without waiting without without moving do you understand what i'm saying if you're to be a sheep or a lamb in the midst of wills can uh fulfilling the commission if this church limerick city church is to be like this if this preacher is to be like this i need the wisdom of the serpent now look at the parallel a serpent is the most hated animal in the world i don't think there's another animal may be hated just as much there are some like tarantulas come second but the serpent is the most hated and feared reviled and rejected animal on the face of the earth yet it survives do you hear me it has wisdom to survive it is the most attacked the most reviled the most rejected and yet somehow that wisdom has made it to survive to flourish to spread in our world and it's as populous as any time in all of history it also has wisdom to avoid danger look at verse 17 here the first thing after saying this about verse 16 it says but beware of men do you know what a serpent does it avoids danger it avoids conflict it doesn't like fighting arguing debating getting in fights with other people it doesn't like that it doesn't put itself in the way of trouble since there is wisdom when Saul of Tarsus converted preached on the high street of Damascus he had to flee for his life over the wall he wasn't scared to do that he was a brave man but he had the wisdom of the serpent he knew when to avoid danger beware be careful of men don't put yourself in trouble it's one thing to go out commissioned to preach in the midst of wolves you can't help that that's what you have in this world but don't put yourself in danger remove yourself from arguments and from conflict where you can help it you know a serpent avoids danger but if you stand on it there's going to be a reaction they also survive in our modern world it's a 21st century world and yet a serpent 6 000 years old it can survive in the 21st century just like it could in the garden of eden you'll find them all over this world in almost every nation apart from ireland this is the only nation free of serpents in the world i am sure they can survive in every atmosphere on land in the sea in fresh water and even in the air you know we can read of serpents that jump from tree to tree they're high up above the ground they have learned to survive in every single atmosphere i'm talking about you having the wisdom of the serpent they evoke respect they're not only feared but they

evoke respect you're not going to go pick up a serpent and play with it you're not going to do that you know what men are going to respect the real church of god they may hate us but they are going to fear that these are not timid lambs only but they have the wisdom of the serpent a serpent also has enough wisdom to stay quiet do you have that wisdom do you know when to speak and when to hiss do you know when to reveal yourself and when to stay hidden you see they know how to stay quiet how to just stay out of the way but they know when it's time to strike oh god give us in this church wisdom to know when to go when to act how to speak this is the wisdom we need serpents are also quick the wisdom they have makes them move quickly at the right time when it's opportune opportune they're not lazy serpents aren't lazy you know what they're very quick to act when it's time to act they're ready to act they could rest an awful long time in the shadows but when they move they are going to move also this last uh similarity to serpents they get in where others don't now i've learned this from candice and my south african encounters and stories you'll find serpents getting in clothes baskets in your kitchen in your bedroom you want to be careful in south africa when we are out there with candice's mom and you know candice will say it's dark it's last thing at night and she'll say will you close the window those windows through the bars it will be open outwardly i went all those bushes i always pray before i stick my hand out to close the window that's just wisdom i want to show you these snakes these serpents get where other animals don't they know how to get in there you know the real christian needs wisdom to know how to reach souls for jesus christ to get into the hearts of men the minds of men to draw near them so uh the apostle paul right through the corinthians he said i caught you with cunning when we're talking about the wisdom the cunning of the serpent to have wisdom as a serpent we're not talking about something deceptive or divisive or evil we're talking about something that's very wise that comes out of a lamb-like spirit a pure love that's what the wisdom is the word wise here means to give thought to practical wise action to be shrewd it's a quality or a type of thinking a way that you learn to think about all things it's the result of insight and experience and as the direct opposite of foolishness this cleverness of intelligence is actually discernment that's what god is calling to us judge biblically judge righteous judgment weigh everything up scrutinize use wisdom before you speak before you act before you go let us be wise as a church to the women of souls what are you doing in the midst of wills and being wise to win souls for jesus christ some of you may ask malcolmson why did you ever come to limerick we watched you year in year out for seven years in this city it's the last city anyone moves into why did you come here for the souls of men because i love you some of you sitting here weren't saved seven years ago but you are now seven years ago you didn't know the things i'm speaking about but you do not now why would malcolmson put himself in this city betrayed by false brethren falsely accused slandered lied about my heart broken time after time once we left that city got back to this house candace fell on her bed she says i'm never going into that city i don't say that to embarrass her she won't mind me saying it we both had those times where i got to the door of that church said lord i'm not sure i can do this but will you help me will you give me wisdom why do you think we've been laboring in the midst of wills because there's a precious harvest of souls i want to be wise clever in my discernment i want to be cautious i want to be careful i don't deliberately suffer these things but for the sake of lost sheep there's lost sheep out there that i'm gonna win thank god praise god that we as a church church why are we gonna endure trials troubles persecution affliction i don't know what awaits us as a church but why shouldn't um god make this like an old-fashioned methodist church in ireland again why shouldn't thomas walsh arise in this church again why shouldn't us creatures you you that are going out in the streets this afternoon why shouldn't you have the same spirit come upon you the same wisdom that thomas walsh had to evangelize in this city of limerick there's a great heritage an example being left for us let us go in the wisdom of god fourth and lastly as i close harmless as does not only as wise as serpents but harmless as does if you're going to survive these wills if you're going to minister and win

souls surrounded by wills you not only need the wisdom of a serpent but you must be harmless as does do you know being as harmless as a dove could save your life with a will i think there's some will sir that'd be so dumbfounded so shocked that this little lamb walks out into their midst it'll leave you alone harmless as does harmless as does my fourth and last point christ is saying you need to be as harmless as doves this word harmless means unmixed not confused not hypocritical pure sincere transparent you know what a dove is it is innocent very simple it is utterly harmless there is no guile within a dove no deviousness no underhand plans you know what a dove is it has the sacrificial spirit in it it comes bearing peace it is tender it feels everything you know they say doves if its partner dies they'll die of a broken heart you know that there's no guile in it it's a soft heart that dove feels everything every emotion you know through long decades i mean 30 years of hardship troubles heartbreaking trials of betrayal of false accusation you know what i still feel things i've never lost the ability to feel or to weep or to hurt i do get hurt i'm flesh and blood but i forgive i love i care i have no devious uh motive in my heart i i want to be as a dove not only as wise as a serpent judging things righteously but i want to be as harmless as a dove never separate these two things some people want to be as wise or cunning as a serpent and they forget that they're to be harmless innocent no guile in their heart there's others who try to be as harmless as doves and they have no judgment no common sense and no wisdom it's not one or the other we need both if we're going to minister like this it says in chapter 10 verse 19 and when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak for it is not you that speak but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you i'm talking about being as harmless as doves let them do what you they're gonna do but you have the spirit of that dove a symbol of the holy spirit what the holy spirit is in nature we are to be as the sheep of god going out to evangelize this is what we're called to it says in james chapter 3 and verse 3 it talks about the meekness of wisdom do you have wisdom and shrewdness do you know how to judge are you wise and cunning in your thinking do you look ahead do you weigh everything up well then add to wisdom meekness it is the meekness of wisdom there's a certain kind of wisdom that is of god and you always know it because there's meekness found within it candace and i went over to john wesley's methodist chapel the first in london in the city of london and as the old preacher was showing us around that old church he showed us charles wesley's piano and he said to candace come play it it was one of his old original pianos where he he wrote those old hymns for the church uh uh to sing and but as we went around that chapel this old preacher he pointed out in round the edge of that church there was a round symbol copied all the way around the top of that church every side you look it was a little round circular emblem do you know what was on it the outward the outside of that circle was a serpent going in around and biting its tail it was a serpent inside the circle was a dove and that old preacher told us the early methodist built on this scripture from matthew 10 verse 16 this was their scripture because they knew they were a church on fire a church in revival a soul winning church but they were surrounded by wills they were sent out in commission in that generation 18th century they were being sent out to bring revival amidst wills to go right into the darkest places but you know what that church that methodist church was reminded you you need to be as wise as serpents but as harmless as does notice how christ joins these two strange animals a serpent and a dove he joins them together only grace could do that only divinity could join these two unusual animals and bring in their attributes to a sheep a lamb to go out and labor and in the midst of wills wisdom does not equal dishonesty an innocence does not equal being gullible christ combined both of these things in himself he was the sheep the lamb of god yet he was as wise as a serpent and he was as harmless as the dove he combined wisdom and harmlessness together he was wise in his answers to the hypocrites he avoided capture on various occasions he he kept his mouth shut and refused to answer at other times other times he answered with scripture and he silenced the mouth of his enemies at times he avoided his enemies at other times he let

them lead him as a lamb to the slaughter he was the crucified one he was persecuted reviled of all men and yet as a lamb he laid down his life for many you see grace knows how to pick out one good attribute from an evil animal it would seem and by some sort of divine chemistry he makes the serpent the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of a dove and comes up with a concoction for those sheep those lambs to drink on their way to face wills on the fields of labor i'm talking about spiritual warfare are you ready for the warfare of the 21st century do you believe matthew chapter 10 is for you in this generation in your church your country your nation your family your workplace do you believe it's for you in this hour that all of this was joined together paul the apostle was a wise man but a harmless man and the church of the early first century conquered the world with the gospel of the lord jesus christ here this morning i call upon you as the church of jesus christ here one last time as i close right now matthew chapter 10 verse 16 behold stand still be silent and listen for a moment i jesus christ send you forth as sheep and lambs in the midst of wilts to stand right in the middle of a circle of wilts be ye therefore as wise shrewd as serpents and as harmless innocent as doves behold i'll be with you to the end of the age can we pray together here this morning thank you lord hallelujah oh praise you lord jesus we love you we worship you when we think of what you've done through that old methodist movement here in limerick right across ireland how you raised up sinners from the high street of limerick as you laid hold of thomas walsh as he was coming out of mass on a sunday and you made him a preacher of the gospel you made him a sheep of god you made him a man wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove you made him a man that was willing to endure suffering and ridicule and persecution and the churches in these cities and these towns around us my god they were willing to endure suffering but they kept preaching the gospel they had the spirit of sacrifice they listened to the promises of god and they triumphed over their enemy they raised up a testimony they arose glorious and there are a generation will do the same for us oh god we don't know what the year holds for us we don't know what lies ahead in this decade of the 2020s but lord god this we want to do is to hear your commission to go out and preach the gospel to this generation even in the midst of waltz since it's an hour of waltz the government a world government that's arising it's a wolf in this hour the lawyers are going to be wolves the guards and police on the high street may turn against you like wills but are you going to function as a church are you going to be a coward hiding in the back of a church protecting yourself saying i can't do the will of god you you don't know what would happen to me if i'm a real christian god help us give us real christians again one last time at the end of the stage and we'll see a revival again that's going to sweep a multitude of souls in god bless

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