

THE MISSION & CONFLICT Matthew 10:16-23`

*HF Mission Slide

*Review

- The Sermon on the Mount, **chapters 5-7**, laid the foundation for character and values in God's kingdom, including life's motivation and priorities.
- **Chapters 8-9** depict Jesus in ministry. He proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, which includes eternal salvation, physical healing, and deliverance.
 - He modeled Kingdom ministry, or what we used to call Jesus' ministry.
- After teaching parables and healing crowds, Jesus shifts to commissioning His disciples.
 - He first instructed them on the scope and objectives of the mission.
 - He then briefed them on the authority that they carried in His name.
- Now Jesus warns them of the context, the danger, the conflict they will encounter.

*Message Theme:

- The central theme is *God's Kingdom mission faces conflict.*

*Message Points:

1. Conflict in Kingdom life and mission is certain.
2. God's resources and strategies are promised.

*Text

Matthew 10:16–23 (NKJV) “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. *19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. *22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 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.

***INTRODUCTION**

- We are living in an era where the divide between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil, and this world-system, is becoming impossible to ignore.
- For too long, the Church in the West has operated under the delusion that we could exist in a comfortable, neutral space.
- The mission of the Kingdom of God is not a pursuit of worldly comfort or cultural approval.
- We have sought to be influential, respected, and mainstream. But Jesus, in His commission to the Twelve, offers a sober correction.

***THE CONTEXT** **vs. 16**

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV) *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

Sheep Amid Wolves*Wolves**

- Wolves are vicious and ravenous; they roam in packs.
- Wolves are predatory; they seek the easy and isolated targets.

***Sheep**

- Sheep are nonpredatory and defenseless in the world of wolves.
- They don’t have claws, they are not as swift, not as strong, nor do they have a thirst for blood – they love grass.

***Kingdom Shrewdness Amid Innocence**

“Wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

- Jesus does not instruct His disciples to become wolves; His direction is totally counter-intuitive; **the command** is: *“Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*
 - **Be wise** – GK WD *phronimos*, sage judgment, prudent, wise, shrewd intelligence, alert.
 - ***Shrewd** (some translations) – *having or showing the insight, intelligence, and understanding to make good judgments about practical matters.*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

- **This is not deceit**; it is discernment. It is the ability to navigate hostility, anticipate traps, and understand that you live in enemy territory.
- **Serpents** in Jewish culture were often symbols of cunning, suggesting alertness and situational awareness.
 - **1st-century Judea existed under Roman occupation**, with frequent social, political, and religious tensions.

- Early believers faced suspicion from both Jewish and Roman authorities, creating the need for “serpent-like” awareness.
- *This means we must be students of the times, discerning the schemes of the Enemy, and navigating the complexities of our culture with tactical brilliance.*
- ***Harmless** – *akeraios*: speak of integrity, innocence, purity, and being free of sin.
- **Doves**, in Near Eastern culture, represented innocence and purity; the dove of Pentecost.
- Harmless does not equate to naivety nor does passivity to piety.

Summary: To be “wise as serpents, harmless as doves” is to combine discernment and righteousness.

- Scripture consistently presents these qualities as essential for believers sharing God’s truth in a fallen world.
- **The exhortation is both a call to be alert amid opposition and a reminder to uphold moral purity.**

***THE CONFLICT** vss. 17-18

Matthew 10:17–18 (NKJV) But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

***Inevitable**

- The conflict will be inevitable. They WILL BE delivered up by people.
- Religious courts, as well as civil courts, and the courts of public opinion.
- It will be in all realms: the **religious**, the **civil**, the **family**, and the **social**.
- When the world tries to silence us, when we are called “haters” or “bigots” for holding to the immutable truths of Scripture, we must not recoil in shame.
- **Jesus tells us that these moments of confrontation are not obstacles to our mission; they are the mission itself.**

***The Opportunity**

- The culture’s hostility is not a sign to retreat but a divine appointment to bear witness to the Gospel.
- Every time you are challenged for standing for the **nuclear family**, for **biological reality**, or for the **exclusivity of Christ**, you are being granted a “testimony.”

***THE PROMISE** vss. 19-20

Matthew 10:19–20 (NKJV) *But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*

No Anxiety

- Don't worry about how to defend yourself, what you will say when brought before magistrates.
- When we are dependent on our own ability, we will fall short. We have reason to worry.
- God's kingdom is not advanced by our human cleverness but by the life and power of the Holy Spirit.

***Divine Provision**

- You are on a mission on behalf of your King. He will provide all that you need.
- It won't be the apostles speaking but the Spirit of God the Father speaking through them.
- I am reminded of Stephen in Acts 7.

***Acts 7:57–60** (NKJV) *Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; . . . 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."*

***THE TEST AND STRATEGY** vss. 21-23

Matthew 10:21–23 (NKJV) *"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 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.*

***Sacred Relationships** vs. 21

"A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed."

- **Christ identifies the breakdown of family and social bonds.**
- We see this happening today; the ideologies of the age, wokeness, have effectively infiltrated the biological family.
- **We see children turned against parents by institutional indoctrination in schools, and we see families fractured by ideological zealotry and narratives.**

- The world system recognizes the traditional Christian family as a threat to be neutralized.
- **Christ is telling us that the cost of following Him may even mean betrayal by those closest to us.**

***Universal Hostility** vs. 22

And all nations will hate you because you are my followers.

- The world's hatred is not directed at you; it is directed at Jesus Christ, His truth.
- **If you remain a nominal, "safe" Christian, the world will tolerate you.**
- The moment you begin to speak and live in the authority of Jesus Christ, challenging the idols of the culture, and asserting the Lordship of Christ, you become the enemy of the world-system.

***The Strategy** vss. 22f-23

Endurance

But everyone who endures to the end will be saved.

- In an era of instant gratification and cultural decay, the Christian mandate is to hold the ground.
- **Endurance means refusing to compromise when the pressure mounts.**

***Strategic Flight**

When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next.

- **This is not a command to retreat in fear; it is a command of wisdom.**
- **It is a strategic move to preserve your opportunity for mission deployment.**
 - When a territory has become occupied by the enemy so as to shut down your impact, it is not a defeat to move to a place where you can continue the work of the Kingdom.
 - This could relate to your job, your community, or your state.

***Historical Precedent:**

- **Jesus** often escaped from a town of opposition until He knew it was His time.
- **Paul** often escaped from a town of opposition until the Holy Spirit told him it was his time to be apprehended.
- **The Church** fled Jerusalem in Acts 8 due to persecution.
- The **Early Church Fathers** fled persecution.
- **The Reformers** (Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, John Knox) fled opposition.
- **The Puritans** fled England for Holland and eventually the Americas.
- **The Huguenots** fled France for the Americas, Prussia, and England.

Those who went before us understood that fleeing was not an act of cowardice, but an act of stewardship and obedience.

***APPLICATION**

Mindset

1. Anticipate a hostile context in living the kingdom life and mission.
2. *Be spiritually shrewd and pure in heart.
3. *Opportunities for kingdom testimony are confrontations and conflicts.
4. *Kingdom strategies include perseverance and can include strategic flight.



1

HARBORVIEW FELLOWSHIP

Equipping people to passionately
Live like Jesus lived,
Do what Jesus did, and
Advance His kingdom together.

2

THE MISSION & CONFLICT

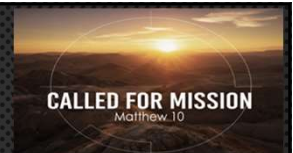


Message Theme

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THE MISSION & CONFLICT



Message Points

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THE MISSION & CONFLICT

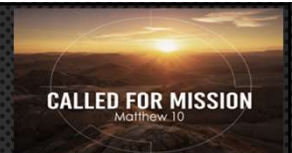


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THE CONTEXT vs. 16

CALLLED FOR MISSION
Matthew 10

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7

THE CONTEXT vs. 16

Sheep Amid Wolves

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- *Doves, in Near Eastern culture, represented innocence and purity.*



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THE CONTEXT vs. 16
 THE CONFLICT vss. 17-18



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THE CONTEXT vs. 16
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 THE PROMISE vss. 19-20

No Anxiety



Matthew 10:19–20 (NLT) When you are arrested, don't worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. 20 For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

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- The Huguenots fled France for the Americas, Prussia, and England.
- Believers up to the present have been and are fleeing persecution.



24

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25

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