

# PACK OF WOLVES

*“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” —MATTHEW 10:16*

When sheep and wolves meet it is normally the sheep that are vulnerable. In our discipleship for Christ, we are the sheep, but who are the wolves? Before sending His disciples out, Jesus identifies three packs of wolves, which are still with us today.

There is the religious pack of wolves. Jesus said, “Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues” (Matthew 10:17). Of all people who should know better, it is those meeting in the synagogues with open Scriptures who become the first source of opposition. Today, the work of God has to grow against opposition from organized religion at large, but also from within its own ranks. There are those who are blinded by prejudice, and lack sensitivity to God in understanding and recognizing His work.

Secondly, there is the government pack of wolves. “On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:18). James was the first disciple to die at the hands of government leaders. By the year 64 A.D., Christians had been singled out as the enemy of the Roman Empire, and were ruthlessly persecuted. In many parts of the world, Christians are still being persecuted because of legislative laws, but it is interesting that historically the church has generally grown best

when persecuted. This is not to encourage persecution, but to be realistic in seeing that when the church is not under pressure, it is in danger of being superficial.

Thirdly, there is the family pack of wolves. “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child...” (Matthew 10:21). This is probably the most distressing of all opposition where members of our own families will alienate and disown us because of our faith. Subsequent history has proved the truth of these warnings, and shown the cost of true discipleship. There is no promise of an easy road. Paul tells Timothy, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Jesus tells us, “Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Snakes do not go looking for trouble, but if they perceive it, they will respond, which is why Jesus said, “Be on your guard against men.” When trouble comes, we are to be “as innocent as doves”. The innocence and clean living of the Christian will mean that when people start throwing mud, it is given little reason to stick! The reality of what we are will carry more influence than the cleverness of anything we might say, because it is Christ Himself who will be revealed through us.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, grant me your strength and courage to be a bold and faithful disciple for You.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: How would I respond to persecution in my witness for Christ?***