

January 14th – Serpents & Doves

*“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

*(Matt. 10:16)*

Studies indicate that about half of Americans are scared of snakes, and that’s probably not too surprising. Just look at them – they’re scaly and slimy. They lurk in hidden places. They strike sometimes when you don’t even see them. And when they do, they can sink their fangs deep into your skin. That’s especially bad if the snake is venomous! But give the serpent his due – he is very crafty and stealthy. He’s a wise hunter who knows just when and how to strike.

On the other hand, you have beautiful doves. They are a universal picture of peace and purity. As a pastor, I’ve officiated many funerals. Sometimes at the graveside, after I’ve said a few words, a caretaker will be there with a basket of doves. After saying a few words, they release the doves into the air. The doves are a beautiful picture of someone’s soul ascending into the heavens. I think we can all agree that doves are beautiful and harmless.

In today’s verse, Jesus commands us to emulate both serpents and doves. When He sent His disciples out to minister in His name, Jesus commanded them to be “wise as serpents.” In other words, understand where you are, who you belong to, and consider the appropriate time to speak and act. On the other hand, we should be “harmless as doves.” As we utilize shrewdness and ingenuity in serving Christ, we should always be peacemakers who yearn to bring others to Jesus.