

# Sermon Reflections

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## *Missions: the Road to Suffering*    **Matthew 10:16 – 11:1**

**Summary:** Be wise. Prepare yourself for Christ's risky, dangerous mission.

Remember, Jesus is giving the 12 apostles instructions and encouragement for the mission He had just given them in verses 5-7.

### 1. Get Ready to Suffer for Christ's Name (vv. 16-23)

- **The mission Christ has given the church is hard.** The apostles were told to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" because the world they were going into would be hostile to their message.
- Has there been a time when you felt the tension between persevering in holding forth the gospel and "fleeing to another city" (v. 23)?
- How can you be wise in the way you live in the fallen world around you?

### 2. Combat the Fear in Your Heart (vv. 24-31)

- **Jesus knew the apostles would have to battle fear.** In verses 24-31 He gave them four truths to help them combat the fear in their hearts.
  - A. **If we are persecuted (shamed, hated, treated unfairly) for Jesus' sake, we are in good company.** They hated Jesus, too. Have you ever been treated unfairly because of your faith in Christ? Looked down on? How does knowing Jesus suffered also help overcome the fear of these things happening?
  - B. **The truth will ultimately be known.** Our faith will be shown true, and our righteous actions vindicated. Name a time when you were mocked for speaking or holding to a biblical truth (i.e. sex only in the context of marriage, the Bible is true, Jesus is the only way to be forgiven). Why does knowing the truth will ultimately be known give you courage to maintain your position?
  - C. **Loving and obeying God trumps earthly suffering.** In what ways do fear of physical hardships affect the way you make decisions (don't limit this just to COVID – think money/retirement, ease of life, etc.)? What is the proper balance between these fears and fearing God?
  - D. **God loves and cares for you.** He knows the smallest details of our lives. He is **for** His own (Rom 8:28, Matt 7:7-11). Is there (or has there been) a circumstance in which you doubted God's goodness (or were tempted to)? Read Romans 8:31-39. Name the ways this promise of God's favor and presence with us overcomes both our fears and circumstances so we can pursue His mission.
- **Homework:** Meet with someone from church one on one and talk through "C" above. Ask them if they think you are properly valuing spiritual things vs. physical things.