



**Sunday, December 27, 2009: Wise as Serpents, Gentle as Doves**

**Scripture: Matthew 10:16-22**

**Speaker: Joe Boot**

**Sermon Notes:**

1. As they face the challenges and foreboding of the new year, many people tend to be depressed and despondent.
2. Each of us faces the prospect of living in the new year under either autonomy (self-rule) or theonomy (God's rule).
3. Though men resist God's rule over their lives now, everyone will eventually proclaim that Jesus is Lord. Philippians 2:10-11
4. In the context of opposition and threats, Jesus sent out His disciples, men called to confront the darkness in their culture.
5. Jesus likens His disciples to sheep who are both innocent and helpless.
6. Jesus didn't trust Himself to the crowd because He knew what was in their hearts. So we must beware of the world's flattery.
7. When we're bearing witness to the truth, people may reject us. We need to trust the shepherd wherever He leads.
8. Islam forces subjugation by violence. By contrast, we are to be gentle in our witness.
9. Increasingly, the demand of the state in western countries is for absolute control in opposition to traditional Christian mores.
10. True dominion is service to Christ. We're to be salt and light, driving away the darkness.
11. Jesus assures His disciples: "what you are to say will be given to you in that hour."
12. We're called to share the gospel, but the result depends not on us, but on the working of God through us.
13. We're to be gentle and respectful, going in divine power to our colleagues, neighbours and friends.
14. Our witnessing should come from a community characterized by unity, tenderness, humble hearts, and love for the brethren.
15. By word and deed we are to win people gradually.
16. Jesus turns secular questions into a sacred response by redefining the question. See Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 13:1-5.
17. We may go out with confidence, knowing that "Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9:7
18. God has put people in our sphere of influence so that we can reach them with the message of the kingdom of God.

**Application Questions:**

1. To what extent will the knowledge of the Lord spread in the earth according to Isaiah 11:9?
2. Does the influence God gives me among people of the world tempt me to disloyalty to Christ and to compromise the gospel?
3. How should our witnessing activity be shaped in consideration of 2 Corinthians 10:3-5?
4. Why don't we live and act as though our God is the same God who grew the early church in Acts?
5. How does the entire context of 1 Peter 3:15 (verses 8-17) instruct the whole scope of our lives as witnesses for Christ?
6. When I'm struggling to "give an answer," how can redefining the question help to bring clarity to false secular assumptions?
7. Will I choose one person for 2010 to pray and fast regularly for their salvation? How can I serve this person practically?
8. Will I pray for opportunities to share and speak the gospel?
9. How can we prepare adequately to share the gospel, and yet trust the Holy Spirit to give us words to speak? (cf. Matt 10:19)