



November 8, 2020

“Sent Out Among Wolves” – A Post-Election Reminder

Matthew 10

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Following the 2020 election results, Pastor Gary shared a reminder about how we are to live as followers of Christ, no matter who occupies the White House. The American Christian life has been too comfortable for too long. Times are changing, and lines are being ‘drawn in the sand.’ Christians cannot remain silent or complacent. Just look at the early disciples and how they were martyred for their faith! Jesus said that when we live for him, we should expect opposition and hostility even from within our own families. Jesus is sending us out into the world as sheep among wolves.

### Matthew 10 – A Mandate For Christians

1. Pastor Gary said, “As you know, I have strongly encouraged you to look at the party platforms upon which the candidates stand and to vote your values from a biblical worldview, and then to trust God with the outcome. If the election does not go in the direction that you had hoped, it’s easy to lose hope. Millions of people felt that way in 2016. Millions of people are feeling that way in 2020. And still millions will feel that way in 2024, and every year that there is an election. But, remember, that if an election does go or does not go in the direction that you had hoped, as Christians our hope and our confidence is in the Lord. As God’s people we honor government leaders [and] we vote for government leaders, but our hope is not in government leaders. Our hope is in the Lord! ‘Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest “political” frame but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.’<sup>1</sup> We have to remember that in Bible times God would sometimes raise up a righteous king, and sometimes God would raise up an unrighteous king. He would use both to accomplish his purposes and through whom to glorify himself. [God called the Babylonian king to come and take the Jewish people back to Babylon for seventy years, in order that God might purge them of sin,] so that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/97628>

they would learn lessons that they would otherwise not have learned under the comfort of a righteous king. ... All the while God was refining his people and doing a work in the hearts of his people. In the same way at the same time he was doing a work in the heart of that pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I don't know what God is up to right now. But I also don't know what man is up to, and man can be up to some pretty evil things in our world. ... [If everything has been resolved by inauguration day, January 20, 2021,] then we need to respect the office of the president, no matter who stands to take the oath of office. And we need to pray always for our elected leaders. I will always support policies of any administration that are biblical, and I will vigorously preach against and fight against any policies that are unbiblical. We don't become silent because of who is or who is not in the White House. We raise our voices in support of righteousness, and we raise our voices in opposition of unrighteousness. That's our duty as Christians."

2. Pastor Gary said, "We must not be complacent, [silent, disengaged, or apathetic]. We certainly must not be complicit to embrace evil and to be a part of an agenda that advances things that are [unbiblical]. We must be a courageous church that stands for righteousness because 'Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.' " <sup>2</sup>
  
3. Pastor Gary said, "If I could summarize Matthew 10, it's basically this: get out there and tell people about Jesus, and be the best example of Jesus, and expect that there will be opposition and hostility, even from among your own family members. ... If we really want to live for Christ in a world that is upside down, we are going to encounter similar things. [It may not be to the degree that it will require our lives.] I can't imagine that at this point, but then again, I couldn't imagine a lot of things [that] just a decade or two ago [would not have seemed possible]."
  - a. [Matthew 10:5-7, 16-23](#)- *"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ... Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 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; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 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. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When*

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<sup>2</sup> [Proverbs 14:34](#)

*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.”*

- b. Of the ten disciples, excluding Judas, and John, who lived into his 90s, all ten were martyred for their faith.<sup>3</sup>

### Witnesses For Christ

#### 4. We are to be sent out.

- a. Pastor Gary said, “[Being sent out] is always a part of what being a Christian is. It’s a faith that is sent out into the world. ... There’s no such thing as a private faith. ... Every person Christ calls, he calls us publicly. ... Jesus calls us to be bold [and courageous] about our faith, to not be ashamed to be identified with Jesus. ... This is no time to retreat into our churches and be cozy in our ‘tree fort’... Be public. Be unashamed. Confess Jesus and let it be known. The challenge, though, is that when you live like this, which is the way Christ called us to live... then you expose yourself to the hostility and opposition of people. [There will be people who don’t] like who you are and who you stand for. That’s why people would rather be silent. ... Silence never advances the cause of righteousness.”
- b. **Matthew 10:32–33** – *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”*
- c. **Matthew 9:37–38** – *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’ ”*

#### 5. We are to expect some opposition.

- a. Pastor Gary said, “Some of the opposition will be rather harmless. It will be that some people don’t want to hear what you have to say. ... Some of the [opposition] will be more severe. ... If you are into Christianity because you want people to like you, then you joined the wrong club! ... When you stand for him, and when you love him, and when you live for him, [you] will draw the ire of other people. ... Things may become very uncomfortable for us.”
- b. **Matthew 10:14** – *“And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.”*
- c. **Matthew 10:17** – *“But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.”*
- d. **Matthew 10:21–22a** – *“Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to*

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<sup>3</sup> In *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, chapter one, pages 16–18, a brief description is given regarding the manner of death of Jesus’ disciples: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22400/22400-h/22400-h.htm>

*be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake."*

- e. **Matthew 10:34-37** - *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."*
  - i. Pastor Gary said, "[Jesus] was simply saying that there will be natural division within a household [in which] there is one who loves Jesus and one who doesn't, or where there are some who want to follow Jesus and some who don't. ... Jesus [was] saying that when push comes to shove, you are just going to have to decide which one you love more, because as much as we love family, we have to supremely love Jesus more than anything and anyone else. And that isn't to say that you then despise your family. [When] you supremely love Jesus, you will be supremely able to love others, including your own household. Even at times when they don't love you because you love Jesus."
- f. **Hebrews 12:1-2** - *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

6. We are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

- a. Pastor Gary said, "What this simply means is that] we should get ready to be hated like a snake! ... [Be wise like snakes are regarding] how to avoid the kind of harm that people will want to inflict on you. Learn from the snakes and be wise about how to survive and avoid harm. ... Doves are pretty harmless. ... Doves are a symbol of peace. ... [Avoid] the temptation to retaliate for the opposition that you [will get]. Be a person of peace."

7. We are to find our lives by losing our lives.

- a. **Matthew 10:37-39** - *"He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."*
- b. Pastor Gary said, "The Christian life is a series of great paradoxes. Jesus [said] things like, to be first you have to be last; if you want to receive, you have to give; and if you want to be great, you have to become least. ... If we live for ourselves, we will never really experience true and meaningful life. But, [if] we die to ourselves... and put our faith in Jesus, then we can know what it

really means to have life through a relationship with him.”

- c. [Psalm 85:6](#) - *“Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?”*

### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Matthew 10:16–39](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s opening remarks about what a Christian’s reaction to the election should be and in whom we have our hope. (See #1 above)
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s comments about the need to be active and engaged versus silent or complacent. (See #2 above)
4. Read and discuss [Matthew 10:5–7, 16–23](#). (See #3 above)
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways the Holy Spirit is using them as one being sent out. (See #4 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments about the importance of having a Christian faith that is public.
7. Read and discuss [Matthew 9:37–38](#) and [Matthew 10:32–33](#).
8. Allow the people in your group to share the positive and negative reactions they get from people they share their faith with or people who know about their Christian faith.
9. What role does prayer play in your public witness of faith in Jesus Christ?
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments about the reality of opposition and the possibility of violent opposition. (See #5a and #5e above)
11. How has the Holy Spirit helped you be as harmless as a dove and as wise as a serpent? (See #6 above)
12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the many paradoxical statements of Jesus. (See #7 above)
13. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)