



Instructions for Missionaries (Part 1)

Matthew 10:16-20

- 1. Be Wise and Innocent (verse 16)**
- 2. Know the Danger (verses 17-18)**
- 3. Do Not Be Anxious (verse 19-20)**

This morning we will be looking at a passage from chapter 10 of Matthew's gospel. In Matthew, we find ourselves eavesdropping on a conversation that Jesus had with His inner group of 12 disciples. Jesus was giving His apostles instructions before He sent them out on their first missions trip. He told them several things. He told them where they should go, what they should do, what they should say, what they should bring, how they should respond to those who received them, and how they should respond to those who rejected them. Up until this point, Jesus' words have been very focused and applicable to His specific disciples for this specific missionary endeavor.

Later on, however, Jesus provides his disciples with different instructions. For example, consider the situation in Matt. 10:6 where Jesus tells His apostles to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Yet later, Jesus would tell these same apostles to go beyond Israel and throughout the world (Matt. 28:18-20). Here, Jesus tells His apostles to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (verse 7). Yet later, Jesus tells these same apostles that the kingdom of God was not going to appear immediately (Luke 19:11-27). Here, Jesus tells His apostles to bring nothing on their journey (verses 9-10). Yet later, Jesus would tell these same apostles to bring a purse, a bag, and a sword on their journeys (Luke 22:35-38). Since Jesus later instructs his disciples differently, we know that these instructions at the beginning of Matthew 10 are not meant for us to follow today. As a result, we need to be careful how we apply those verses to our situations. Even the apostles were not expected to follow these temporary instructions later.

Beginning in verse 16, however, Jesus' instructions to His disciples start to expand in their focus. No longer does He focus on this one particular missions trip of the apostles. He begins to prepare them for what will happen beyond this trip. He tells His disciples of things that will not take place until after this journey is complete. In fact, He tells them of things that will not happen until after His death. He tells them these things because the disciples needed to be prepared for them. For instance, in verse 17, Jesus said, "They will deliver you up to the courts." As far as we know, this did not happen on the first journey. In verse 17, Jesus warned, "They will scourge you." This did not happen on the first journey, either. In verse 18, Jesus said, "They will be brought before kings and governors." We have no record of this happening during this first journey. In verse 18, Jesus explained, "They will be a witness before the Gentiles." On this first journey, they were not to go to the Gentiles. In verse 21, Jesus described how "brother will deliver up brother to death" and "children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death." We know that all twelve of the apostles were still alive after this journey. In verse 23, Jesus said, "They will not finish with the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes." This was a larger scope than the disciples originally covered during this first journey.

As a result of this broadening focus, we will see that many of these instructions that Jesus gave to His disciples on that day in Galilee are more directly applicable to us. Beginning in verse 16, the instructions that Jesus gives are nowhere updated or changed as a result of His death and resurrection. In fact, we find these themes that Jesus brings up here repeated throughout the rest of the New Testament. In that way, we know that we can apply them to us today. Jesus is instructing His apostles directly. His instruction applies for this particular missions trip. But in a greater sense, He is instructing all Christian missionaries as well. That is why I have entitled my sermon this morning, "Instructions for Missionaries." Beginning with verse 16, Jesus focuses on what Christian missionaries should expect from the people they preach to along the way. These instructions are applicable to missionaries of all times.

I want to read our text this morning. Beginning in verse 16, Jesus said,

Matthew 10:16-23

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even 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 become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. And 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 on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than

many sparrows. Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

Let's look at the first instruction, which comes in verse 16. Jesus told His apostles to ...

1. Be Wise and Innocent (verse 16)

Jesus said, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Jesus is using four animals as pictures to get His point across: sheep, wolves, serpents and doves. The first two animals, sheep and wolves, are set up by way of contrast. The second two animals, serpents and doves, are given by way of instruction.

Let's look first at the sheep and wolves. **Wolves** are the natural enemies of sheep. **Sheep** are defenseless against the attack of wolves. Wolves eat sheep. You go to a wolf restaurant and on the menu will be 16 different ways to eat sheep. There's boiled sheep, fried sheep, baked sheep, sheep with pasta, and sheepburgers. Needless, to say, when Jesus told His apostles, "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves," it was not an encouraging thought. It was an expectation of doom. You can hardly think of anything more unsettling that Jesus might tell to His disciples. Jesus was telling His apostles that they should expect to be devoured. Picture with me a chicken coop. Now, picture with me one raccoon in a chicken coop. You know what the raccoon is going to do; it will kill every chicken. Now, imagine a raccoon coop (if such a thing exists). And picture one chicken in a raccoon coop. There is no contest. The raccoons will enjoy chicken for dinner that evening. This is the type of imagery that Jesus' comments would have brought to the disciple's minds. If Jesus were living in America today, He may have said something like, "Behold, I send you out as chickens in the midst of raccoons." Maybe he would say he was sending them out as worms in the midst of birds, or mice in the midst of cats, or ducks in the midst of hunters, or cookies in the midst of children. Jesus said that it would be dangerous out there. He warned that the disciples would be consumed or devoured.

Perhaps you have known a little of this in your life. Have you ever been scared or intimidated while sharing your faith with others before? I know that I have. Why? There are various reasons, but it all comes down to the fact that evangelism is difficult and intimidating. It is difficult to bring up spiritual things in conversation. To some degree, it is because of this very fact that it is a dangerous business to be a sheep in the midst of wolves. Much of our society is against Christianity. Much of our media is against Christianity. Much of our educational system is against Christianity. Many of our governmental leaders are against Christianity. In such a world, when you are bold to stand up for the gospel of Jesus Christ, there will be difficulty and danger. Speaking from personal experience, I will say that I have been ridiculed for my faith. I have been intimidated by others. I pray for boldness in this area.

Jesus gave His advice in our situation by looking at two other animals. Jesus said, "Be like them." First, be like a **serpent**. We are not supposed to be like serpents in every way, just in the good ways. The Bible portrays serpents as crafty animals. Genesis 3:1 says, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." The serpent is an animal that is calm and in control of the situation. Yet, the serpent is also allusive. I have not seen an anxious snake before. A snake is difficult to catch. But, remember, in your craftiness, do not be manipulative, like the serpent, who "deceived Eve by his craftiness" (2 Cor. 11:3). Jesus also said his followers were to be like a **dove**. The Bible portrays doves as innocent, sweet, simple, and lovely animals. Solomon spoke of his bride by using a dove to describe her. "How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves" (Song 1:15). "My dove, my perfect one, is unique" (Song 6:9). Jesus said, when you go out, be innocent and sweet, like the doves. Jesus is taking the best qualities of the serpent (i.e. his wisdom and shrewdness) and the best qualities of the dove (i.e. her innocence and sweetness), and he combines these good qualities. As the commentator Clarke said, "Jesus Christ corrects here the cunning of the serpent, by the simplicity of the dove; and the too great simplicity of the dove, by the cunning of the serpent."

Jesus is trying to balance the imagery here. Sure, you are a vulnerable sheep, but you do not have to give yourself up to be eaten by the wolves. Look down in verse 23. Jesus said, "When they persecute you in this city, flee to the next" (Matt. 10:23). You do not have to be so sheep-like that you become foolish. When persecution comes, flee from it. The apostles fled on several occasions. When Paul was converted, he began preaching at Damascus. When the Jews discovered what he was doing, they "plotted together to do away with him" (Acts 9:23). Paul found out about it and wanted to leave the city, but the Jews were "watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death" (Acts 9:24). So Paul's disciples found a basket large enough to place him in and lowered him down through an opening in the wall (Acts 9:25). By doing this, Paul was able to flee. Later, when Paul and Barnabas were in Iconium, they found out that "an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ...[so] they fled" (Acts 14:5-6). When things heated up in Thessalonica, they fled (Acts 17:5-9). When the hostile Jews arrived at Berea, they fled (Acts 17:13, 14). Even Jesus fled from persecutions that came upon Him. After he preached in Nazareth, "all in the synagogue were filled with rage ... and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill ... in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way" (Luke 4:28-30). There was a time when the Jews "picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple" (John 8:59). On another occasion, the Jews were "seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp" (John 10:39). When persecution comes, it is okay to flee from it. You can be crafty, wise, cool, calm, collected, and difficult to catch, just like the serpent. But always remember that you are to be simple and lovely, like a dove. As we go and share the gospel, we ought to be sweet and attractive and innocent. Yet, there is no need to be foolish. It may be dove-like to go into Baghdad with a sign that says, "Repent and believe in Jesus Christ." But, such dove-like actions will simply find you to be a dead dove.

There is a time to flee the persecution. There is a time to face the persecution. I love the statement in John 7:30, when Jesus faced persecution. John writes, "They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on him, because His hour had not yet come" (John 7:30). But later, when His hour had come, Jesus willingly entered Jerusalem as the sacrificial lamb of God. He was accused by the Jews, but remained silent. When examined before Pontius Pilate, He did not defend Himself. Rather, He was lead away to slaughter as a lamb in the midst of wolves to bear "our sins in His body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24). I rejoice that Jesus faced such persecution. It was for our redemption!

Paul also faced persecution. There was a time, when he knew that he would be bound in Jerusalem. The people of the church in Caesarea

were pleading for him not to go. Paul said, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). The question of when should we decide to flee and when should we decide to face persecution is a difficult one to answer. Should missionaries go to hostile countries? When the political situations in countries begin to grow unstable and hostile toward Christian missionaries, should they leave? When should they leave? It is a question that must be brought to the Lord in prayer. When or if you are faced with a decision between fleeing and facing persecution, you should seek the Lord's guidance. Perhaps this is why Steve Belonger has told us often that when those who are persecuted for their faith are asked what they need, they say that they desire others to pray for them. Perhaps they are seeking snake-like wisdom to know how they are to be innocent doves in their society. **We are to be wise and innocent.**

I have found myself in the path of well-meaning "Christians," who have become unbalanced in these things. They are so concerned with the truth, that they are obnoxious in their behavior. The persecution comes, not because they are Christians, but because they are obnoxious. Oftentimes street preachers can be this way. I remember being at UCLA, and there was once guy, who would stand up in the square on Bruin walk, and begin to shout obscenities at the people, just trying to provoke a response from them. I have a picture of a man I found in a magazine, who is on top of his van with a megaphone on one hand and his bible in the other. His van is covered with paint that says, "The end is near" "Repent you sinner" "turn or burn." It has a picture of the world exploding.

Perhaps in some measure, these people who are "shrewd as serpents," and yet have missed being simple and lovely as doves. They focus upon God's hatred against sin and have missed His love. On the other hand, I have met other well-meaning "Christians," who have been so "dove-like" that they have missed being shrewd at all. Sure, they are loving and kind and sweet, but they have no message. Their message is all love and as a result, no wrath. With no wrath, there is no cross. With no cross, there is no salvation. What do you get when you cross a Unitarian Universalist with a Jehovah's Witness? Someone who goes around knocking on doors for no reason.

Jesus' advice for us this morning is very good. He tells His disciples to be wise and innocent. He also tells them to...

2. Know the Danger (verses 17-18)

Jesus said, "But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:17-18). The dangers to these apostles would come from two fronts. The danger would come from religious leaders and from governmental leaders.

The apostles appeared before the courts. You simply need to read Acts 4 and Acts 5 to see them punished by the religious leaders. In Acts 4, you find Peter and John preaching in the temple after they healed a poor, lame man. They were "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2). They were jailed for their actions (verse 3) and called to give an account before the religious leaders -- Ananias and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. Ananias was a high-priest and remained in great power. Caiaphas was once high-priest. He resided over Jesus' trial. John became high-priest after Caiaphas was finished. These men were the most powerful religious leaders in the land, and the apostles stood before them. Peter testified that it was in the name of Jesus Christ that the lame man was made well. Peter identified Jesus as the rejected stone that has since become the chief corner stone and that salvation only comes in the name of Jesus. The council then decided that they should warn Peter and John and let them go (Acts 4:21).

The apostles were scourged in the synagogues. In Acts 5, you will find Peter and John ignoring the order of the courts and being imprisoned once again by the high priest and his associates (Acts 5:17-18). This time, at the end of their trial, the religious leaders "flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them" (Acts 5:40).

The apostles were brought before governors and kings. You simply need to read Acts 24, 25, and 26 to see the apostle Paul stand trial before the governmental authorities. He stood before Felix (Acts 24) and Festus (Acts 25) and Agrippa (Acts 26). He was eventually sent to Rome to stand before Caesar.

And now the million dollar question comes. Which of you who are listening to this sermon have appeared before the religious or governmental authorities because of your witness for Jesus Christ? I do not believe that any of us here today have experienced this. That brings us to another question: Why have we not been brought before government authorities to account for our faith? There are several answers to this question.

1. We live in a country founded upon religious freedom.

We can, and do, preach the exact same message that the apostles preached. They preached, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). They preached against the sin of those who put Christ to death, saying, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:30-31). When the apostles preached these things, they were jailed and beaten for it. We can preach this same message without incurring punishment because we have been given constitutional freedom to do so. Aren't you glad? Now, if we lived in a different country, this same message could land us in prison! Perhaps we would even be tortured or killed for such a message!

Yet, in America, we are protected by our constitution. This has been greatly illustrated recently with the massive anti-war protests that have taken place in the United States. In America, this is permissible according to the law. But, if such protests took place in Baghdad, you would find many dead protestors!

At Rock Valley Bible Church, you hear about the persecuted church in the world nearly every month. Steve Belonger tells us about persecuted Christians in the world today. We make an effort to keep you informed of these things, because we need to keep these things before our minds. We live in a country founded upon religious freedom. We should use this freedom that God has given to us and be bold proclaimers of the gospel of Christ!

Another reason why we do not suffer religious persecution from the government today, is because ...

2. It is not God's will for us to suffer from the hands of the government right now.

Notice in this text that Jesus isn't telling His disciples that they will face unrelenting and continual persecution. In verse 16, Jesus tells them to be shrewd as serpents, who will be wise as to the dangers surrounding them. In verse 19, Jesus speaks about the day, "when they deliver you up." This implies that there will be days when they are free to preach the nearness of the kingdom. In verse 23, Jesus says that they are to flee the persecution when it comes. In other words, there will be times when they will be able to avoid the persecution coming upon them. There are seasons of persecution and seasons of freedom. The book of 1 Peter is very clear about this. It is a book, written to a scattered and persecuted people. Yet, in the midst of their difficult times, Peter tells these Christians that persecutions may or may not come. Beginning in verse 13, he writes,

And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But **even if you should suffer** for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better, **if God should will it so**, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. (1 Peter 3:13-17)

Their suffering came upon them because of God's willingness to allow the persecutions to come. Such is the lot of Christians today, who live in China or Vietnam or Muslim nations. For us in America today, there is not much persecution that God in His grace has allowed us not to experience.

When we are instructed to pray for our government, we are to pray that we might live quiet, peaceful lives. Paul writes, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). For us in America, **this prayer has been answered**. For those in other nations, this prayer has not been answered.

Last Sunday evening, there were several families from our church who traveled up to Milton, Wisconsin to hear a man named Franco Maggiotto speak. He was born in Italy. He was trained to be a Roman Catholic priest. Through the testimony of Scripture, he was saved when he came to understand the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to forgive sin. He came to see how the mass was no longer necessary. His desire is to see reformation take place in the Roman Catholic Church. He is working to that end. I sat with him at dinner and asked him several questions. One of the questions I asked was about the persecution that he faces. His nose has been broken. His wife's leg has been broken. Right now, he is being charged with harassment and will soon face trial. He told me something to the effect that "you go about doing what you do, and you receive persecution from it." It goes with the territory where he is. This is God's will for him in fighting for the gospel in Italy.

It is not God's will for us in America to suffer from the hands of the government at this time. Oh, the time may indeed come for us someday! When it comes, we need to take heed of 1 Peter 4:19, "Therefore, let those also **who suffer according to the will of God** entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right." But today, let us enjoy the freedom that we have right now and "make the most of our time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16).

Yet another reason we might not be facing persecution is that ...

3. Perhaps we have not been bold enough in our community.

Let me ask you this. Suppose that you lived in Italy, or in China, or in Vietnam, or in Iraq. Suppose that you lived in those countries in the same way that you live your life now. Would you be arrested for your outreach to the lost souls around you? Would you be in prison? Or, would you be able to continue on living just the way that you are living? Would your life display such little of your faith that the government would not be concerned at all with you and your Christianity. Steve Belonger has come up here month after month after month and has shown us slides of what it is like to be in Vietnam. He has told us of how the Christians over there have to live. He has told us how evangelism is illegal over there. You can worship the spirits, but not the God of the Bible. I remember him telling us about a man named Asif. I forget which country he is from, but he survived a poisoning. He now rides a bicycle, evangelizing. He has had his legs broken and his bike taken away. I have been praying for this man to have strength for him to continue his evangelizing and that he could get his bicycle back. The government will arrest people who have been evangelizing.

The government will arrest people who distribute Christian literature. I remember hearing a pastor who visited China tell the story of how they distribute gospel tracts there. They often pass them out to people on public transportation, just before they are going to part from them. At one point, there were some workers in the back of a pick-up truck. They were just about to leave the work site. The Chinese native said, "Now's our chance." He then quickly distributed gospel tracts to all of the men in the back of this truck. The truck took off. The timing was perfect, because the authorities would never be able to trace this literature back to this man. So, he was safe. If you were living in China right now, would you be arrested? Are you bold enough for the government to take note and single you out? Perhaps we have not been bold enough in our community.

Well, here's some application. I believe all of you have seen the brochure we have available that describes our church. It includes clear, convicting truths concerning the gospel. Here's what it says under the section "Our Beliefs":

The BIBLE is inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed. It reveals the truth about GOD, the sovereign Creator, who exists in

three equal persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Every person has SINNED against God and deserves His wrath. In this state, we are unable to understand the gospel, to repent of sin, or to trust in Christ.

JESUS CHRIST lived a sinless life, died on the cross to redeem, reconcile, and forgive His elect people, and rose from the dead in victory over death.

God calls people to SALVATION, which is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. TRUE BELIEVERS will grow in righteousness.

Jesus Christ will COME AGAIN to judge and rule the earth. The righteous will enjoy everlasting life, and the wicked will endure everlasting punishment.

Here's what I'm thinking... Springtime is coming. People are beginning to get out of their homes. Easter is coming. Perhaps there are people, who have not been interested in Christ or attending a church before, who are now thinking about it. Perhaps there are people, who have quit going to church for some reason or another, but would like to return again. They do not know where to go. Easter can often be a catalyst for people to come to church. I'm thinking that a Saturday or two before Easter might be a good time to hand these brochures out. I'm thinking especially in the neighborhoods surrounding Rockford Christian High School. Yvonne and I recently met some people, who live across Bell School Road. It came up in conversation that I was the pastor of Rock Valley Bible Church. They said, "Oh, I know where that is. I live right across the street from Rockford Christian High School, but I did not know anything about the church. Well, now I do." I remember one couple who lived in the neighborhood across the street and visited us one Sunday, because they saw the sign and were curious as to what type of church met here. Perhaps there are many families, who have seen our sign, but do not know anything about us. Some literature in their hands might help them. I guarantee you, if we were in China handing out such brochures, we would be arrested for our activities. So, what do you think? All of us are missionaries to Rockford. Jesus sent His apostles out. Certainly you can take a few hours one Saturday and pass out these brochures. Details about this will come next week. Perhaps you are a bit intimidated by such a process. Perhaps you do not feel comfortable with such a proposal. In that event, the next two verses are for you.

3. Do Not Be Anxious (verse 19-20)

Jesus said, "But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (verses 19-20). Jesus knew that these apostles would be fearful. Being described as sheep in the midst of wolves is scary enough. Being explicitly told that you would be delivered up into the hands of authorities is even scarier. Yet, Jesus sought to comfort them and calm their fears. He said, "Do not become anxious about how or what you will speak" (Matt. 10:19). What a great promise this is to these apostles. They were told that when they were presented before the civil magistrates or before the church councils, they would be given divine inspiration at that moment!

They had enough to worry about. Jesus told them of the dangers they would face. They would be sheep among wolves. They would get in trouble with the law. They would get in trouble with the religious system. They would face being betrayed by their own families. They would be hated by all. But Jesus promises His presence among them in their greatest hour of need. The Spirit of God would miraculously speak through them. (Perhaps this promise extends to all martyrs for all time).

The principle of this verse is that God will show His tender care and compassion for His people when they need it most. The Scriptures say, "Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs, And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes" (Is. 40:11).

Does passing out a few brochures in neighborhoods challenge your faith? Are you fearful of being bold with the gospel of Christ? There is no better way to know the comfort of God than to step out in faith and boldly proclaim Him and to watch Him come and comfort you in any of your difficulty. I close with two verses that we will get to in a few weeks, verses 32 and 33. Jesus said, "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). Your salvation is at stake. If you confess Jesus, He will confess you. If you deny Jesus, He will deny you. Have you gone to the cross and found in Jesus your righteousness? If so, be bold with others and confess Him. If not, repent of your sin and seek Jesus' righteousness. There is no way to the Father, but through the Son.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 30, 2003 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.
