

# Among Wolves | Matthew 9:36-10:16

Sunday, July 26, 2015

## Introduction

[10:5] These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go **nowhere among the Gentiles** and enter no town of the Samaritans, [6] but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

### Why is Jesus only concerned for the Jewish race?

- Remember last week: we are safe from and say before...
- In order to answer this question, we've got to do the work of locating Jesus's words in the larger context of what's happening in the bible...

**Genesis 1:27-28 mandate:** “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- But they fell into sin
- All people - not just preachers - bear the image of God (Eden was his temple -- we are his “idols”) — all people are a part of God’s plan
- **All God's people are chosen to advance his plan...not just preachers.**

**Genesis 12:1-3, Abraham’s Call:** “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

- A nation that would be a blessing to all other nations
- There would be a uniqueness to Israel that would set her apart from all others; a distinctive holiness

- But she fell
- The entire nation was intended to display God's holiness, not just Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and so on.
- **All God's people are chosen to advance his plan...not just preachers.**

**Matthew 9:35-10:6, Redeeming Israel's Call:** "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. [36] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [37] Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; [38] therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." [10:1] And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. [2] The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; [3] Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; [4] Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. [5] These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go **nowhere among the Gentiles** and enter no town of the Samaritans, [6] but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

- 10:5-6: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles".."but...to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (9:36: "sheep without a shepherd") --> Redeeming Israel (saved from, saved for)
- "Harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"
  - Apostles (first used here)
  - Twelve = Corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel who now have shepherds!
  - Sent into to shepherd the Jews (ch. 10)
- The church has this same calling --> Acts 2
- **All God's people are chosen to advance his plan...not just preachers.**

- "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers...": Pray that all Jesus' followers rise up!

**How We Are To Labor, Matthew 10:7-15:** "These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. **11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.**

**Here's how:**

- 1) **Be A Good Friend:** Reaching out; putting ourselves out there; the express purpose of expanding God's rule ("say the kingdom is near" & "repent..." & "seek first the kingdom...")
- 2) **Be Thoughtful -- Be A Blessing in Word & Deed:**
  - 1) Relieve people's hurts: meet their needs
  - 2) "Acquire no gold or silver...": Jesus didn't want his disciples to be a burden -- he wanted them to bring joy and good news wherever they went.
- 3) **Tell People About Jesus:** Mailman conversation
- 4) **Prepare For Rejection:** Wolves = religious (remember, Jesus is taking right now about Jews only)

**Matthew 10:16, A Word About Wolves:** "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

- Context: The wolves were not pagan idolaters who hated God. They were found within the Jewish community - God's chosen people.
- Wolves = Unfriendly religious people are a fact of life.
- Our reaction to wolves (unfriendly religious people):
  - Option #1: Retreat from community** -- collateral damage is the rejection of God's call on our lives to be an intentional part of a holy, distinct community
  - Option #2: Keep your head down** -- do as little as possible in order to avoid conflict -- collateral damage is that we might look like a community, but we're not very unique, distinctive, or holy (we're not learning to live beyond our limits and biases; we're not learning to endure with one another in love)
  - Option #3: Do life with people just like you** -- collateral damage is the same as the last one - except you think you're growing in love, yet you still maintain control in your relationships
  - Option #4: Learn to love** -- abandon your naïve thinking that Christians are supposed to be automatically loving; grow wise - understand the ways of serpents, but live and think like a harmless dove (don't become jaded)