> *Matthew 10:16 (NKJV)* – “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

This verse from the Gospel of Matthew has puzzled many believers. Why did Jesus, the Son of God, instruct His disciples to emulate the wisdom of serpents? Why not choose a nobler animal like a lion, eagle, or ox? After all, throughout Scripture, the serpent is commonly associated with Satan and deception particularly in the Garden of Eden. So what did Jesus mean by this unusual comparison?

1. The Context of the Instruction

Jesus spoke these words while commissioning His twelve apostles. Matthew 10:1-15 lays the foundation: He was sending them to preach the message of the Kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. But He also warned them: persecution, rejection, and opposition would come.

> *Matthew 10:16 (NKJV) is part of that warning:*
> “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves...”

This imagery is deliberate. Sheep are innocent and vulnerable; wolves are dangerous and aggressive. Jesus knew His disciples would face spiritual and physical threats. Yet instead of instructing them to be like lions or warriors, He advised them to be wise *like serpents* and gentle *like doves*.

2. Understanding the Wisdom of the Serpent

The serpent, in biblical terms, is first introduced in

> *Genesis 3:1 (NKJV):*
> “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

The Hebrew word translated “cunning” is ‘ārûm’, which can mean prudent, crafty, or shrewd. In Eden, Satan used the serpent not through brute force, but through subtle persuasion and deceptive wisdom. While his goal was evil, the method was

undeniably strategic.

Think about it: Adam and Eve, who had direct fellowship with God, were convinced to disobey a clear command and that wasn't accomplished with threats or physical force, but through careful, targeted conversation. That level of persuasion required a kind of wisdom Jesus wants His followers to adopt not for evil, but for the strategic presentation of truth.

Just as the serpent identified Eve as the more vulnerable target and used questions instead of accusations ("Has God indeed said…?" Genesis 3:1), so must evangelists today learn to discern their audience, be patient, and choose their words wisely.

3. The Serpent's Approach: Discernment, Patience, and Strategy

Even after the Fall, serpents embody certain traits that illustrate wisdom in action:

- They are silent hunters.

- They rely on timing and subtlety.

- They do not waste energy.

- They avoid unnecessary confrontation.

This is similar to how believers should approach their mission. The Apostle Paul writes:

> *Colossians 4:5–6 (NKJV)* –
> “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Here, Paul links wisdom with speech — the ability to respond to outsiders with thoughtful, gracious words. Wisdom isn’t just about being smart; it’s about *how* and *when* to speak, *how* to engage people’s hearts, and *how* to maintain the purity of the message while tailoring its presentation.

4. Paul as an Example of Strategic Evangelism

Paul embodied this balance of wisdom and gentleness. In 1 Corinthians 9:20–22 (NKJV), he says:

> “...to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews... to those who are without law, as without law... to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

Paul didn’t compromise truth, but he contextualized it. He adjusted his approach without altering the Gospel. That is serpent-like wisdom: strategic, purposeful, and Spirit-led.

5. When Wisdom Is Absent, Conflict Arises

Too often, Christians share the Gospel without this wisdom. For example, attacking another person’s dietary practices (such as not eating pork) or insulting another faith only creates resistance and hostility.

> *Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV) reminds us:*
> “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

> *And 2 Timothy 2:24-25 (NKJV) tells us:*
> “A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...”

Winning souls isn’t about proving who’s right; it’s about drawing hearts toward the truth in love. Even Jesus didn’t force belief He invited, He taught, He corrected gently.

6. The Dangers of Foolish Zeal

Even online, many Christians forget this principle. Instead of building up, they tear down. Instead of winning hearts, they provoke arguments. But Scripture warns:

> *1 Corinthians 8:1 (NKJV)* –
> “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

Wisdom is not just knowledge it’s knowledge applied with grace and love. Jesus didn’t tell us to be *clever* like serpents, but *wise*. Wisdom seeks the good of others.

7. The Reward of a Wise Servant

Jesus praised the wise servant in:

> *Luke 12:42-44 (NKJV)*
> “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household…? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.”

Wisdom is a trait that God honors. Those who serve with both truth and tact will be rewarded.

Conclusion: Walk in Wisdom

As followers of Christ, we are called to carry the Gospel with strategic love and Spirit-filled discernment. Being *wise as serpents* means understanding people, navigating opposition thoughtfully, and responding with patience and grace. Being *harmless as doves* means never using aggression, manipulation, or pride.

Let us be faithful stewards, serving not to win arguments, but to win souls.

Prayer:
Lord, teach us to walk in wisdom, to be strategic yet gentle, bold yet humble. Help us represent You with grace, truth, and love that many may come to know You. Amen.

Please share this message with others. May God bless you richly

JIUNGE NA GROUP LETU LA WHATSAPP HAPA >> WHATSAPP GROUP….

Share on:

WhatsApp