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"I am sending you out as sheep among wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

- 1) Have you ever participated on a short term mission trip? If so, what was the effect on your faith?
- 2) Read Matthew 10:5-33. What's surprising, confusing or frustrating about this passage?
- 3) What's the difference between religious persecution and pushback? Why does the difference matter? What kind of persecution/pushback have you received while sharing the gospel?
- 4) How have you experienced embarrassment for your Christian faith? What about the Christian faith makes you blush when you say it out loud in front of non-believers?

"We (Christians) commit the bizarre category error of claiming that our goblins, ghouls, Flying Spaghetti Monsters are really there, off the page and away from the rendering programs in the CGI studio. Star Trek fans and vampire wannabes have nothing on us. We actually get down and worship. We get down on our actual knees, bowing and scraping in front of the empty space where we insist our Spaghetti Monster can be found. No wonder that we work so hard to fend off common sense. Our fingers must be in our ears all the time—lalalala, I can't hear you—just to keep out the plain sound of the real world. The funny thing is that to me, it's exactly the other way around...it's belief which demands that you dispense with illusion after illusion." ~Francis Spufford, *Unapologetic, Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense*

- 5) Why is vs. 26 comforting in light of the hostility and humiliation we will face for Jesus? How does judgement day then both motivate mission and comfort the messenger? How do snakes, doves, sparrows and balding heads give you courage to talk about Jesus?
- 6) Brainstorm: If you were to be apart of a short term mission to Ballston Spa, what kinds of things could your small group do? Pray for God to guide us to build relationships with the 'worthy', those who will believe.
- 7) Select one unbelieving person to pray for by name together. Pray for their life and salvation.