

GOSPEL PEARLS

An opportunity to bear witness

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Jesus said to his disciples: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise

against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10: 16-23)

Jesus advises His disciples to rely on God and not on mankind in their mission to proclaim the Gospel to the world. Often, instead of being listened to, they will be judged and persecuted because of what they teach others. Nevertheless, even suffering persecution will become an opportunity for proclamation and bearing witness. It will often be much more effective than peaceful preaching. Any divisions that result from proclaiming the word of God are not due to divine will, but to human will. Let us, therefore, try and remain steadfast in our faith, whatever happens in life.