**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**March 18th 2018. Cross Vision**

**Discussion notes: Sheep and Wolves. Matthew 10.**

In this season of Lent, looking forward to Easter we have an opportunity in reading the gospels to see Jesus life and ministry in the context of that tumultuous week in Jerusalem, climaxing in His death and resurrection. The three years of Jesus ministry were planned and orchestrated with the Cross in mind. At the start of his ministry Jesus faced temptations which would define the course of his earthly life, a choice between naked power or self denial ultimately expressed at the cross. In Matthew 10 Jesus commissions and challenges his disciples, sending them out ‘like sheep among wolves’, telling them they will be persecuted and opposed and asking them to take up their cross and follow him.

1. What is your impression of Jesus sayings in this chapter? How would you react if you heard Jesus saying these things to you today?
2. ‘I didn’t come to bring peace but a sword’. That phrase seems so different to the things we associate with Jesus. What did Jesus mean?
3. How does a sheep survive if there are wolves around? Are we like sheep among wolves today? If so, what are the wolves?
4. Jesus is sometimes described as a lamb to the slaughter (Acts 8:32). Is this unique or do we imitate him in this regard?
5. What is our experience of rejection from close friends and family because of our faith? How do we handle this?

The message Jesus gave to his disciples before Easter seems to be very coherent with the way they lived after Easter, especially around arrest and persecution. Pray for people around the world today who are persecuted for following Jesus.