Acts 6:8-7:60

SUMMARY

In Acts 6-7, Stephen shows us a faith that is far more than something practiced on Sundays. When he is falsely accused, dragged before the religious leaders and eventually faced with death, Stephen refuses to abandon what he knows to be true. He remains rooted in God's Word, connected to God's heart and trusting in God's timing.

Stephen's story challenges us to examine the difference between simply participating in Christianity and truly following Christ. His faith was not confined to a building, dependent on comfortable circumstances or silenced by opposition. The same Holy Spirit who empowered Stephen is at work in us today. Stephen was willing to die for his faith. The question for us is: **Are we willing to live for ours?**

INTRO PRAYER

God, thank You for bringing us together. As we open Your Word, help us see where our faith has become comfortable, convenient or confined to certain parts of our lives. Through Your Holy Spirit, give us the courage to hear what You want to say and respond with obedience. Help us become people who are rooted in Your Word, connected to Your heart and willing to trust Your timing. Amen.

ICE BREAKER

Who is the most persuasive person you know? What makes them so convincing?

KEY VERSES

Acts 6:8
"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people."

Acts 7:48-49
"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord.'"

Acts 7:55-56
"But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"

QUESTIONS

1. ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD

When Stephen is brought before the Sanhedrin, he responds by walking through the story of Scripture. He points to Abraham, Joseph and Moses to show how God has always been at work and how God's people have repeatedly struggled to recognize what He was doing.

Read Acts 7:2-10 and Acts 7:25-35.

- What stands out to you about Stephen's knowledge and use of Scripture?
- What patterns does Stephen identify in the stories of Abraham, Joseph and Moses?
- Why do you think God's people sometimes struggle to recognize what God is doing when it does not happen the way they expect?
- What is the difference between simply knowing Scripture and being truly rooted in it?
- How rooted in God's Word would you say you are right now? What could help Scripture shape more of your everyday life?

2. CONNECTED TO GOD'S HEART

Stephen challenges the religious leaders because they had begun placing their confidence in the temple, traditions and religious activity instead of God Himself.

Read Acts 7:48-50.

The message reminds us that **activity for Christ does not equal connection with Christ.**

- Why is it easy for religious activity to become a substitute for a genuine relationship with Jesus?
- What are some ways Christians today can unintentionally "check the box" spiritually?
- How can practices like attending church, serving, giving and praying deepen our relationship with Jesus rather than simply becoming routines?
- Where do you most naturally experience connection with God outside of a church service?
- Is there an area of your spiritual life where God may be inviting you to move from duty to devotion?

3. TRUSTING IN GOD'S TIMING

Stephen faithfully shares the truth, but the response is not what we might expect. Instead of seeing immediate change, he faces rejection, persecution and ultimately death.

Read Acts 7:54-60.

- What stands out to you about Stephen's response when the crowd turns against him?

- Why do you think Stephen was able to remain faithful and forgiving in such an extreme moment?
- Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God as he approaches the end of his life. What encouragement do you find in that picture?
- Have you ever obeyed God and wondered why things became harder instead of easier?
- What would trusting God's timing look like in a situation you are facing right now?

4. A FAITH THAT LEAVES THE BUILDING

The message says, **"This can't be just a place that you come. It must be a mission that you embrace."**

Stephen's faith was visible wherever he went, even when following Jesus became costly.

- Where are you most tempted to keep your faith private or comfortable?
- What fears keep us from talking about Jesus with the people around us?
- How can we share Jesus boldly without becoming argumentative or insensitive?
- Who has God already placed in your life that you could intentionally encourage, serve or talk with about Jesus this week?

LIFE APPLICATION

Stephen was willing to die for his faith. **Are we willing to live for ours?**

This week, choose one practical step in each area:

Rooted in God's Word: Spend intentional time reading Scripture beyond a weekend service.

Connected to God's heart: Set aside time to be with God without treating it like another task to accomplish.

Trusting in God's timing: Identify one situation you cannot control and intentionally surrender the outcome to God.

Then ask God for one opportunity to live your faith openly this week, whether through a conversation, an invitation, an act of generosity or simply the courage to identify yourself with Jesus.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Being sold out for Christ means our faith shapes every part of our lives, not just our Sundays.
- God's Word grounds us when circumstances and culture challenge what we believe.
- Religious activity can never replace a genuine relationship with Jesus.

- The Holy Spirit lives within every follower of Jesus and empowers us to live faithfully wherever God sends us.
- Following Jesus does not guarantee an easy life, but we can trust God even when obedience becomes costly.
- Our world is not our home, but it is our assignment.
- The goal is not simply to start the race of faith. It is to finish strong.

ENDING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for the example of Stephen and for the reminder that following You is more than attending church or practicing a religion. Root us deeply in Your Word. Keep our hearts close to Yours. Teach us to trust Your timing, especially when obedience is difficult.

Forgive us for the places where our faith has become casual, comfortable or convenient. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and give us courage to live for You wherever You have placed us. Help us love people well, speak truth with grace and remain faithful when following You costs us something.

Give us everything we need to finish the race You have set before us. Amen.