



Series: Unsung Heroes

Sermon: Part 1: The First Martyr: Stephen

Date: Sunday, July 7th, 2024

“All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
(Matthew 20:18-20)

Followers of The Way

Scriptures referenced in sermon message: Acts 2:42-47, Acts 6:1-15

Stephen chose to _____ up to help because he wanted to serve God with his abilities.

To blaspheme: to speak _____ things about God

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen spoke _____, accusing the nation of Israel for their failure to recognize and accept Jesus as their Messiah and their failure as God’s chosen people to live that out to their neighbors.

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him - you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.” When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 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.” (Acts 7:51-56)

In the midst of lies and an unfair trial, Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, has _____ as he looked up to Heaven and saw the glory of God with Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.
(Acts 7:57-60)



Stoning someone: where people throw stones at a condemned person until they die from blunt force trauma.

And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went. (Acts 8:1-4)

May We Strive To:

- 1. Be committed to _____ no matter what, even in the face of death**

- 2. Be faithful to preach the _____ with our mouths and to live it out faithfully in front of a watching world**

- 3. Be able to not only understand our faith for ourselves but to even articulate it to _____**

- 4. Know, believe, and live in a way where even in our _____ and pain, God will use it to grow our faith, make us more like Him, and change the world**

- 5. Know that all things are _____ in this world when ordinary people remain faithful to an extraordinary God**

Bottom Line: *Stephen's life and martyrdom are examples of how we should strive to live in a way where we still trust God even in the midst of persecution and obstacles.*

Questions to reflect on this week or with others:

- 1. Is our faith in Jesus just a resource that we pull out when it's convenient? Or is our faith in Christ our source that leads us, sustains us, and covers us through whatever we face?*
- 2. How do the obstacles you are currently facing reveal where your trust in God really is? How can your faith be an encouragement to those around us as a result of what we are facing?*

Songs used in service: This Is Amazing Grace (Phil Wickham), Same God (Elevation Worship), Our Daily Bread (Pat Barrett & Kari Jobe), Great Is Thy Faithfulness (Thomas Chisholm)

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Any prayer requests?

Name _____ **Date:** _____ **Email:** _____

What can we be praying for you about?