



Acts 6:8–7:2, Acts 7:54-60

Stephen's Martyrdom

Context:

1. Synagogue of the Freedman
 - a. A Synagogue was the _____ gathering place of Jews for religious training, prayer, and fellowship.
 - b. The "Freedman" were Jews who were themselves _____ slaves, or come from the families of former slaves
 - c. Synagogue of the Freedman was a group of Jewish worshippers whose bond was being freed from past slavery
 - d. Mentioned only so that we know where Saul (_____) came from.
 - Romans 6:6 We should no longer be slaves to sin
 - Romans 6:16 We can be slaves to sin, or slaves to obedience
 - Romans 6:18 We are set free from sin to become slaves to righteousness

Lessons from the short spiritual life of Stephen:

1. Opposition from your faith can come out of _____.
2. Your spiritual enemies will _____ in order to shut you up.
 - a. Acts 5:3 Satan filled Ananias' heart, so that he lied to the Holy Spirit
 - b. John 8:44 When Satan lies, he speaks his native language
 - c. They made up lies about Jesus, and now are doing the same with Stephen
3. Things can get really _____, really _____ when you serve God faithfully and righteously.

4. God gave Stephen _____ what he needed to accomplish His will.
- a. Wisdom and Biblical _____ when he was a teacher and apologist
 - b. A _____ when he needed hope and calmness
 - c. Christlike _____ when he needed to voice forgiveness

Application: When you _____ God wholeheartedly, God will also give you exactly what you need to accomplish His will

- a. **Finances** to navigate through the time and space required
- b. **Biblical insights** to share God's ideas and perspectives when necessary
- c. **Christlike attitude** to show love, patience, forgiveness, etc.

5. Stephen's teaching/debate (6:10), physical appearance (6:15), Sermon (7:1-53), Vision of Heaven (7:55), and ability to forgive (7:60) were all _____ of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:5, Acts 6:8, Acts 7:55

Application:

- a. **Ask** the holy spirit to enlighten and lead you as you speak of/for God
- b. **Ask** the holy spirit to let people see the presence of God in your life
- c. **Ask** the holy spirit to speak through you when you answer questions
- d. **Ask** the holy spirit to give you a vision of what your eternal future holds
- e. **Ask** the holy spirit to give you the ability to forgive those who harm you.

6. Sometimes we cannot understand what God is doing sovereignly, as we suffer through persecution, trial, test, and other painful stuff in our own _____ world.

- a. Saul broke loose on the scene as an enemy of Jesus (8:1)
- b. All the foreign converts headed back home, gospel in hand (8:1)
- c. Other preachers were inspired to carry Stephens torch wherever they went. (8:5-9)
- d. Our Bibles, and the Gospel reaching our lands, are all results of Stephen's life and martyrdom.

Application: When you are being attacked for being a Christian:

- 1. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you through it for God's glory and God's will
- 2. Trust God to never put you in a position where you can't succeed
- 3. By Faith, endure to the end, knowing this really is part of God's master plan.