

Grace and Power of the Holy Spirit

Experience the Holy Spirit, Part 19

Midweek Empowerment

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Review: Pastor Harris

Reflection on **Leadership and Service: Acts 6:1-7** provides a timeless model for church leadership and the critical role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the selection and functioning of leaders.

Application: Seek the filling of the Holy Spirit in their own lives, striving to serve in their capacities with wisdom and spiritual insight. The way we treat one another is an indicator of what believers are: a reflection of the Love of God, the Love of Christ's message of the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit alive within.

Text: Acts 6:8-15

WHO / WHERE / WHEN / WHAT

WHO

- Stephen: Hellenistic Jewish believer
 - Hellenists - Greek-speaking and Greco-Roman culturally, but ethnically and religiously Jewish
- "Some of those" synagogue of the Freedmen
 - Synagogue - various synagogues in Jerusalem catering to Jews from different regions. The existence of these synagogues illustrates the complex social and religious landscape of Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.
 - Freedmen - refers to Jews who were previously enslaved and subsequently freed, or to the descendants of such freed slaves. Many of these individuals likely came from the Jewish diaspora and returned to Jerusalem.
- False witnesses - hired by the synagogue leaders
- Elders and Scribes - Religious leaders
- Council - Sanhedrin: Sadducees, Pharisees, Priests

WHERE / WHEN

These events took place in Jerusalem after the assignments of

WHAT is going on in this passage?

1. Stephen ("[a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit](#)" vs.5) was ministering to the people through signs and wonders

- a. Wonders /Gr *teras*/ encompass larger-scale displays of divine authority that leave a profound impact on observers. i.e. feeding the five thousand
 - b. Signs /Gr *sēmeion*/ indicators or confirmations of God's presence or approval, specific acts that demonstrate God's intervention in a particular situation. Individual or unique circumstances. i.e. healing blindness in an individual.
2. Stephen was operating in the GRACE of God provided by the Holy Spirit
 - a. Grace - "All of God's power, presence, and authority" Bishop Lovelace
 - b. Grace - "The gift of divine ability beyond human capability to accomplish God-things through God-methods by God's power unto God's glory." Pastor Jonno Strickling
 - c. The Holy Spirit a) **gives grace to the humble** (James 6:4), b) creates the situation for grace to operate in, and c) fulfills the will and purposes of God in and through believers.
3. Haters gonna hate!
 - a. While the apostles were given to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4): drawing the line between the Tanakh (Torah, Writings, and Prophets) and the fulfillment of scripture through Jesus Christ;
 - b. These deacons were working in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The leaders of the synagogue recognized the authority of Christ which challenged their authority in leadership.
 - d. The leaders of the synagogue brought in false witnesses into the council against Stephen. 13 "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."
4. Grace sustains:
 - a. 15 "his face was like the face of an angel."
 - i. God's visible and apparent glory

Conclusion

God's power is available to the believer to accomplish His will and purpose. The Holy Spirit delivers the grace of God and authorizes us to use the power and authority of Christ unto God's glory, which can be seen visibly upon our faces.

Application

Humble yourself in the Lord and He will give you the grace (power, presence, and authority) to accomplish the assignments He has for you.

Discussion

Q1: "Where the Spirit of God is there is liberty." How has the Holy Spirit intervened when challenged for your faith in the Lord?

Q2: How does your understanding of grace help you to face opposition?