

DEEPER ROOTS

May 6 - May 11

Planting Seeds: Read Acts 6:8-15, 7:1-60

In this story, Stephen is preaching, teaching, and performing signs and wonders. It is evident to everyone that he is full of the Spirit, and that God is at work in him. This makes the religious leaders mad, so they come and seize Stephen and make false charges against him. Stephen does not argue with them about how they are twisting his words. Instead, he goes through the Old Testament and shows how all their heroes of the faith, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, were all opposed by false prophets and idolators. These religious leaders all consider Abraham, Joseph, and Moses to be their fathers, but Stephen flips the script on them. He says their fathers are the persecutors and says now that as they oppose Jesus and persecute His followers, they are following in the footsteps of their fathers. In this moment, Stephen understood that they were lying, and instead of arguing with liars about their lies, he spoke the truth. There is a certain strength and wisdom to this. Sometimes, when we hear lies, we want to argue against the lies. Sometimes this is necessary, but sometimes it is a waste of time and energy and fruitless. Sometimes, we need to ignore the messages of liars and instead, speak a different, clear truth. Stephen disregarded their lies and instead just spoke the truth. **Why is it hard to not get distracted? How do we learn to tell the truth in the midst of lies? How does wisdom come from the Spirit and not from our own feelings, emotions, and logic?**

Digging Deep: Read Acts 7, John 16, 1 Peter 4:12-19

An important understanding of the early church was that they would suffer. Jesus was persecuted and suffered. They expected to be persecuted and to suffer. They did not expect the government to support them. They didn't expect rights, or liberties, or privilege. But they chose to love God and walk in obedience anyways. We don't have to apologize for being born into a different context and society. But we should always be very thankful for the opportunities and the freedoms that we have. We should also expect to suffer. We don't have to expect that the government will turn against us and persecute us for our faith, but we should value and prioritize faithfulness to Christ over acceptance in society, and privilege from worldly powers. The early church had the expectation that they would suffer, and belief that faithfulness was rejoicing during suffering. **How are you preparing your heart for struggle and suffering? How do you find joy, and celebrate, when life is hard?**

Pioneer Drive Baptist Church wants you to grow in The Word during the week of 5.6-11.24. Planting Seeds is a quick devotional and Digging Deep is a more robust study for you, your family, or your group. If you have questions or feedback, please email Terence@pioneerdrive.org.