
SERMON NOTES AND SCRIPTURE

It's not about me.

Acts 6:1 (NIV)

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Always assume the best.

When you have a problem, go straight to the source.

Acts 6:2–10 (NIV)

2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

Acts 7:51–59 (NIV)

51 “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 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— 53 you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 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. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 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.

59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

Two lessons learned from Stephen:

- 1. Sometimes... God does his greatest work through ordinary people.**
- 2. Don't be surprised if you face opposition for being used by God.**

GROUP DISCUSSION

What were the qualifications for leadership that we see in Acts 6?

Would you say that the establishment was threatened by the story of Jesus? Why or why not?

Read acts 6:10. Have you ever found yourself in a conversation with someone where you knew the Holy Spirit was speaking through you?

How did Stephen tie the stories of the Old Testament to Jesus? How have we seen that happen before in the Book of Acts?

Stephen's ministry was characterized by opposition, and yet, the Holy Spirit was at work in him. How do you reconcile that in your mind?

Have you found yourself facing opposition in a time when you were following God?

What would you say is the bigger message God intended through the story of Stephen?