



## Acts

Amplifying Hope | September 24, 2023

**Sermon:** Stephen - Confrontational

**Scripture:** Acts 6:8-15 & 7:1-60

**Summary:** There are many different ways someone may share faith with others. Some involve acts of service. Others involve acts of great faith. Still others are characterized by friendship and some storytelling. Other situations in which faith sharing is called for may require confrontation. Acts 6 & 7 reveals one of those times. Whatever style of evangelism is used, every believer should be sensitive to opportunities to speak up for Jesus! Stephen spoke clearly, passionately, truthfully and forcefully using confrontation much like Jesus did with religious abusers. Confrontation may not be your first choice or your sweet spot of faith sharing, but it is a tool that the Holy Spirit may someday lead you to employ. Let's get ready!

### Acts 6:8-15

[8] And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. [9] Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. [10] But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

[11] Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." [12] And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, [13] and they set up false witnesses who said, "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." [15] And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

## 1. False Accusation is A Common Attack of the Enemy.

- False witnesses are almost always pawns of the enemy.
- Don't allow yourself to be "set up" as a false witness.
- The Scripture says false witnesses will perish.

Acts 7:1-58

- Stephen gave a very long introduction to a charge of sinfulness with false accusation.
- There are times when the Lost need to hear just how far they are away from God.

Acts 7:51-53

[51] "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. [52] Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, [53] you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

## 2. Confrontation is an Available and Effective Faith-Sharing Tool.

- Confrontation is a weapon the Holy Spirit may give you to advance the Kingdom.

2 Corinthians 6:6-7

[6] by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; [7] by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

Acts 7:54

[54] Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

- Study and Discern NonVerbal Resistance Cues

Acts 7:55

[55] But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

## 3. Live Filled With the Holy Spirit.

Acts 7:57-59

[57] But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. [58] Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid

down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. [59] And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

- Harsh Resistance will come from those with the most to Lose

#### 4. A Faith Sharing Best Practice is to Trust God with the Outcomes

Acts 7:60

[60] And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

#### 5. Maintain a Heart of Forgiveness.

### Life Application Questions:

1. Have you ever been confronted? By someone besides your parent, teacher, coach or boss? Describe the confrontation and outcomes.
2. Have you ever had to confront someone? Describe the confrontation and outcomes.
3. How comfortable are you confronting others? NOTE: Being overly confident in self can lead to abuse.
4. How does foundational faith factor into faith sharing (witnessing/evangelism)? What role does foundational faith have in confrontational faith sharing?
5. Name some things that Stephen had going for him as he confronted his religious abusers. Do you have those same things? Is there anything you can do to gain those things?
6. How often should we trust God with the outcomes of our faith sharing? How often do we?
7. PRAY: Ask the Lord to prepare you for sharing your faith and to give you opportunities. Ask him to guide you to the style that is best for the person and ultimately their salvation and the glory of God.