

# Message Of A Martyr

November 12, 2017

## I. How to handle the pressure of being done wrong

**Acts 6:8** Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

**Acts 6:3** 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

### A. *What is in you will come out of you.*

**Acts 6:5** This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit

**Acts 6:9-10** 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. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

#### 1. *Being wronged happens to the best of us!*

**Acts 6:11-14** Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

#### 2. *The enemy plays dirty.*

### B. *God is writing a grand story.*

**Acts 7:1-2** Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran.

**Acts 7:51-52** You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 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—

**Deuteronomy 10:16** Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

**Proverbs 4:23** Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

**Jeremiah 6:10** To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.

**Acts 7:52** 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

*1. We miss the point when we resist the Spirit.*

**Acts 7:54-56** When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 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. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

- Hate that is not dealt with is hate that destroys.
- Jealousy that is not controlled is jealousy that consumes.

*2. When things start looking bad, start looking up.*

**Acts 7:57-58** At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 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.

- **Conviction will either soften or harden your heart.**
- **Blinded eyes can't see the truth. Covered ears will miss God's voice.**

**Acts 8:1** And Saul approved of their killing him.

- **Your internal response must not be determined by the external outcome alone.**
- **What we see is defeat. What Stephen saw was Jesus.**

**Acts 7:59-60** While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

*3. Place your life in God's hands.*

**Proverbs 2:7-8** He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

**Psalms 37:27-29** Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed; the offspring of the wicked will perish. The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.

### ***C. Our disappointments are God's divine appointments.***

#### *1. Place others' lives in God's hands.*

**Matthew 5:44** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

**Luke 23:34** Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

- The devil works through unforgiveness.

**2 Corinthians 2:10-11** Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

- God works through forgiveness.

**2 Timothy 4:16-17** At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.

#### *2. Peace under pressure is found in God alone.*

**1 Corinthians 9:25** Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.