

**Be a Man 03: "Like Stephen"**  
**Acts 7 and Luke 23**

May 7, 2023

**Main Idea:** Stephen lived like Jesus; he even died like Jesus because he followed Jesus.

**Meet Stephen**

You might not be familiar with Stephen. Stephen was one of the first deacons (meaning "servant") in the early church. He is introduced in Acts 6:5 as "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit." He was part of the early church explosion. The resurrection of Jesus created a massive movement and Stephen was a part of that movement. His story does not end well by our standards. In fact, you might say that Stephen lost. But you would be wrong.

**Q: Am I an Admirer or a Follower?**

Are you an admirer of Jesus like so many who sit in churches around the country today or are you a follower of Jesus. There is a big difference! Stephen lived and even died like Jesus because he was a follower (not just an admirer) of Jesus.

**Important! How His story ends means everything.**

If Jesus hadn't died the way He died he would be just like every other wanna-be prophet to come down the pike. There were plenty who claimed to be sent from God. All of them went the way of the earth. All of them died like most men die. But not Jesus. Not this man! The way Jesus died showed incredible strength and dignity. Jesus actually forgave His executioners. He didn't fight for Himself like we would expect a man to do. His strength was much deeper than that; much greater than that.

**Something Bigger and Better**

Anybody can claim to believe in Jesus, but it takes courage and determination to follow Him. Jesus is calling men to something much bigger and better than a small, independent life. To follow Jesus is to **abandon my independence; to depend on Him; to obey Him relentlessly** and leave the outcome to Him.

**What About You?**

Anyone can cling to some religious words or a ceremony like baptism, but real men not only embrace God's forgiveness, they also take on the responsibility of following. **Real men follow Jesus.**

**Family Night Big Idea**

This is a great time to teach your children the difference between simple belief (which is important) and authentic faith (which is what happens when belief becomes saving faith).

**Discussion Starter – Read Luke 9:21-26**

**Elementary School** – Ask, "What did Jesus tell the disciples He had to do (v.22)?" Ask, "How are followers of Jesus supposed to think about themselves (v.23)?" Ask, "Do you want to follow Jesus?"

**Middle/ High School** – Ask, "What is the difference according to Jesus, between believing in Jesus and following Him?" Ask, "What is the hardest part of self-denial?" Ask, "What did Jesus mean in v.24?"

**Prayer**

"Father, we want to follow Jesus. Help us deny ourselves and be willing to carry our cross. Amen."

**Velocity (Middle and High School Students)**

**Velocity:** Velocity this Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Gravity:** Students stay and enjoy the service.

**Today's Songs**

*The Lord's Prayer*.....Matt Maher

*Cornerstone*.....Hillsong

*This is My Song*.....North Point Worship

**Building Dino-sized Faith in God's Big Plan**

Summer Camp for current Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> graders is June 12-16 from 9am-Noon. Registration online and in the lobby begins May 14<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$10.

**Fostering Bulloch Donations**

If you can donate toiletry items, please see list in the lobby and take to Hope Chest in downtown Statesboro at 102 Elm Street.

**Ladies Movie Night**

We will show "War Room" on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Community Room. Please join us!

**Baby Bottle Boomerang**

Pick up a baby bottle in the lobby, fill with change and return to the church any Sunday in May. Proceeds support Choices of the Heart.