

Sermon Notes

Wi-Fi password for westwoodguestsecured: westwoodguest

**The Spirit-filled Life and Death**

Acts 7:54-60 (pew Bible pg. 916)

*"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"*

(How Firm a Foundation, published in 1787 by John Rippon)

Had the words of this hymn been around during the time of Stephen, he might well have had them in his heart on the day he died. Today's passage shows us the final day in the life of Stephen — how he lived, what he said, how he died. One can't help but see the relationship between Stephen's death and the death of Christ. While the two executions are not exactly the same, they bear many similarities. Innocent men facing unjust trials; peaceful men facing raging enemies; loving men offering forgiveness to haters; confident men facing death with faith. Stephen's life, final testimony, and violent death revealed him to be a man whose heart beat with Christ's to the very last, and then beyond. Stephen shows us what a Spirit-filled life and death looks like, and the eternal impact that life and death can have

Jesus said, "When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour." (Matthew 10:19)

**We hear this truth in the bold message Stephan proclaims. Acts 7: 51-53**

Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." (John 15:19)

**We see this reality in the seething hatred Stephen faces. Acts 7:54**

Jesus said, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

**We see this truth in the heavenly perspective Stephen has. Acts 7:55-56**

Jesus said, "They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you." (John 16:2 & 4)

**We see this opposition in the violent persecution Stephen endures.**

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26)

**We see this promise in the peaceful death Stephen experiences.**

Applications:

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## Weekly Discipleship Guide

Use this guide to help you reflect upon and internalize today's passage and message! Using a journal or a notebook, follow the daily prompts below. We also use these guides to guide our discussions in our Life Groups each week as we seek to grow together in the Word!

### Sunday

*In your journal, reflect on today's sermon by answering the following:*

I never knew:

I was challenged:

I was reminded:

I was convicted:

A question I still have:

A truth I could share:

**Know**

### Monday

*Spend some time today doing the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Select a portion of this week's sermon passage to memorize this week.

Write your selected portion and read it to yourself at least 10 times throughout the day and meditate on that portion this week.

**Know > Be**

### Tuesday

*In your journal, spend some time writing about the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Write a prayer of response, specifically guided by the passage.

(May include adoration, confession/repentance, thanksgiving, petition, etc...)

Continue to meditate on a memorize the selection you chose from yesterday.

**Be**

### Wednesday

*Think about this week's questions for group discussion:*

If pressed in a similar way as Stephen, could you narrate the Old Testament story that culminates in Christ if someone asked you to do so? How are you seeking to grow in your ability to give a faithful account of the grand story of God?

What is your reaction to Stephen's willingness to forgive his murderers? Do you need to forgive some people in your life? What advice would Stephen give you?

It is clear here that Stephen viewed his accusers as primarily enemies of Jesus, not of himself. How does this perspective change the way we view the people in our culture who we would view as 'enemies'? What happens when we get this backward?

**Be > Do**

### Thursday

*In your journal, spend some time considering the following:*

What insights have you gained while internalizing this week's passage?

How specifically will you seek to apply its truths in your home/workplace/life in general?

**Do**

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**Gerald Hodges:** Lead Pastor  
**Jonathan Taylor:** Associate Pastor  
**Jim Fulp:** Counseling Pastor  
**Jason Engle:** Pastor of Students  
& Discipleship  
**Katie Austin:** Children's Ministry  
Coordinator

#### Contact Us

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westwoodroxboro@gmail.com  
www.westwoodfamily.org

#### Upcoming Events

February 10,17,24 - Directory Pictures  
March 3 - TLU Cake Auction  
March 10,24,31 - Directory Pictures  
March 20 - Church Conference  
April 6 - One Day with God  
April 13 - Mom 2 Mom Spring Sale  
April 27 - Family Discipleship Summit

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