

The Stoning of Stephen

1. Stephen Witnesses to Christ and They Kill Him for It.

2. Saul Is Introduced as an Enemy of Christ.

3. Jesus Receives Stephen in Glory.

We are told of Stephen's death as a witness (martyr) to Christ. He has an extraordinary experience as the heavens open up and he is able to see Christ's glorious welcome. Jesus stands to advocate for Stephen just as He has promised to do for all those who stand for Him before men (Matthew 10:32). While we may not physically see this at our death, it is the certain hope of all who claim Jesus as our Savior. What is your hope?

Second Corinthians 5:1 – 10

¹For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be **away from the body and at home with the Lord**. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Acts—Series Overview

The Expansion of the Gospel Witness with Power

Acts records God's faithful accomplishment of all that He promised in taking the gospel to the nations. It lays the groundwork for all that will take place as His Church awaits His return. Just as Jesus lived and spoke as the Father commanded, we now are called to do in the power of His Holy Spirit. While Jesus did this perfectly, we will strive imperfectly, constantly in need of the Holy Spirit's direction, power, and correction. Nevertheless, our faithful God will work even through our failing efforts and His gospel witness through us will prevail and penetrate every nation, tribe, & territory. For the praise of our King!

Taking Gathered Worship Home

If you keep that up, someone might kill you. What?! Talking about Jesus. Oh, usually folks are ok with talk about Jesus, but not as the Lord of all Creation. Not as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If you believe that, you're a nut. And someone might just shut you up.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ. Ask Jesus to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday Morning

READ Acts 7:54-60; Second Corinthians 5:1-10; Revelation 6:9-11. DISCUSS, How does Stephen's death challenge us? Encourage us? Convict us? Comfort us? Do you have a welcoming advocate in Jesus? How? **PRAY** for Him to enable us to live as Christ's holy instruments in the fallen world in which we live awaiting His return.

Sunday Evening

In lieu of the evening worship service tonight, please set apart some time to pray for God to bring revival here at FCCW and around the globe.

Monday

READ Acts 7:54-60; Luke 24:13-20; John 15:12-17. DISCUSS, What are the similarities and differences between the trials and murders of Jesus and Stephen? How should we expect the world to respond to our witness for Christ? How will our love likely be repaid? Why? **PRAY**, "Lord Jesus, give us boldness to proclaim Your resurrection and to hope in nothing less."

Tuesday

READ Acts 7:54-60; Matthew 10:24-39; Colossians 2:13-15. DISCUSS, How did Jesus forgive us our sins? How will He serve as our advocate in the final judgment? Why should that encourage us? How are you (we) living in the reality of that knowledge? **PRAY**, "Lord Jesus, You are holy, righteous, and perfect. You tell us that You have canceled the charge of our legal debt. You have taken our condemnation on Yourself. How can we ever thank You enough? Make us obedient!"

Wednesday

READ **Acts 7:54-60; Luke 23:33-46**. DISCUSS, What does Stephen say as they are about to kill Him? How does this follow Christ's words? Why would Stephen quote Jesus? How are you (we) following Christ's example? PRAY, "Lord, You have both given us a righteous example and Your Holy Spirit within us to live holy lives. Help us to in ways worthy of Your calling."

Thursday

READ **Acts 1:8; 7:54-60; Matthew 10:16-25**. DISCUSS, How can we witness? Where do we get the needed boldness to faithfully witness to Christ's resurrection? What's hardest for you? How are you taking that to Christ in prayer? PRAY, "Lord, we need You. Teach us what we need to know. Enflame our hearts with love for You and our neighbors. Move our hands and feet in Your service."

Friday

READ **Acts 7:54-60; Second Corinthians 5:1-10; Revelation 6:9-11**. DISCUSS, How has God been teaching you from these passages this week? REJOICE if Christ has honored you to witness for Him! PRAY for renewal and revival across our land.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the worship service tomorrow. *There will be both the live-stream and in-person services available.*

READ **Acts 8:1-40; Genesis 23:1-20**. Invite others to join you for either the *live-stream or in-person service* tomorrow. Ask Jesus to help us in the transition back to gathered worship in the building.

Revelation 6: 9 – 11

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.