

## "Stephen's Witness"

Acts 6:8-15

### 1. Our lives should be centered around Christ so much that others see us as a sign and wonder. (vs. 8)

- A. Stephen is not special in any strict sense. He's a normal guy. **What makes him special is his bending to God's grace and power in his life.** This is what made him a sign and wonder to the people around him.
  - I. Grace is given at salvation (by God) but must be nurtured and built upon (by us). (dependance upon God, not self)
    - a.) Peter puts the ball in our court when it comes to allowing the grace of God to grow in our lives.

2 Peter 3:17-18

*You therefore, beloved...be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

- II. Power comes from the Gospel of Jesus.

Romans 1:16

I'm not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

- B. So, notice two things about Stephen and his being a sign and wonder to people for Christ:
  - I. The Grace of God was strong and prevalent and growing in his life. (dependance upon God, not self)
  - II. The Gospel of God was his life purpose and source of real power to be a sign and wonder for Christ.
- C. These two important qualities for anyone who pushes beyond the "norm" will never be hidden. Others will see these in us and tell about it.
  - a.) In this way our life works will become amazing and draw others to Christ through us. (i.e. signs and wonders)

### 2. When we live our lives out loud for the Gospel those against Christ may argue with us. (vs. 9-10)

- A. People will try to argue with us against Christ.
  - I. Could be at the dinner table. Could be in our schools. Could be at the work place. Could be at church.
- B. But if we rely on God's grace and the power of the Gospel none will be able to cope with the wisdom and Spirit of Christ. *(It's an argument that can't be lost, because they are fighting not against us, but against God's Wisdom and Spirit.)*
  - I. You are mandated to defend the faith, not shrink away from it, when someone counters you; yet with gentleness and respect.

1 Peter 3:15

*Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and respect.*

- II. This is called "taking thoughts captive." (see 2 Corinthians 10:1-5)
- III. It's "commending ourselves to every man's conscience." (see 2 Corinthians 4:1-5)

### 3. If the Gospel doesn't pierce our opponents heart they often will despise us or come against us. (vs. 11-14)

- A. Common tactics of divisive people to watch out for:
  - I. Twisting of words (11); stirring up people (12); involving authorities (12); getting people on their side (13).

#### Close:

- Are you a sign and a wonder to those around you because God's Grace and Power are your center?
- Are you prepared to defend the Grace and Gospel of Jesus when people want to argue with you?
- Are you ever persecuted for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? If so, this is a good sign you are a living sign and wonder of God.