

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: April 30th 2017

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: Stephen Shows the Way

Introduction: This passage marks another turning point in the story of the church, and the spread of the Gospel. Stephen, a key figure in the church, is executed for his claim that Jesus - crucified, resurrected and ascended - is the Messiah.

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: Acts 6:8-15

Reflect:

Note the intensification of the pressure on Stephen (v9: they argued with him; v11: they.....?; v.12: they.....?; v13-14: they.....? Humanly speaking, how might this increasing pressure have affected Stephen? What, in fact, was his reaction (v15)? How do you account for this?

Note: In Acts 7:2-50 Stephen's speech recounts a long period of the history of Israel:

Acts 7:2-8 - Abraham's call

Acts 9:9-19 - Jacob

Acts 7:20-46 - Moses and the deliverance from Egypt

Acts 7:47-50 - Solomon's temple.

Reflect:

How does Stephen's speech act as a defence of the accusation in 6:13,14?

Read: Acts 7:44-50

Reflect:

In many ways the Temple in Jerusalem was the heart of the Jewish identity. As long as they had the Temple, they had God's presence and they were God's people. What is the point that Stephen is trying to make in this passage about the Temple?

What might we look to today for our 'identity marker' as Christians? What makes us feel that we are 'God's people' and that 'God is with us'? Are there any causes to be concerned that we could put other things where the Stephen's accusers put the Temple?

Read: Acts 7:51-53

Reflect:

What three accusations does Stephen level at his accusers? What can we learn from them?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

Thornbury Baptist Church:
Following the Way of Jesus: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

Read: Acts 6:8-9; 11-12, 13-14; 7:56, 59, 60.

Reflect:

How many parallels can you find with Jesus' own execution? What can we learn from this about being part of the Jesus movement?

Note: All we know about Stephen is found in Acts 6&7. In what ways does Stephen's life and death challenge and encourage us as followers of Jesus today?

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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