

Sometimes It Takes A Martyr

Acts 6:8-8:1

Into the Lesson:

Have you ever traced your families' genealogy? How far back have you been able to trace your family?

Were there any surprises like rich uncles or past due taxes and penalties? Anybody famous or infamous?

How about your "spiritual genealogy?" Did you come from a family where Sunday worship was a natural assumption, and you grew up always knowing of the love of Jesus? Or did you grow up in a "Christmas home" where you acknowledge God but only on occasion? Or possibly in a home where God was rarely even mentioned (and usually not in a positive way).

Who do you think of as your "spiritual parents"? (Pause here to say a quick prayer of thanks to those people.)

Into the Word:

Read Acts 6:7-15 and respond to the following questions:

How did the Jewish leaders respond to Stephen's words and actions?

After v.10 what was their solution for dealing with Stephen?

What would have been the result of seeing him with "the face of an angel?"

Do you think this was a cherubic look of innocence or of a mighty warrior?

How close do Jesus' words in Matthew 5:10-11 match with Stephen's experience?

What can we surmise of the response to Stephen's defense when he "schools" the Jewish leadership in O.T. history, their genealogy, in Acts 7:2-53 (which is the longest sermon of the Book of Acts and a cautionary note for long-winded preachers)?

What about the impact of his countenance (6:15) and his words (7:56 & 60).

Into Life:

Not everyone is called to be a martyr for our faith...or are we? Read and respond to Galatians 2:20.

How can we flesh out this concept of "Christ living in me"? What part does using our spiritual gifts play in this process?

How can we begin to think "outside the box" that is 697 Denver Ave. to enable others to "See the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God"?

What can we expect from a world that has turned so upside down when we try to share our faith?

How can we use our gifts "inside the box" to expand and strengthen the ministries of Valley Christian?

As we gather and scatter to fulfill the mission that Christ gave us how can we always remember that...

God is in control