

Stephen the faithful

ACTS 6

- **8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. 11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." 12 So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. 13 They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. 14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." 15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**

ACTS 6

- Calling
- Character
- Conflict
- Countenance

Calling

- Prototype Deacon- Serving tables

- Acts 6

- In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait/serve on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Calling

- **Prototype Apostle-** performed great wonders and signs
- Acts 6
- 8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.
- Luke 16:10 -"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.
- Galatians 6:7-8
- 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Calling

- Don't underestimate small faithful service for Christ. Especially one that is out of a sacrificial and worshipful heart. It's powerful!
- It can heal. The difference between the widows were healed. The division in the church was healed.
- It can have unexpected results. The church grew not because of powerful preaching here but humble faithfulness. The church attracted Priests. Interesting!
- It leads to greater blessing. Serving tables to power encounters. Signs and wonders. (AMI Institute Servers)

Character

- Acts 6
- 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them.
- 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit;
- 8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

Character

- Acts 6
 - 3 ... full of the Spirit. Full of wisdom.
 - 5 a man full of faith . Full of the Holy Spirit;
 - 8 a man full of God's grace and power,
-
- We could focus on:
 - Spirt. Wisdom. Faith. Holy Spirt. Grace. Power!

Character

- Acts 6

- “FULL”

- It's like Stephen was a man who lived a full life! Full of Christ! And the fruit of that fullness were Wisdom. Faith. Grace. Power.

- Full- Abundant life!

Character

- John 10:9-10

- 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

Character

- **How do you picture an abundant life? A full life in Christ?**
- **Maybe: A character of wisdom, grace, spirit, and power that leads to.... Good family. Good marriage. Good health. Good career. Good friends. Good stuff. Good feelings.**
- **Not prosperity and abundant wealth but at least some form of the “GOOD LIFE”.**

Character

- **Let's Examine Stephen's life:**
- **Full of wisdom. Full of Holy Spirit. Full of Faith. Full of Grace. Full of Power. Full of Christ.**
- **-He was picked to wait tables**
- **-He was most likely never married**
- **-He did not serve Jesus long. He had a short life!**
- **-He went through a brutal death**
- **This was Stephen's full life. Abundant Life!**

Character

- **Why do we follow Jesus because what He can give us?**
 - **For the good life? The good Christian life?**
 - **Or Because He is King of King and Lord of Lords! He is worthy!**
-
- **Church prayer meeting. (Battling Selfishness)**
 - **Selfishness- “good life”**
 - **Christ Centeredness- Kingdom Abundance! Abundant Life! It’s not about me! It’s about God! His Kingdom!**

Conflict

- Acts 6
- 9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. 11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” 12 So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

Conflict

- 2 Timothy 3:12
- 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
- John 15:18-19
- 18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.
19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own.
As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Conflict

- Matt. 10
- 37 “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.
- Calling!- Character of Christ!- COMFORT!
- Calling- Character of Christ- Conflict! Are we ready?

Countenance

- Acts 6
- 15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.
- Face of an angel? What does that look like? Do you know? Can you pick it out?

Countenance – Face of an angel



Countenance – Face of an angel



Countenance – Face of an angel



Countenance – Face of an angel



Countenance

- Exodus 33:11 - The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.
- John 15:15-I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Countenance

- Intimacy with Christ
- Friendship with Christ
- Friend of God
- Aroma of Christ. Speech. Attitude. Calmness. Presence.
Life as Stephen faced death!

Conclusion

- Calling – Don't underestimate faithful service.
- Character- Let's live the Christ centered abundant life!
- Conflict for Christ- Conflict will come! Don't be surprised.
- Countenance- Friend of God! Let's show Jesus in the good, bad, and the ugly of life!