

GOD CAN USE EVERYBODY

Acts 7:54-60

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: The account of the stoning of Stephen is well remembered by Christians. Stephen was a faithful, preaching deacon and he died at the hands of wicked people because of his witnessing about Jesus. Something special stands out about Stephen's death for among those present who stoned Stephen was a man named Saul. Saul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen and Saul was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee while Stephen was a broken, humble sinner, saved by the grace of God. Quite a difference between the two men, yet God was able to use both men for after Stephen died for witnessing about Jesus Christ, Saul also was saved and became known as Paul and he was instrumental in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. God can use anybody and everybody.

I. EVERY BELIEVER IS IMPORTANT AND USEFUL TO GOD

1. How a believer lives is very important for there are some people who will have no knowledge of Jesus and His Gospel except what they hear and see in a believer.
2. Saul's first introduction to genuine Christianity was through a believer named Stephen.
 - Stephen influenced Saul with his life and death.
 - Saul hated both the messenger and the message but he never forgot Stephen, the believer.
 - Saul saw a believer die for his faith and in time all this had an impact upon Saul.
3. Believers never know when or how they are having a positive influence upon some lost person.

II. GOD WILL ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE TO TELL THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

1. Pastors don't like to see any of their faithful church members leave, thinking that somehow the church just can't get along without that person or that family.
2. God will always have sufficient witnesses for the Gospel until Jesus comes back.
 - The early church lost Stephen, but look who God brought in - Saul, later known as Paul.
 - Elijah was caught up into heaven, but Elisha was waiting to carry on.
 - God is never in short supply of people to work in His vineyard.
3. Perhaps YOU are one that God plans to use in sharing His Gospel, are you?

III. BELIEVERS OUGHT TO REMEMBER WHEN/WHERE THEY WERE SAVED

1. *"...The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul..."*
2. Paul never forgot what happened in Jerusalem that day as he watched Stephen be stoned to death.
3. Believers should never forget where they were when God's grace found them.
 - Never forget what they were before being saved.
 - Never forget what God saved them from.
 - Never forget what God has done for them in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Never forget that it is God's grace alone that makes them so different from those who are lost.

IV. GOD OVERRULES ALL THINGS FOR THE GOOD OF BELIEVERS AND HIS GLORY

1. The stoning of Stephen was indeed a terrible act of cruelty and sin yet it was one of the very best things that could have happened and God was in charge of what happened.
 - If Saul had not been there, Stephen would not have prayed for him.
 - If Stephen had not prayed, Saul would have never preached.
 - Evil done by people and Satan can be good for God's believers and can bring praise to God.

V. WHEN THE TIME COMES, GOD GIVES BELIEVERS GRACE TO DIE WELL

1. What God did for Stephen, He will do for all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Stephen died being full of the Holy Spirit with his heart fixed on Jesus, looking up into heaven.
 - Stephen died without a care in the world, trusting his Substitute, calling on the name of God.
2. Stephen saw heaven opened and saw the glory of God with the Lord Jesus standing there ready to receive him.
3. Stephen died without any anger or malice in his heart. In fact, Stephen didn't really die at all for he simply dropped the fleshly body, fell asleep in the arms of Jesus and woke up in heaven, in glory.
4. What God did for Stephen, He does for every believer when it comes time for the believer to die, to leave this world of sin.

CONCLUSION:

1. The result of the stoning of the believer, Stephen, points out how amazing God works, for another man became a believer and a great witness for the Lord Jesus because of the stoning.
2. God will always have a witness whenever one is needed, therefore every believer should be ready to witness for the Lord at any moment.
3. Believers should never fear nor worry about dying, for it is only a matter of leaving this sinful world and weak fleshly body and going into his/her prepared place with a new, everlasting body.