

STEPHEN - A FAITHFUL SERVANT

Acts 6:8-16

Introduction: The apostles were Jews, a crude, uneducated rabble of fishermen and a tax-collector and were looked upon as unlearned and ignorant men. Stephen, however, was from another culture. He was a Jew by birth, but born in Greece, a man of learning, educated, and refined. He was a man of rank and reputation, trained at the feet of Gamaliel. Stephen was a faithful man, to the Gospel, to the Church, to Jesus Christ, and even unto his death. He is an example for us to consider if we want to honor God with our life.

I. FAITHFULNESS IS THE ONE THING GOD REQUIRES AND HONORS OF BELIEVERS

1. Stephen served God as a Church member, a deacon, then as a Gospel preacher.
 - He was faithful in serving tables and in preaching the Gospel.
 - He was a man of uncommon gifts, talents and abilities.
 - He thought it was an honor to serve as a deacon and serve the poor.
2. God's people are God's servants in this world.
 - It matters not what one's service is, where it is, or who is aware of that service.
 - The only thing that matters is that one be faithful in his/her service to God.
 - Honor God in all things and with all things and God will honor back.
 - There is much one cannot do, but be faithful in what one can do.
3. Stephen was a man full of faith.
 - Faithful means "full of faith."
 - He believed God, trusted God's Son, Jesus, obeyed the will of God and was confident.
 - Faith makes naturally timid people courageous and bold.
 - Stephen did great wonders and miracles among the people signifying God's confirmation of his work.

II. EVERY WORD SPOKEN FOR GOD AND EVERY WORK DONE FOR GOD ACCOMPLISHES ITS'S PURPOSE

1. Saul of Tarsus was probably the chief spokesman against Stephen and was present at Stephen's death.
 - None were convinced, none converted, none believed Stephen's message.
 - Only eternity will tell what Stephen's sermon did to Saul, who became Paul.
2. Two things determine the success of anybody's or any Church's labors for the glory of God and the souls of men:
 - The purpose of God and the power of God.
 - No one serves God in vain - whether one preaches and thousands are saved or whether one preaches thousands of times and only one is saved.
 - God doesn't always show the results of man's faithfulness right away.

III. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS OFFENSIVE TO PEOPLE

1. When the religious hearers of Stephen realized he was right, they hired false witnesses.
2. Nothing has changed today.
 - Until a sinner's heart is changed by the Grace of God, the Gospel will not be received.
 - Salvation by Grace, through the blood of Jesus Christ, received by faith alone is both foolishness and offensive to the unsaved sinner for it offends his/her pride, religious ideas, love of self, and his/her self-righteousness.
 - Jesus said pigs will trample pearls in the mud to get at the one who feeds them (casting the pearls of the Gospel before sinners).

IV. GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS

1. Stephen's conscience was pure and free from guilt with regard to the charges made against him.
 - He had nothing to fear.
 - He had been faithful in what God wanted him to do.
2. Even in the hour of his greatest trial, being stoned to death, he did not forsake his God and his God did not forsake him.

CONCLUSION:

1. What an example of being a faithful servant Stephan was and is for us today.
2. Let us remember that God honors those who honor Him and He will be faithful to those who are faithful to Him.
3. Let us willingly serve God in all things, whenever, wherever, whatever God wants of us.