



OPENING PRAYER

Lord, fill us with your Grace and Power as you filled Stephen. May our eyes be fixed on Jesus, and not on circumstances, challenges, other people, or ourselves. In Jesus name. Amen.

OPENING QUESTION^(OPTIONAL)

Think of someone in your life, either past or present, whose faith was obvious just by being around them. What was it about them that you noticed?



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WORD

Acts 6:8-15

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13 and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” 15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Acts 7:54-60

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together[a] at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

REFLECTION AND COMMENTARY

F.F. Bruce highlights that Stephen, though not one of the original apostles, was “full of grace and power,” demonstrating that God’s Spirit is not limited to a select few but is given to ordinary believers who are yielded to Him. His wisdom and Spirit-filled responses (Acts 6:10) could not be resisted—not because of intellectual brilliance alone, but because they were empowered by God.

Bruce also notes the striking description of Stephen’s face “like the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15), reflecting a divine presence and peace even under accusation. This visible transformation points to a life deeply rooted in God’s presence.

Time with God Is Visible: Stephen’s face “like an angel” reflects something happening internally. There is a visible evidence of a life spent with God.

Reflection: You can tell when someone has been with Jesus—not just by what they say, but by who they are.

In Acts 7:55–60, Bruce draws attention to the powerful parallel between Stephen and Jesus. As Jesus prayed for His persecutors (Luke 23:34), Stephen echoes the same spirit of forgiveness. This reveals that true Christlikeness is most evident not in comfort, but in suffering. Stephen’s vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God signifies divine approval and welcome, affirming that heaven is not silent when God’s people suffer faithfully.

Faithfulness Doesn’t Always Lead to Favourable Outcomes: Stephen’s faithfulness led him into opposition, not applause. This challenges the assumption that obedience always results in ease.

Reflection: Faithfulness is measured by obedience, not outcomes. Will we trust God even when it costs us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stands out to you most about Stephen's character and actions in this passage?
2. Stephen was described as "full of grace and power." What do you think that looks like in everyday life?
3. Acts 6:15 says Stephen's face looked like an angel's — a mark of someone who had spent time in God's presence. What spiritual practices or habits do you think shaped Stephen to be that kind of person? What shapes us?
4. In Acts 7:54, the truth Stephen preached didn't soften the crowd — it provoked them to rage. Have you experienced a moment where being faithful to Jesus cost you relationally, professionally, or socially? How did you navigate that?
5. Stephen's final words echo Jesus on the cross — forgiveness and surrender. Is there a situation in your life right now where you are being called to respond like Stephen rather than like the crowd? What would it look like to fix your gaze upward in that moment?

Gospel Invitation:

Call to Surrender: Invite people to shift their focus from living for approval to living for Jesus—repenting of people-pleasing and trusting Christ fully.

Receiving Grace: Emphasize that the same grace and power Stephen had is available through Jesus—salvation is not earned but received.

Missional Activation:

Audience of One Challenge: This week, intentionally choose one moment where you act in obedience to Jesus instead of giving in to social pressure.

Bold Witness: Share your faith or story with one person, trusting the Spirit to give you wisdom and words.

Prayer:

Salvation / Surrender: Jesus, I surrender my life to You. Open my eyes, forgive my sin, and lead me forward. I choose to follow You. Amen.

Closing:

Jesus, help us to fix our eyes on You above every voice and every pressure. Fill us with Your grace and power so that our lives reflect You, no matter the cost. Strengthen us to live for You alone. In Jesus name, Amen.