

August 4, 2024



1. Read Acts 7:54-60
Why were the Jewish leaders so angry?

What strikes you most about Stephens response to his persecutors?

How do you think such a young Christian, less than a year in the faith, is able to respond in the way he did?
2. In what ways do you find yourselves identifying more with the pharisees response than with Stephen, to want to throw stones or attack "enemies" rather than seeking to see them through the eyes of Christ.
4. Does this passage shift your understanding of what it means to be a disciple or follower of Jesus? If so, how?
4. Read Luke 6:27-36.
This is quite a radical message by Jesus. Discuss any parts you struggle with.
5. How can we practically cultivate a heart that sees our "enemies" as people Jesus died for rather than opponents to be defeated or changed.
6. Take some time to consider what "stones" (metaphorical or literal) do you need to lay down in your life right now. Which person or group of people are we unable to see with eyes of Christ? Commit to pray daily for them this week.

Acts 7:54 - 60 (NIV)

When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Matthew 26:64 - 66 (NLT)

Jesus replied, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, "Blasphemy! Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" "Guilty!" they shouted. "He deserves to die!"

Parallels between Stephen & Jesus

- False witness are brought against him
- Accused of the same crimes as Jesus
- Tried before the same High Priest & Sanhedrin
- He sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God
- Murderous rage of his accusers condemning him

Acts 7:59 (NIV)

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**"

Luke 23:46 (NIV)

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Acts 7:60 (NIV)

Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Luke 23:34 (NIV)

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 6:27-28 (NIV)

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.