

PURSUING — OUR — MISSION

Portrait of a Faithful Witness of Jesus Christ

Acts 6:8-15



mar·tyr

/'mærdər/

noun

1. a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

Significance of Stephen

A great persecution against the church broke out in Jerusalem.

- It forced all the believers into different regions
 - 1) Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1)
 - 2) Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19)
 - 3) Fulfillment of Jesus' prediction in Acts 1:8 ("ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth").

The Character of the Witness

Full of the Spirit (vv. 3-5)

- Eph. 5:18-19 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
- Col. 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

The Character of the Witness

Full of Wisdom

- **Prov. 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”**
- **Prov. 8:12-13 “I wisdom dwell with prudence ... The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”**

The Character of the Witness

Full of Faith *(v. 5)*

- **Faith** *(noun)* = **Believe** *(verb)*
- **One who believes the word of God for what it is** *(Rom 10:17).*
- **Having a definite hope by being convinced of the unseen spiritual reality** *(Heb 11:1).*

The Character of the Witness

Full of Grace and Power (v. 8)

- **The result of being full of faith and of the Spirit:**
Grace
 - **the divine favor of enablement for ministry**
 - **gracious spirit (cf. v. 3; Luke 2:40)**

The Character of the Witness

Full of Grace and Power (v. 8)

- **The result of being full of faith and of the Spirit:**
Power to do “wonders and miracles”
 - **Beyond natural—obviously divine**
 - **For the testimony of God to glorify Himself**
 - **For the edification of the church**
 - **Doing wonders and miracles DOES NOT prove that God is at work** (*False prophets and anti-Christians can also perform! Matt 24:24; 2Thess 2:9*).

The Irresistible Ministry of the Witness

Glory of God reflecting in Stephen's face

- He witnessed to the gospel courteously.
- He witnessed to the gospel persuasively.
- He witnessed to the gospel “with wisdom and the Spirit.”

Fulfillment of Luke 12:11-12 and 21:15



The Irresistible Ministry of the Witness

Stephen boldly witnessed to the gospel *(v. 9)*.

- Result of walking with God
- Ready to see God face to face



The Expected Reaction of the Enemy

Matthew 5:10-12 “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”



The Expected Reaction of the Enemy

John 15:18-25 “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you ... But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, “They hated me without a cause.”



The Witness' Response

Acts 4:19 “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.”

Acts 5:41 “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”

The Witness' Response

Acts 4:29-31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Biblical Mindset of a Witness of Jesus Christ

John 12:24 “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Matthew 16:25 “whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

2 Corinthians 5:15 “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”



NEXTSTEPS