

CALLED OUT

To Give Up Everything

Greg Musselman

Church Problem

Acts 6 starts out with problems in the church between the Greek speaking followers of Jesus (Hellenists) and the Hebrew speaking believers in the Messiah. The Hellenists were upset because they felt their widows were being overlooked and the Hebrew speaking widows were getting priority.

Stephen gets into trouble with the religious leaders, but why?

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 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. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

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, and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 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."

Acts 6:8-14 ESV

CALLED OUT

a journey through the book of ACTS

March 15
2015

Stephen was operating in signs and wonders and people were coming to Jesus and the religious leaders were getting jealous. His ministry made him friends and enemies.

Stephen had such integrity and lived a God honoring life he couldn't be accused of wrong doing. So these religious leaders got false witnesses who lied and distorted Stephen's ministry.

Stephen was calm during this interrogation.

"...his face was like the face of an angel." Acts 6:15 NIV

ACTS 7

The meeting gets a little tense, but not for Stephen.

Stephen gives the religious leaders at the meeting of the Sanhedrin a history lesson, reminding them of God's plan and workings among them. He starts out with their founder Abraham through to Solomon building the temple.

Taking no prisoners, Stephen drops the hammer!

You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. Acts 7:51 ESV

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.

Acts 7:55 NIV

The way Stephen died would later come to impact a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus who would be later known as the Apostle Paul after he had a powerful encounter with Jesus.

Conclusion

Stephen would be the first follower of Jesus to die for his faith, but he would not be the last.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been. Revelation 6:9-11 NIV

Our question from our Lord.

**Are you willing to
give up everything to follow Jesus?**

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

CALLED OUT: To Give Up Everything

1. What were the aspects of Greg’s sermon that stayed with you in the deepest way?
2. What did you personally resonate with most in Greg’s message? What did you personally feel challenged or uncomfortable with in Greg’s message?
3. Have you felt the peace of the Lord in difficult situations?
4. What are you doing to prepare yourself for a time when you are faced with opposition?
5. Our question from our Lord. Are you willing to give up everything to follow Jesus? What do you think Jesus might have say to you in response?