



TAKING A STAND – ACTS 6:8-15

GETTING STARTED

In 1521 Martin Luther declared before a council that would determine whether he lived or died, “Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen.” The historicity of that exact statement is somewhat debated, but regardless of whether or not he said those exact words, his determination was clear. Luther taught and fought for the truth of the Scripture, that the gospel is a work of God’s grace towards undeserving sinners. The church could not mediate God’s grace, nor did anyone have to earn it. This determination has been seen throughout the history of Christianity all the way back to the time of the Apostles and the beginning of the church. The very first martyr of the church was a man by name of Stephen who stood before an angry mob and refused to back down from the truth of Jesus Christ. This is the kind of stand we are called to make as followers of Jesus. May God grant us such grace to imitate these examples as we stand for the gospel in our day!

READ THE TEXT: ACTS 6:8-15

⁸And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then 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. ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. ¹¹Then they secretly instigated men who said,



“We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” ¹²And 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, ¹³and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” ¹⁵And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Identify all the parallels that exist in this account between the trial of Jesus and the trial of Stephen. Why do you think that Luke writes this account in this way?
2. What was the crowd accusing Stephen of preaching? In what way is this a half-truth? What does the Bible teach about the law of Moses and the Temple? (see Matthew 5:17-20; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

APPLY THE TEXT

3. What does courage in standing up for the gospel look like in our day and age? How does the Holy Spirit help?
4. How does sin interfere with our ability to share our faith? How can we overcome that?

SHARE & PRAY

1. As we study the book of Acts, think carefully about 1 or 2 people that you would like to actively share the gospel with. Share them with your life group and hold one another accountable in prayer and support.
2. In light of Acts 6:8-15, let us pray that God would give us his Holy Spirit to be able to proclaim with boldness the Word of God.

