



The Word of God Spread
Acts 6:1-8:3

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Acts 6:1-8:3

- ❖ A case study in problem-solving.
- ❖ A model for church government.
- ❖ Mercy ministry should not be neglected.
- ❖ Word ministry must have priority.
- ❖ Faithfulness will bring opposition.
- ❖ Applause of Heaven > scorn of humanity.

A Spirit-filled church

- ❖ Devoted to the apostles' teaching.
- ❖ Devoted to fellowship.
- ❖ Devoted to "the breaking of bread."
- ❖ Devoted to prayer.

Our heroic Savior:

- ❖ Character > appearance.
- ❖ Fidelity to truth > desires of your heart.
- ❖ Heroes = substitutes.

Acts 6:1-8:3

- ❖ Problem and solution (6:1-6:6)
- ❖ Summary of progress #2 of 7 (6:7)
- ❖ Opposition to Stephen (6:8-6:15)
- ❖ Stephen's "defense" (7:1-7:56)
- ❖ Stephen's death (7:57-7:60)
- ❖ Persecution led by Saul (8:1-8:3)



New players:

- ❖ Stephen
- ❖ Philip
- ❖ Saul (Paul)

Acts 6:1

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.



Enemy attacks:

- ❖ Persecution
- ❖ Corruption
- ❖ Distraction
- ❖ Division

Acts 6:2

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Acts 6:3-4

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Acts 6:5-6

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Summaries in Acts:

❖ 2:46-47

❖ 6:7

❖ 9:31

❖ 12:24

❖ 16:5

❖ 19:20

❖ 28:30-31

Acts 2:46-47

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the LORD added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 9:31

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the LORD and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.



Acts 12:24

**But the word of God continued
to spread and flourish.**



Acts 16:5

So the churches were strengthened in the faith
and grew daily in numbers.



Acts 19:20

In this way the word of the LORD spread widely and grew in power.

Acts 28:30-31

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the LORD Jesus Christ — with all boldness and without hindrance!



Acts 6:8

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

Gospel for the Gentiles:

- ❖ Stephen
- ❖ Philip
- ❖ Saul (Paul)
- ❖ Cornelius, the centurion
- ❖ Peter

Acts 6:9-10

Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) — Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia — who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

Luke 21:14-15

[Jesus, warning of persecution]: “But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.”

Acts 6:11-12

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 6:13-14

They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."



Acts 6:15

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Exodus 34:29

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.



Acts 7:1

Then the high priest asked Stephen,
“Are these charges true?”

Stephen's "defense" (7:2-7:53)

- ❖ History of OT (7:2-7:50)
 - ❖ Abraham
 - ❖ Joseph
 - ❖ Moses
 - ❖ Temple
- ❖ Counter-charge (7:51-7:53)

Acts 7:51-52

[Stephen]: “You stiff-necked people!
Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised.
You are just like your ancestors: You always
resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a
prophet your ancestors did not persecute?
They even killed those who predicted the
coming of the Righteous One.

Acts 7:52-53

“And now you have betrayed and murdered him — you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

Acts 7:54-56

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."

Jesus seated:

- ❖ Psalm 110:1
- ❖ Romans 8:34
- ❖ Colossians 3:1
- ❖ Hebrews 1:3; 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2
- ❖ 1 Peter 3:22

Colossians 3:1

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Acts 7:57-58

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.

Acts 7:59-60

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.

Acts 8:1

**And Saul approved of their killing him.
On that day a great persecution broke out
against the church in Jerusalem, and all
except the apostles were scattered
throughout Judea and Samaria.**

Acts 8:2-3

Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

1 Timothy 1:15

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.

1 Timothy 1:16

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Early church problems:

- ❖ Administrative issues
- ❖ Ethnic strife
- ❖ Jealousy
- ❖ Slander
- ❖ Conspiracy
- ❖ Violence

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."

What have we learned?

- ❖ A case study in problem-solving.
- ❖ A model for church government.
- ❖ Mercy ministry should not be neglected.
- ❖ Word ministry must have priority.
- ❖ Faithfulness will bring opposition.
- ❖ Applause of Heaven > scorn of humanity.



Are you being called?

- ❖ To receive Christ
- ❖ To become a member of Melbourne Community Church
- ❖ To pray / to receive prayer
- ❖ To affirm or reaffirm a commitment
- ❖ To receive the LORD's Supper