

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – Nov. 24, 2019

Theme: The Acts of the Apostles

Topic: Stephen: A Man of Faith and Power

Main Texts: Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Key verse: Acts 6:8 – “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders *and signs among the people*” (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: ‘*And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*’ (Acts 6:8). Faith and power are closely connected. Someone said, ‘*They that are full of faith are full of power, because, by faith the power of God is engaged for us.*’ It was not Stephen’s intellect, or eloquence, or efforts which made him powerful. It was his abundant in faith. Although God demands that we should serve Him with all that HE has endowed us - learning, energies, these things will be utterly unproductive apart from Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church of Christ is a supernatural body, and the work of Christ is a supernatural work, and in that work the grace of Christ is compulsory to make any human abilities or effort powerful in fulfilling His purposes. So, those who desire to be powerful in that work must be full of faith.

1. (a). How does one become ‘full of faith’? (see Mark 9:24; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:2; Hebrews 11:1) (b) In an age when skills, talent and organization is emphasized, what can we learn from these words, “Stephen, full of grace and power”?

Being full of faith and the Holy Spirit propelled Stephen to prominence. And before long, he became someone to be silenced. First to attempt to silence him were members of some sect who tried to disprove the gospel in a debate. But ‘... *None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke.*’ (Acts 6:9-10 NLT). Even before the Sanhedrin, the radiance of God on him and his excellent grasp of Scriptures was glaring. Sadly, the authorities did not acknowledge the truth he spoke; but furiously condemned him to death by stoning. Indeed, ‘*Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance ...to those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume...*’ (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). Like someone said, ‘*Wisdom and holiness make a man’s face to shine yet will not secure men from being treated badly.*’

2. (a). What can we learn from Stephen’s experience and what to expect as the Holy Spirit manifests God’s power through us? (b) If these lessons are true, in what ways, then, have we tended to misrepresent or try to misuse the Holy Spirit’s power in us?

Psalm 84:5-6 describes how those whose strength comes from God set their minds on pilgrimage, and how that mindset transforms the valley of weeping into a refreshing spring. Stephen’s ‘full’ faith enabled him to stay focused on Jesus Christ even in the agony of his painful death. His last words were ‘... “*Lord, do not charge them with this sin.*”’ (Acts 7:60) Stephen demonstrates that being full of faith and power is so that staying focused on Jesus till the end (Hebrews 11:27; 12:2); is to love like Jesus - to love his murders. In his last breath, he saw their lostness and was doing all he can to give them a chance to be saved. Does our faith and the Holy Spirit in us move us to love people like that?

3. (a). Let participants share how they had reacted when people had hurt them deeply because of their beliefs or hurt for sharing the gospel (b) The Holy Spirit enabled Stephen to forgive his murderers. What will it take for us to be so full of faith and power to forgive those, like Boko Haram and Herdsmen, who have hurt us or hurt our loved ones?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit fill us with this same faith that we may love and die with our eyes upon Heaven. In Jesus Name. Amen