

MY NOTES

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Thank you for joining us today. This is a short note to let you know that we know what you are thinking: It is hot and cramped in this room. We want to acknowledge with you that yes, the front room is full, the kids rooms are full, and it can get warm. We are working on alleviating this right now by building our own building on the land just north of us (we must be out of this one by December 2016).

There is a lot that goes into the process of Element having a permanent home, but we hope that today you are first drawn to Jesus before you are overwhelmed by anything else. If it gets too hot, we may hand out popsicles to help you cool off and give you a sugar rush. If you would like a service that has open seats (and is cooler), you are invited to our 8:15am service. Please understand that all of these “challenges” are because of our love for Jesus, people, and growth that has come quickly. These are good things. We hope you will stay as we work to make more room for you to be part of the good thing Jesus is doing here. If you would like more information about our building process or how you can participate, you can visit: www.elementroots.org.

- The Element Team

Week 20

ACTS

A Calling
That Kills Us

TODAY'S VERSES:

Acts 7:54-60

Acts 7:59-60

Acts 6:7

Acts 7:1

2 Peter 2:9

Exodus 28:36-38

1 Samuel 12:23

UPCOMING @ ELEMENT

Donuts with Dad

Dads, stay with your little ones TODAY after 3rd service!

CareNet Baby Bottles

Don't forget to bring your baby bottles back NEXT SUNDAY to help support CareNet Pregnancy Center

eMoms! Wine Tasting

Saturday, June 25th,
2-4pm. RSVP:
emoms@ourelement.org





So far in Acts:

Guidance That Leads Us

A Heritage That Informs Us

Worship That Reminds Us

Preaching That Changes Us

Generosity That Defines Us

Compassion That Is Bigger Than Us

Truth That Challenges Us

Community That Encourages Us

Membership That Accounts For Us

Accountability That Exposes Us

A Hope That Heals Us

A Joy In Our Identity

A Lifestyle of Mission

Leadership That Grows Through Mistakes

A Peace That Speaks For Us

A Theology That Informs Us

Week 20 – Acts 7:54-60 A Calling That Kills Us

Welcome to our series in the book of Acts, this is week 20. At Element we are hoping to see the characteristics that should define who the “church” is in the world today. Not every church will live all of these perfectly, but we can have a vision of what God calls us to be as “the church.”

Define what a priest is.

What has been your experience with priests?

We finish Stephen’s story of his trial in front of the religious leaders this week by seeing the outcome of his confrontation: death. When Stephen defends his position to the Jewish Ruling Council he does it by retracing the Jewish heritage and history to the people who thought they knew it the best. Stephen tells their history in a way that would have been unfamiliar to those who thought they knew the story. He tells the story through a lens that shows God sending prophet after prophet and God’s people rejecting those prophets. Stephen’s critique is a rejection of their power and that they are missing the true prophet right in their midst, Jesus.

When was the last time you missed something that was right in front of you?

In the book A Biographical History of the Christian Faith it says, “*Never in so short a time has any other religious faith or, for that matter, any other set of ideas, religious, political, or economic, without the aid of physical force or of social or cultural prestige, achieved so commanding a position in such an important culture.*” The reason this sudden change takes place is that the people in the “Church” started to see themselves as being God’s ambassadors to the world (His priests). They started to live as priests were

meant to live by spreading the good news of God and taking care of the poor. When Stephen gives his sermon to the Council he acts like the priests were meant to act, and this frustrates them.

Read Acts 7:58-60.

How should a priest act?

Because Jesus is our High Priest, we are now sent to be priests to this world.

- *Priests are those mediate the divine.* A priest puts the divine on display. A priest shows people the divinity of God.
- *Priests care for others:* They pour themselves out for those in need.
- *Priests are humble:* If you know you are saved by grace alone, that you go in to the Father because you have a perfect High Priest, your life becomes one of humility and service.
- *Priests have boldness that comes from Jesus:* We are beautiful before God because of Jesus and His work.
- *Priests pray for people.* Even people who want nothing to do with Jesus can still be taken to God in prayer. **1 Samuel 12:23, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.”**
- *Priests are willing to die not just for their people, but for their High Priest, Jesus.* We are to live like priests, putting Jesus on display, and if we die we will see Jesus just as Stephen did.

How are you living or not living like a priest?

Many times, as Christians, we forget to live in the humbleness of acknowledging that we, ourselves, needed saving from ourselves. We sometimes start to think that God saving us was somehow because we were good, or better than, some of the other people around us. The Jews in the ruling Council that Stephen spoke to live some of the most righteous lives anyone had ever seen, and yet they were as lost without Jesus as anyone else.

Read Exodus 28:36-38

What are the iniquities in your “holy things?”

Timothy Keller writes, “*I try to repent, but if I ever look at my repentance, I see it’s filled with false motives...I try to obey, but it’s always halfway there. Even my motives are impure. Oh, the iniquity of my holy things.*” If we know we’re saved only through Jesus’ grace as a Priest, we will begin to live as priests too. When we see what Jesus has done for us, it turns us into priests.