

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 19

ACTS

A Theology
That Informs Us

TODAY'S VERSES:

Acts 7:1-53

Acts 6:3

Philippians 3:4-6

Corinthians 10:5

1 Peter 3:14-16

John 5:38-39

Genesis 50:20

1 Timothy 1:13-14

Psalms 27:4

1 Corinthians 3:16

2 Timothy 2:21

UPCOMING @ ELEMENT

eKids! Promotion Sunday

Next Sunday, kids move up to next Sunday School Class!

Donuts with Dad

Dads, stay with your little ones after 3rd Service Next Sunday!

Youth BBQ Fundraiser

Sunday, June 26th. Tri-tip BBQ, chips & Root-beer floats!





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

Week 18 – Acts 7:1-53

A Theology That Informs Us

Welcome to week 19 of the book of Acts, we are just over halfway through with our series that is covering the first half of the book. We are looking at the early church in order to better identify how to serve and love Jesus as they did. It is important to remember that Acts is both prescriptive and descriptive, meaning some sections teach us what to do while other sections simply describe events that took place. Today we look at Stephen's first and last sermon recorded in scripture. Stephen was not aware that he would be speaking to the Jewish council, but he knew his Bible and was able to deliver a powerful message.

When was a time someone got mad at you for you telling them the truth?

Stephen is placed on trial before the ruling Jewish council because of his stance for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Stephen's sermon has a few themes, but the ones that stand out to me (Jon) are as follows.

- 1) Stephen's sermon highlights Israel's history which reveals God's sovereign grace.
- 2) Israel's history reveals its culture's rebellious propensity to reject God's gracious dealings with them.
- 3) Israel's history reveals their pattern of limiting worship to a sacred place, rather than the sacred person who made it all.

How would you tell God's story to someone who asked?

How would you talk about God's grace to someone who didn't ask?

Stephen did not know he was going to be given an

opportunity to speak and proclaim truth, he was not "prepared" as we think of being prepared, but the Holy Spirit filled him and he was able to deliver a sermon that was packed with truth that challenged cultural norms.

Read: 1 Peter 3:14-16.

Are you more concerned with truth or acceptance?

Who in your life has told you hard truth when you didn't want to hear it?

Stephen did not water down the Gospel, he preached truth regardless of the consequences. He preached to a Jewish audience that rejected Christ as the Messiah. He preached fully aware that his message would offend, but he delivered it any way. As we saw last week 'he had the face of an angel;' the peace Stephen displayed came from knowing the Gospel isn't based on our effort, but about God's mercy.

Do you try to make scripture more about morality and "being a good person," or about Jesus?

Stephen shows us what "balanced Christianity" looks like. Luke wants us to take special note of Stephen's character as he followed Jesus *completely and fully*. Some may think that a balanced Christian life is one of uneventful moderation, but a biblically balanced life is a life where we follow a God who has revolutionized everything in our life. There are too many examples where believers focus on certain parts of their life while ignoring others, Stephen's life and ministry showed combinations of scriptural characteristics that we all should live.

- He preached powerfully and he served widows faithfully.
- He was *inspired* and he also had *wisdom*.
- He had peace under pressure, yet he could fearlessly proclaim truth and thunder accusations that would ultimately lead to his death.

And in the midst of it all he expressed the graciousness of God.

How do you normally react under pressure?

What would your reaction be like if in those moments you remembered that Jesus is the one who holds you?

How could that truth enable you to speak into other people's pain?

All of scripture points to the fulfillment of the world found in Christ. It is quintessential to remember that without Jesus—there is nothing that matters.