



1. Who is/was your favorite Superhero?

Acts 6:1-15

"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.

²So 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.

³Brothers 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 ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.'

⁵This 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.

⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

⁹Opposition 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.

¹⁰But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

¹¹Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, 'We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.' ¹²So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law.

They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

¹³They produced false witnesses, who testified, 'This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹⁴For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.' ¹⁵All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

"Are these charges true?" -Acts 7:1b

If you had been arrested for the crime of telling others about Jesus. If you were arrested for being a follower of Christ. If you found yourself on trial for your life for being a member of The Living Room Community Church. How would you respond?

Every day, we are confronted with decisions that could determine our destinies.

Whenever a church begins to have an impact in the community, sooner or later there's going to be opposition that rises up. (Read Acts 6:9, 12)

2. Are you cooperating with God in the development of your courageous, heroic faith?

We don't know anything about Stephen before Acts 6, but we can deduce some conclusions about his personal growth. He made Courageous Decisions. He became a true follower of Jesus.

3. Have you made that decision?

Stephen made a courageous decision to allow God to use him and to use the spiritual gifts that God had deposited in him.

4. Are you allowing God to use the gifts that He's given you?

5. Are you accepting the responsibility that's extended to you as a part of this church family?

He took advantage of those opportunities to share what Jesus meant to him and what Jesus could do for others.

6. Do you take advantage of those kinds of opportunities?

Stephen was not the first to die for Christ. And he certainly won't be the last. Some of you are thinking, does Jesus want me to die for Him? Yes. He does. You see, the call to follow Jesus is a call to die for Him if necessary. But more importantly, to live for Him. To die to self, but to live for Him.

"He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for us." -2 Corinthians 5:15

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." -Galatians 2:20a

"To live is Christ, to die is gain." -Philippians 1:21

Jesus wants us to live for Him. Every day! A daily life of courageous faith. Choosing to put Him first in our lives.

Heroes do not set out to be heroes. They set out to make good decisions, courageous choices on a daily basis. And when a crisis comes – and it will come – heroic faith emerges.

Near the end of Chapter 7, having just delivered a brilliant defense of his faith, Stephen powerfully, boldly proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah – the One who was promised in the Old Testament. The One who is anticipated by the Jewish people, but also the One who was rejected by this very court. And he turns the tables on his accusers and he indicts them. In Acts 7:53, Stephen says:

“You who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.” -Acts 7:53

And they responded.

“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.’” -Acts 7:54-56

“At this, at the words of Stephen, they covered their ears and yelling at the top of their voices, they rushed at him and they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And while they were stoning him, Stephen prayed: ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’” -Acts 7:57-59

Not only did Stephen live out his life like Jesus, but the text tells us that he also died like Jesus.

“Then he fell on his knees and cried out: ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And when he had said this, he died.’” -Acts 7:60

Today’s prayer: God, I want to do the right thing. I’m going to do the right thing. I’m going to give up that sin. I’m going to say no to that temptation. I’m going to step out of my comfort zone and trust You. I’m going to accept that responsibility that You extended to me. I’m going to give that sacrificial gift. I’m going to forgive that person. I’m going to ask for forgiveness. I’m going to trust You with my illness. And to share my faith. I’m going to live for You.

7. Whatever it is that God is telling you to do right now, would you do it?

8. How can our group pray for you?