

**SERMON SERIES:** “*The Early Church*”

**SERMON TITLE:** “*Stephen Speaks the Truth*”

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 7:1-53

**INTRODUCTION:** When we witness for Christ, we don’t need to be on the defensive, we simply share our faith.

1. God’s presence is not confined to a building (verses 1-50).

**Stephen was Prepared (v. 1)**

Stephen was ready to share his faith and he did so with uncommon boldness. What steps have you taken in preparation to defend your faith? Could you be as faithful as Stephen under such criticism and scrutiny.

**Stephen’s speech: Abraham (vv. 2-8)**

Stephen pointed to spiritual lessons from Abraham's life. Abraham trusted God in situations where common sense would have led most people to doubt.

Using the life of Abraham, Stephen reminded his audience that God seldom acts in an expected manner.

Make it your goal to give God your full attention the next time you have your personal time with Him, take Communion, or take part in a church service.

**Stephen’s speech: Joseph (vv. 9-19)**

When faced by a confusing array of circumstances, remember that:

- (1) God is in control—nothing surprises him;
- (2) this world is not all there is—it will pass away, but God is eternal;
- (3) God is just, and he will make things right, punishing the wicked and rewarding the faithful;
- (4) God wants to use you (like Joseph, Moses, and Stephen) to make a difference in the world.

**Stephen’s speech: Moses (vv. 20-39)**

Stephen's review of Moses' early life shows how God prepares his people for future service. Because God is sovereign, nothing about our lives is ever accidental. Nothing is ever wasted.

Don't run ahead of God. Don't take action without first spending much time in earnest prayer and without seeking wise and godly counsel.

How much better it is to wait on God, to let him reveal himself and his plan, and then to humbly trust and obey!

If you have come to a place in your life where you wonder if your troubles have been missed by God, overlooked, and pushed aside for some more urgent heavenly matter, take heart from Moses and the children of Israel. God sees it all. And he will, in his time, take action.

We need to learn that when we reject God's will and resist the leadership of his appointed servants, we consign ourselves to lives of misery.

**Stephen’s speech: The temple was not God’s dwelling place, but it was a place to come and worship (vv. 40-50).**

God is not limited; he doesn't live only in a house of worship but wherever hearts of faith are open to receive him. Is your worship of God confined to church on Sunday? God wants to live in us at all times.

Stephen's words convey the truth that God cannot be confined to a building. Be careful not to become so caught up in human religious systems that you forget the God who lives now.

2. They are the law breakers, and they have rejected the Righteous One who fulfilled the law (vv. 51-53).

**Stephen’s speech: Israel’s habit is continually rejecting God’s spokesperson and clearly rejecting the Righteous One, the Messiah, Jesus Christ (vv. 51-53).**

Make sure your heart is devoted to God and that your activities reflect that reality.

Rather than using the Bible to condemn others, apply it first to your life, and make the required changes.

**CONCLUSION:** We must not allow ourselves to become stubborn or hard-hearted and reject God’s Word. We must remind ourselves the importance of having God’s Word, respond to His Word appropriately, by applying the life-changing truths to our lives.