

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

www.thestory.church/discipleshipgroups



KEEP JESUS WEIRD: The Book of Acts and the Birth of Non-religious Christianity

Session 6 – What Is Preventing Me?

DAY 1

Introduction:

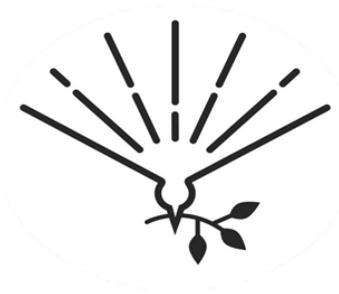
Who remembers Atticus Finch representing innocent Tom Robinson in the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*? He reminds the courtroom that all men are created equal in the deeply moving speech. While his defense didn't change the minds of the jury, and they found Tom guilty, it left a lasting impression on generations of readers. We will also see a powerful defense speech this week. An innocent man "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:55) will defend himself against false witness. He moves beyond defense and goes on the offensive. He recounts God's dealings with Israel, their rejection of Moses, the Law and the very one sent for their salvation, Jesus.

Hang on to your seat, and pay attention to what Stephen says, and doesn't say. It will not only leave a lasting impression on the opposition and the early church, but the modern reader as well. The Jesus movement can't be stopped.

Questions:

1. Has false witness ever been brought against you? What was your reaction and how did you defend yourself?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to defend a position but ended up going on the offensive? What was the outcome?

DAY 2



DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

www.thestory.church/discipleshipgroups



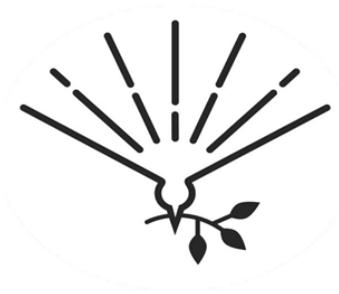
Read Acts 7:1

1. In verse 1, the high priest, probably Caiaphas, asks Stephen to defend himself. What charges have been brought against him in 6:11-14 and what will he need to defend?
2. What was "this holy place" that Stephen was speaking against in 6:13? What significance does it have?
3. Read Matthew 26:59-61. What similarities and differences do you see between the accusations brought against Jesus, and those brought against Stephen?

DAY 3

Read Acts 7: 2-50

1. What do we learn about obedience through the life of Abraham (verse 3-4)? Why do you think Stephen point this out to the council?



DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

www.thestory.church/discipleshipgroups



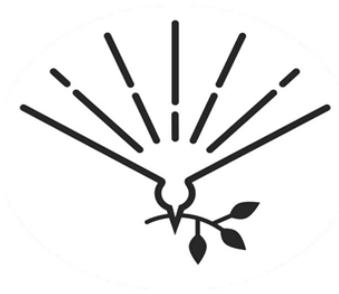
2. Why does Stephen include the story of Joseph? In what ways does his story echo that of the ultimate Savior?

3. What do we learn about how God felt about Moses? Which of Moses' characteristics contribute to his ability to lead Israel?

4. Moses was called by God to deliver the very people who rejected him. What is the purpose of Stephen making this point?

5. Read verses 44-48 again. What do we learn about where the presence of God dwells? Why does Stephen emphasize this point to the council, and how is he calling them out?

6. Discussion question: When Israel rejected Moses and God's work through him, they built a golden calf, a god of their own. Then they rejoiced in the



DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

www.thestory.church/discipleshipgroups

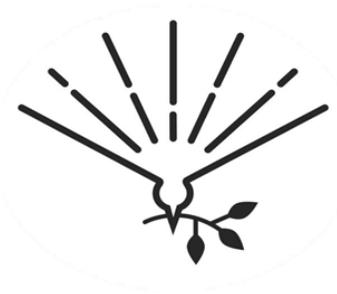


work of their own hands. How have you, either intentionally or subtly, rejoiced in the works of your own hands?

DAY 4

Read Acts 7:51-60

1. Throughout Stephen's indictment he refers to the Israelites multiple times as "our fathers". However, in verse 51 it shifts to "your fathers". Why does Stephen exclude himself?
2. Who does Stephen charge with the responsibility of the death of Jesus?
3. Stephen was given a chance to speak to defend himself, but he goes from a defense to a prosecution. What is he doing in verses 51-53? How does this relate to the rest of his speech?
4. Discussion Question: Stephen was unafraid to lay out the entire truth and



DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

www.thestory.church/discipleshipgroups



that resulted in his death. What power enabled Stephen to ask for the forgiveness of the very people who were stoning him? Where in your life are you resisting the Holy Spirit? How can you allow the Holy Spirit's power to work through you?

DAY 5

Read Acts 8: 1-40

1. While those in Samaria were asking to receive the Holy Spirit, Simon asked and offered money to receive the authority to give the Holy Spirit. What is the difference and how does Peter rebuke him?
2. Who was the Ethiopian eunuch and what was he going to Jerusalem to do?
3. Discussion Question: The eunuch said, "How can I understand what I'm reading unless someone explains it to me?" Then Philip goes on to tell him the good news about Jesus. *We live in a world where people are waiting for Jesus to be explained to them.* How can you be led by the Spirit to proclaim the good news about Jesus? Who in your life is waiting to hear about

