

Acts 6:8-15

1. In this portion of text, the focus shifts from the Apostles' ministry to Stephen's. What may be surprising for us is that we see Stephen doing exactly what only the Apostles were doing up to this point: signs, wonders and preaching.

a. Why is this development important? What does it teach us about giftedness, roles, and responsibilities in the church?

b. How then do we make sense of the facts that God can and will use anyone to do His work, and at the same time the Bible teaches that churches are to appoint leaders (elders/pastors) that have a special purpose and authority? What then is the difference between a congregant and an elder/pastor?

2. In vv. 8-10 we see Stephen functioning in the grace, power and wisdom of the Spirit to testify for Christ. In fact, he does so with so much power and wisdom that the scholars with which he is engaging are unable to refute him. Clearly, God had equipped Stephen for the task at hand.

a. Do you truly believe that God has equipped you to be a faithful witness on his behalf to those around you?

b. What is the greatest hindrance to your confidence in the sufficiency of God's word and Spirit to give you what you need when it comes time to share?

3. Sometimes we have unnecessary expectations regarding what a Gospel-filled conversation needs to look like.

a. What does and doesn't need to be said in order for a conversation to be gospel-filled? Are there general truths that always needs to be shared, or is it case-by-case? In short, how do you know if you have been a faithful witness in a conversation?

b. Do you have a personal example of a time when you stepped out in faith to share and God gave you the "right" words? If so, tell us about it.

4. As this text and many others highlight, at some point we will inevitably face opposition when we share Jesus with others. The key to being willing to share anyway is to truly believe that Jesus is worth it, i.e., that he is the truth and what he offers is more valuable than anything else that the world can give.

a. What have been the times in your life when you were most convinced that Jesus is better than anything else and worth giving up everything for? What brought you to those moments?

b. What are you most often tempted to believe is more important, real, or valuable than Jesus?

c. What are the most effective ways that you have found to overcome this temptation?

5. Pastor Bryan shared that sociologists define boldness as a willingness to be make oneself vulnerable, i.e., a willingness to put oneself out there.

a. In what kind of situations do you find yourself being most willing to be bold? Why is that?

b. How bold are you when it comes to sharing your faith? How do you think that you can grow in your boldness in this area?