

Acts of the Apostles Bible Study

Session 5 - Wise Witnessing

Acts 8:1-4

One of the amazing things about our God is the way he takes even the most difficult of circumstances and brings something good out of them. In this instance, Stephen had just been stoned to death for preaching the gospel of Jesus. It is interesting that the initial charge against Stephen was the same charge that was brought against Jesus - blasphemy (Acts 6:11-12; Mark 14:61-64).

While Jesus was tried and condemned by the Sanhedrin they had to take him to Pilate to carry out the death sentence. But in Stephen's case, they became so angry with him they took him out and stoned him to death in violation of Roman law (Acts 7:54-60).

Stephen's death caused a great persecution to break out against the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. As a result, many Christians left the city and went throughout Judea and Samaria. This was all part of God's plan. He used the tragic death of Stephen to initiate the spreading of the gospel as Jesus had directed in Acts 1:8.

We might think that since they were being persecuted for sharing the gospel they would stop talking about Jesus. But the opposite happened. Acts 8:4 says, "**Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**" This should encourage us. We will face skepticism, opposition and rejection when we share our faith, but instead of causing us to stop we need to press on all the more.

Acts 8:26-40

The encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian official provides for us an example of how to be an effective witness for Jesus. First, we need to realize that every Christian is called to be a witness. Not just the preachers, Bible teachers or church leaders. Every believer needs to be ready, willing and able to share their faith in Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

Steps to being an effective witness for Christ:

1. Be open to opportunities to witness (vs. 26)
2. Put yourself in a position to share your faith (vss. 27-29)
3. Engage the person in conversation by finding common ground (vss.30-31)
4. Share your faith plainly and answer any questions (vss. 32-35)
5. Be prepared to lead the person into a relationship with Jesus (vss. 36-38)
(The Romans Road, The Bridge Illustration, The Brutally Honest Approach)
6. Follow up. Stay in contact with the person and help them get connected to a church.

***Their response is not your responsibility. Success in witnessing = faithfulness in doing it.**