

2024 - Family Devo

Apr 7 - a



READ: Acts 7:54-60

Main Idea: What a great example of a faithful Christian till death. Stephen is the first recorded martyr for Christ. He did well by not backing down from the threat of violence and having the courage to speak the truth. Then as he is dying, he follows Jesus' example by stating "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

DISCUSS

Children: Do you know what a martyr is? It's someone who is killed because of something they believe in. If a group of kids at your school decided to make fun of you for going to church, would you be upset by this? Would you pray for them while they were making fun of you? Imagine how you would feel if they hurt you or tried to kill you for believing in Jesus.

Teen: Do you think those that Stephen was speaking to knew he was speaking the truth? Does denying the truth make it any less truthful? Could anything other than the Spirit of God have strengthened Stephen enough that he could have the courage to speak the truth in the face of violence, and have the love in his heart to ask for the forgiveness of those about to kill him?

Adult: Do you wonder how many martyrs have remembered Stephen as they were being persecuted or killed? Oftentimes, a martyr is alone when they are killed. In Stephen's case, we're not told that other Christians were present when he gave his defense of the charges brought against him, though Luke knows what he said. Why do you think Stephen was granted the vision of heaven and God's glory? It angered the Sanhedrin but how would it have helped Stephen? Or did it?

PRAY

MEMORIZE

Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)
But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.



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Apr 7 - b



READ: Acts 8:1-8

Main Idea: Persecution broke out against the church and caused many Christians to move to other areas. But in all things God is working, and as Christians spread, so did the gospel, because they kept sharing it. Philip goes to Samaria and is preaching there and also performing powerful miracles, as Jesus and the apostles had done before. The gospel is spreading, and so are the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSS

Children: What is persecution? Its what happens when you are teased for believing in Jesus. It is when people treat you badly for believing in God, going to church, reading your Bible or not missing church to go do something else. But back in the Bible days, it was much worse than teasing. For us today, it might get uncomfortable enough for you to want to go to another school, but not to move to another town. But it was really bad in those days so a lot of people did move, sometimes to stay alive. And they took their believe in Jesus with them. And they kept sharing it.

Teen: Did the persecuting of the church stop the spreading of the gospel? Is there anything that God can't work good in? Can you think of a difficult time in your life where you could see God's goodness still at work?

Adult: Often the first violent act will unleash more violence. We see that in our times. How would the Christians feel after this period of peace was shattered and great persecution broke out? Most of us in America don't fear a knock on the door but these Christians knew Saul was on a hunt for Christians. But even as they were running for their lives, they preached the word "wherever they went." It is hard for us to understand what they went through – feeling they needed to leave Jerusalem, but unable to keep quiet about Jesus and the gospel. Have you had a situation where you felt you could not keep quiet about Christianity? What was it that propelled you to speak?

PRAY

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