

“Doing What Jesus Did” [DWJD?]

Introduction

- Continuing series, “Unleashed”
- Focusing on 6th & 7th Chapters - open up your Bibles
- At this point in ACTS, the church in Jerusalem is growing, so much so, the Disciples need to raise up some people to help run things - they needed some ‘care team leaders’ to be able reach out to people when someone has a tough diagnosis like leprosy, maybe bring them a meal, some bandages, pray for them...
- So the twelve said to the people, Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them **4** and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.
- First verses of today’s Scripture - everybody thought it was a good idea: While there were 7 men chosen, 6th & 7th chapters largely focuses on one person: Stephen

Acts 6:7-10

- Notice all the parallels of Jesus as we go through
- Humble Servant
- Stephen performed wonders and signs among the people
 - He was one of the 12 disciples after all, right?...actually no he wasn’t
 - He was just a ‘regular guy’ ...usually sat towards the back...worked a 9 - 5; Yet a regular Joe could perform signs and wonders? strange...

Not surprisingly, when someone was doing some great stuff for God, turning hearts towards God, the spiritual forces of evil take notice, and opposition arises...through flesh and blood people...

Something we don’t keep in mind nearly enough, words of Paul in [Ephesians 6:10-13](#)

So much conflict and strife in this world - opposing kingdoms; opposing perspectives, on just about every issue: hitting the Church today: gay marriage; gay clergy; hitting our nation: abortion, immigration; issues of race and gender...politics...there even a great deal of conflict and strife within local churches
How know if you are on the ‘right’ side? Won’t know for sure until we get to Heaven, but just the list of attributes from the Armor of God is helpful in discerning:

- Truth of the Gospel (aligns with Scripture); righteousness; readiness that comes from the gospel of peace; faith; salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- Opposing: Lies; opposes Scripture; deceitfulness; sinfulness; complacency; conflict and chaos; mistrust; breeds disunity; destruction; living for the flesh; of this world, not the Word

When you’re trying to do great things for God, going to have flesh and blood people oppose you, lie about you, defame your character, but Jesus loves those people every bit as much as He loves you; you may be living in opposing kingdoms with opposing perspectives...but doesn’t make you, or them, ‘bad’ people...it’s the worldly influence that we’re up against, not the flesh and blood people - something worth reminding ourselves about often

Acts 6:11-15

Stephen’s story, so far, sounds a lot like Jesus:

- Jesus performed signs & wonders; Stephen performed signs and wonders
- Jesus walked in grace and wisdom; Stephen walked in grace and wisdom
- People produced false witness against Jesus; People produced false witness against Stephen
- Jesus spoke truth in some tough setting without regard for His own well-being; and Stephen spoke truth in a tough setting without regard to His own well-being...
- Stephen then gives a tough, truth-filled testimony in the first 51 verses of the 7th chapter. Not going to read it all but essentially, Stephen, like an Old Testament professor, reminds them of their shared heritage, re-telling many stories of their heroes, as well as, about the parts of the stories that were less flattering, and the people who were less-faithful...
- He Told the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
- And The 12 sons of Jacob, and about the (stiff-necked) jealous patriarchs who sold Joseph into slavery (but God was with Joseph, and he became appointed ruler over all of Egypt)
- He told about how the number of God's people in Egypt greatly increased, so much so that the midwives were to throw out their newborn, and later, their ancestors became oppressed
- Then he told of the story of Moses, and the burning bush, and Moses being sent to Egypt to free His people; The parting of the Red Sea; 10 commandments at Mt. Sinai;
- But the (stiff-necked) people rejected Moses, and said, "Who made you ruler and judge" though God himself had sent Moses to be their ruler and deliverer; the (stiff-necked) people made a golden calf and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars
- They making of the Tabernacle; but were made to wander in the wilderness until a generation died out, due to their (stiff-necked) ways...;
- They crossed the Jordan, Joshua led them, there was the time of David; Solomon built the Temple, and yet, Heaven is God's throne...all things were made by the hands of God

Acts 7:51-60

Again, Stephen's story sound like Jesus:

- Jesus speaks truth boldly, and man becomes angry and considers it blasphemy; Stephen speaks truth boldly, and man becomes angry and considered it blasphemy
- Moments before his death, Jesus speaks words of forgiveness over his aggressors and prays for God to receive His Spirit; Moments before Stephen's death, Stephen speaks words of forgiveness over his aggressors and prays for Jesus to receive his spirit
- Through Jesus' death, a new chapter begins; Through Stephen's death, a new chapter begins

Bible note: "Stephen confronted the religious leaders directly about their refusal to see the truth. They were resisting the Holy Spirit and didn't like being rebuked. While Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had warned the apostles not to preach in Jesus' name and occasionally had them flogged, they hadn't yet begun any formal campaign to suppress the church as a whole. That all changed after Stephen's preaching and death. But God would use the terrible circumstances of persecution for his glory, as they believers would be driven from their homes in Jerusalem, and use that as an opportunity to share the gospel wherever they went." Stephen's death serves as a tipping point, from which point, the Good News spreads.

Throughout these chapters, Stephen does what Jesus did.

- Humble servant
- Performed signs and wonders
- Walked in grace and wisdom
- Was the victim of false witness
- Spoke truth in a tough setting without regard to His own well-being...
- Spoke boldly, leading to the anger of man, with opposers shouting 'blasphemy'
- Speaks unimaginable words of forgiveness over his aggressors
- Prays for Jesus to receive his spirit
- And 'falls asleep' or dies; Through Stephen's death, a new chapter begins

How is it possible that a regular guy could do the things that Jesus did? He wasn't at the Last Supper. He wasn't an Apostle. He didn't write any of the books of the Bible. He was just a regular guy...but he was a guy who loved the Lord and was devoted to follow Him, he was a guy who had surrendered himself to the needs of the King and community, and he was a guy who walked in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit; being 'full of the Spirit' was the first thing the 12 listed when the people were choosing the 7

We believe that every person in the sound of our voice can do the things that Jesus did, by loving Jesus more and ourselves less, through greater devotion, greater surrender, and by walking in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit

Every one of us can:

- Perform signs and wonders - healing, prophecy, faith, miracles, and more
- Walk in grace and wisdom (and grow in wisdom and stature like Jesus did)
- Can end up being the victim of false witness, when we stand up for Jesus
- Speak truth in a tough setting, without regard to our own well-being...
- Speak boldly, potentially leading to the anger of man
- Speak unimaginable words of forgiveness over our aggressors
 - Lean into the possibility of forgiveness regardless of circumstance / supernaturally
- Pray for Jesus to have our spirit and die to our own ways and desires
- Through dying to self, God can start a new in us, our families, and our community

We ultimately want to be like Jesus...THIS is what it looks like to be like Jesus...imagine a church FULL of people who look like Jesus; what could we accomplish with God's help? Not opposing the Holy Spirit, but embracing the Holy Spirit

The powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil do not want this reality...

**None of this is possible apart from the Holy Spirit; every bit of this is possible with the Holy Spirit
This is why we are spending the summer in ACTS - to make known what IS possible by seeing what was MADE possible in the past...None of this is possible apart from the Holy Spirit; every bit of this is possible with the Holy Spirit**

Response: Pray for God's help to be like Jesus in every way