

### Message.

Stephen's life reminds us there is a cost to following Jesus. It's clear that Stephen dedicated himself to the Word. He was obedient to the Holy Spirit. He spoke truth in Jesus' name. All these actions have consequences that range from people talking falsely against you or even severe persecution. Stephen took on a great responsibility as a disciple. The more responsibility you step into as a believer, the bigger the target for criticism. As a fellow believer, don't be surprised when those outside the Church show their dislike, but don't let their words take control of your mind and emotions. Continue to pursue God through His Word. Grow in strength and endurance as we seek to mimic Christ in this world. Ask for the daily filling of His Spirit and be aware of your obedience to Him. We are clothed in Christ! Confidence in belonging to Christ enables us to see our lives as a testimony of God's goodness. Remember, we are a part of an unstoppable mission. We answer to know one, but God. We are free from this world's grasp. *An unstoppable church owes no man anything except to love. #bccBIGidea*

### Prayer.

Heavenly Father,  
You are my Lord. You have set me free from this world and I owe You my life. I am Your slave. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so I can be Your ambassador to the world. I understand the world hated You first and hates me as Your follower. Protect me from allowing any negativity from this world to overtake me. Show me ways I can act in love and spread Your Kingdom.  
Amen.

### Scripture.

Acts 6:8—8:3  
John 15:18-25  
1 Peter 4:12-14

### Self-Reflection.

Acts 6:8—8:3

Stephen gave the Jewish leaders a history lesson. It was intended to show the Sanhedrin how people rejected God-sent, God-ordained messengers. He concludes by showing them how Jesus was similarly rejected by them. He didn't seem to be surprised, but simply speaking truth.

- Why did people lie about Stephen? What was their motivation?
- How did Stephen respond about the false witnesses?
- As he was being stoned, how did Stephen respond?
- How did Stephen manage to respond in such a way?

John 15:18-25 – Look at Jesus' words carefully. Jesus said that we'd be persecuted because of His name. Peter reminds us of this truth (1 Peter 4:12-14).

- Why did the world persecute Jesus?
- What does it mean to be hated, persecuted, and/or insulted because of Jesus' name?
- Should we expect persecution?
- When and how might we expect persecution? What constitutes persecution and/or the world hating us?
- What if we aren't experiencing persecution? Are we not living as we should?
- What life transformation needs to take place for you to live the life of a Christ-follower?