



Stoning of Stephen

Handout

Session Theme: God and Conflict

Activity: Groupings

Scripture Story: Acts 6:7-15 & 7:1; 51-60

Video Clip: Gandhi

7 The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. 8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12 They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. 13 They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." 15 And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7:1 Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen replied:

[note: first Stephen reminds them all of their shared story as Israelites. He starts by talking about Abraham and ends with Moses before saying...]

51 "You stiff-necked people, with hard-hearts and muffled ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. 53 You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it." 54 When the council heard these things, they became enraged and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. 55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57 But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

A quick review of "God & Conflict" Session is as follows...

- God does not remove obstacles/conflicts from our lives
- But God will lead us through those conflicts if we pay attention to God
- God will most likely lead us through those conflicts in unconventional ways, including surrender and sacrifice.
- In order to know how God will lead us through the conflict, we need to pray and then be obedient to what we hear.