



An Arbitrary to Die For

1. The first thing we see about Stephen that would make Godly men mourn his passing is the fact that he was truly a SPIRIT-FILLED person.
 - a. This fact is affirmed at least four times in the Bible.
 1. Acts 6:3
 2. Acts 6:8
 3. Acts 6:10
 4. Acts 7:55
 - b. What does it mean to be “Spirit-Filled”?
 1. A Spirit-filled person is someone who literally makes Jesus LORD of his or her entire life—their thoughts, their actions, their reactions.
 2. A Spirit-filled person is someone who allows the Spirit of God to LEAD them—to FILL them—they let our Lord literally use his or her flesh to do His will.
 3. A Spirit-filled person is someone who allows the Spirit’s leadership from within and allows that leadership to extend into all of life. His life is literally FULL of the Spirit of God.
 - c. Stephen and Jesus have similar characteristics of their life:
 1. The Bible says Jesus was full of grace.
 2. Jesus performed miracles.
 3. Jesus boldly confronted the religious establishment of the day.
 4. Jesus was convicted by lying witnesses.
 5. Jesus was executed though innocent of any crime.
 6. Both were accused of blasphemy.
 7. Both died outside the city and were buried by sympathizers.
 8. Both prayed for the salvation of their executioners.

2. Another thing that made people love Stephen was the fact that He took our Lord's Great Commission **PERSONALLY**.
 - a. He saw his **people** —his **friends** —his **co-workers** —as his responsibility, his mission field.
 - b. You don't need to be a visual effects artist to share your faith. You don't need a dramatic presentation. You just need to be a **friend** on the journey who is willing to **love people** and point to Jesus—people on the street where you live—people you know.
3. Stephen was a skilled **STUDENT** of the Scriptures.
 - a. He was **wise** with the wisdom of God's Word.
 - b. **Crisis** shows what is inside us.
 - c. Overview of Acts 7:2-53
 1. As you read his message you'll see that his first point was to **counter** their accusation that he had spoken against their beloved temple.
 2. In the second part of his sermon he countered their **accusation** that he had maligned the law of God.
 3. He said, "Not only does the Scripture record the fact that your forefathers disobeyed the law and rejected Moses, but you yourselves rejected and killed the very One Moses prophesied about!"
4. Stephen was a person of great **COURAGE**.
 - a. Why wasn't he afraid of what these men were doing to him?
 1. Luke 12:5
 - b. Christians like Stephen live to please our Lord. The only fear they have is not doing so.
 - c. No Christian has **influenced** the world as profoundly as **Paul**. Acts 20:22 tells us that Saul never forgot Stephen's death.
 - d. **Acts 8** tells us that Stephen's death was the beginning of a time of wide-spread **persecution** of Christians.
 - e. God only allows things to happen that are for our **good**.
 - f. Good—amazing good—came from Stephen's death.