



## Sermon Discussion Guide

### 03.12.23 Message | Keith Ehresman | Acts 7:54-60

#### Key Scriptures:

*Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

- Acts 7:54-60

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- Romans 8:35-39

*When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

*But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*

- 1 Peter 4:13-14

#### Message Highlights:

- As Christians, our story's outcome is not ours to control.



- The Church is called to repent, or die to self, by living by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.
- By discerning what you're willing to die for, you can also determine what you're willing to live for.
- Once we understand Jesus and his story for us, we can better understand the stories of others who have yet to know Jesus and what he desires for their lives.

### **Conversation Starter:**

Share with your group something you tend to be particular about, whether it's the way that your desk is arranged at work or how everyone *should* cut their grass. How does trying to maintain control over these aspects of your life preach a false sense of security to you?

### **Discuss the Message:**

1. In light of Acts 7:51-53, what motivates the Israelites to hurt Stephen in Acts 7:54-60?
  - a. What are you holding onto that holds you back from truly living by the power and presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
  - b. What steps can you take to welcome repentance and continual heart transformation into your life?
  - c. What does the text mean by "falling asleep"? How does this phrase point us to 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 and the eternal hope we have in Jesus?
2. What can separate us from the love of Christ according to Romans 8:35-39?
  - a. How does the depth and strength of Christ's love for you encourage you to live for him?
  - b. Who in your life needs to know more about God's love for them? Make a plan to share Christ's love with them this week.
3. Why should we rejoice when we suffer for Christ's sake according to 1 Peter 4:13-14?
  - a. How does this passage help guide us through suffering?
  - b. What effect does suffering, whether for the gospel or during difficult life circumstances, have on your faith in God?

### **Pray:**

*Spirit, we are grateful for the example you've given us in Stephen so that we better understand what it means to live and die for you. May we be a people that desires for your name to be glorified and elevated above all else. Would you continue to cultivate softened hearts within us so that we are quick to repent and chase after you? We thank you for Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, which makes our salvation and freedom possible. In his name we pray, amen.*