

Sermon Based Small Group Guide
For November 22, 2020 sermon:

Empowered (Book of Acts): "The 5 layers to the trial of Stephen"

Warm up:

- What would you say is your favorite recent TV show? (last 5 years)
- What is your 'all time' favorite TV show?
- What Thanksgiving plans do you have and have they changed at all?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. Stephen was someone who was described in Scripture as full of grace, faith, power and the "Holy Spirit". What do you think it means to be 'full of the Holy Spirit'? To start the conversation check out: Ephesians 5:15-20
2. When given the opportunity, Stephen gave a long account of the history of Israel and how God worked through time to show his faithfulness. If you were asked about God's faithfulness, what account or passage in Scripture (Old and/or New Testament) would you share? Why?
3. Stephen's defense is a 'Biblical Theology', meaning it shows God's redemptive story throughout the Old Testament and points to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as its climax. Obviously Stephen didn't include all of the Old Testament. Think of one account not included in Stephen's defense and see if you can tie it into Stephen's Biblical Theology. Remember- his main focus was God's faithfulness in and out of the Temple and Israel's rejection of its messengers.
4. Read John 16: 5-11, as Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit's work of conviction. According to this passage, how do you think the Spirit acted through Stephen's speech in Acts 7? Try to think about what type of conviction the Sanhedrin might have been resisting, like their forefathers resisted.
5. Stephen ends his defense with a pointed accusation: "You always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51) Ask yourself the pointed question of "In what way might I be resisting the Holy Spirit right now?"

In light of this question, read Isaiah 66:1-2 as a group. What in particular will you do this week to submit to the Holy Spirit with 'trembling'?

Apply it: (10 minutes)

At the end of the message, we talked about three aspects of the Spirit's work: conviction, comfort, and the spotlight on Christ. How was this reflected in the life of Stephen? How have you seen these 3 aspects working in your own life? How could these 3 focal points shape how you view the Spirit and interact with God in a more meaningful way?