

Acts 7:54-60 Jesus at the Right Hand of God

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Years ago Actor Steve Martin appeared on the David Letterman show (Letterman is looking like Santa)

A) Martin sang a Song - He called it: "[Atheists Don't Have No Songs](#)."

Christians have their hymns and pages,
Hava Nagila's for the Jews,
Baptists have the rock of ages,
Atheists just sing the blues.

Romantics play Claire de Lune,
Born again's sing "He is risen,"
But no one ever wrote a tune,
For godless existentialism.

For Atheists there's no good news.
They'll never sing a song of faith.
In their songs they have one rule:
The "he" is always lowercase.

B) Though the song was meant to be funny - it hit on a very true truth -

1) when it comes to our outlook on life and Hope

C) There is a HUGE contrast between people who have faith in Jesus

D) And those who have no faith!

In the book of Acts we have seen a similar contrast between the followers of Jesus -

A) who have been impacted by his Resurrection

B) And those in the religious community who refused to believe that the resurrection was true.

C) That CONTRAST IS ON DISPLAY IN OUR TEXT THIS MORNING IN A BIG TIME WAY.

Last week Tyler did an amazing job last week covering Stephen's sermon - 53 verses in 45 minutes - quite a feat

A) Who talks the fastest around here?

B) Stephen's sermon flipped the script - they were trying to put Stephen on trial

1) But Stephen put them on trial - The Summary to his message in v.51

⁵¹ "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*."

C) That was the summary of Stephen's sermon -

1) as he flipped the script on these religious leaders in much the same way Peter did

D) They were guilty of killing Jesus the Messiah

But Tyler left us hanging - He gave us the sermon but not the reaction.

A) We ended there - and that was by design - I asked him to do that

B) TV shows - cliffhanger - to be continued - accept you could read what happened in your Bibles

C) I asked him to do that - so we could zero in on the reaction and what happened today.

So Stephen challenges them - calls them stiff-necked in heart and ears

A) Heavy - Mean? But it was true

B) They were stiff-necked and hard-hearted in their refusal to believe the irrefutable evidence -

C) That Jesus had risen from the dead

1) He was ALIVE - he is the messiah - only way to be saved.

What we have before us today in V54-60 is an incredible and extreme contrast between Stephen and the Religious leaders.

A) We see in the passage that Stephen gets stoned to death - first Martyr of the early church

B) the real victim of this passage is not Stephen. He is no victim at all.

1) He wins. He dies, but he dies the victor.

C) The religious mob that killed Stephen, they live. But They live the loser.

1) The mob is the tragedy. Stephen's was the victory.

Note this: What we see in Stephen is directly connected to the statement that he makes in V.56

A) About seeing **Jesus standing at the right hand of God in the heavens.** - Crucial - BIG IDEA - where we are headed

B) Where and how you see Jesus is going to play a significant role in the way you approach life -

1) go through life and deal with difficulties

C) So here is what we are going to do today -

1) first I want us to consider the contrast that we see here in Stephen and the religious leaders

D) Then I want to spend the rest of our time in considering what it means that Jesus is at the right hand of the father in Heaven

Contrast #1

Stephen is full of the Holy Spirit - whereas the religious leaders were full of anger and wrath. V.54

A) 54 When they heard these things -

B) I think means that Stephen's sermon was interrupted before it was ever finished, -

C) These religious leaders always prided themselves on their obedience to God, worship of God,

1) 'we love the law', 'we love the prophets',

D) But Stephen had just exposed their hypocrisy. **"And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart."**

1) That means they were sawn in half. - Great conviction

They were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

A) They began to grind their teeth at him. This is the picture of rage mixed with frustration - My dad and that look - TROUBLE

B) Interesting that the Bible tells us over and over again that is what people will be doing in hell -

1) Hell is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth

C) Weeping they were wrong to reject God - and not believe -

1) Gnashing - mad at themselves for their foolishness and unbelief

Jesus spoke more about Hell than he did of heaven:

A) Why? Hell is a real place - real people go there.

B) These men are gnashing their teeth in anger at Stephen -

1) even though their hearts were convicted by his words.

C) A REVELATION OF how far these men were from really knowing God

D) So Contrast #1 They were full of Anger - Stephen is full of the Holy Spirit

Contrast #2 Spiritual blindness vs Spiritual sight

A) They can't see anything - Stephen sees everything!

B) The situation is growing more and more intense - and Stephen can see it

1) The tension is escalating

C) They begin grinding their teeth - STEPHEN can see the fury coming.

D) what does he do? . . 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven

The first thing you want to do in a tough situation is get your eyes off the tough situation.

A)Off the Horizontal - Go Vertical

B)If you've got a bad situation, don't look at your situation. Look up.

C)And that's exactly what Stephen did. "He, being full of the Holy Spirit" gazed = looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,

D)One of the biggest problems we struggle with in this life is our eye sight and our heart sight -

1)are constantly directed to the Horizontal - all the hard stuff and situations happening to us.

D)But when we look up and see the Lord in the midst of our hard situation

1)Mountains turn into molehills when we see our problems in light of God's glory, power and majesty

Stephen looks up and sees Jesus in the place of Glory at the right hand of the father.

A)He says:V.56 , "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

B)This is so interesting: Because this is exactly what Jesus said to this exact group of religious leaders - during his trial

1)this was really the final straw that got Jesus killed -

Mark 14:61-64 **Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"** ⁶² Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

C)Stephen says? "You know what I see? I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." -

1)Repeating what Jesus said they would see - even though Steve wasn't there when Jesus said those words

No wonder it says in verse 57, cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;

A)You see, Stephen had hit the nail on the head.

B)they either had to kill Stephen or admit that they were wrong in killing Jesus,

1)because Stephen is making the same claim for Jesus that Jesus made for Himself,

C)Jesus was declaring "I am who I claim to be, and I have a seat on the right hand of the Father, and I'm going there."

1)And they killed Him for saying it, so they've got to kill Stephen for saying it too.

This leads to contrast #3 Death and Life ⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes (coats) at the feet of a young man named Saul.

A)They thought they were killing him, but it was only just giving him his entrance into glory!

⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

B)Death satisfied them. They wanted death. But for Stephen it wasn't death. It was life.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in Me, though he were dead" "Yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

C)There's no death. It's simply going from one thing to the next.

1)When a believer dies we say they Passed - great phrase

D)Passing changing addresses - "Oh death where is your sting - grave your victory "

1)This mortal is putting on immortality

Born again to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead!

A)Jesus beat death so death wouldn't have to beat us

B)No fear in death - Passing - My Dad not afraid to die - looking forward to it

1)Home coming

C)Contrast between Death and Life, Spiritual blindness vs Spiritual sight

1)Full of anger versus being full of the Holy Spirit

Final contrast we see #4 The contrast between hate and love.

A)They were a hating mob. They hated him so much because they hated Jesus.

B)They were venting such venom and fury. Their hate is seen in just the way they stoned him.

1)They took their coats off so that they could blast him.- No hinderance

C)Carnival - balls at the bowling pins - to win a cheap stuffed animal - take your coat off

D)V59 reads in the ESV as they were stoning him - meaning the rocks just kept flying

Image of Hatred in the extreme.

A)But in contrast to that we see another image of EXTREME Love

B)Stephen kneels down to pray - 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

C)WOW!!!!!! Who does that remind you of? JESUS

D)THAT is exactly what Jesus prayed from the Cross: Father forgive them for they know not what they do. -

Interesting Stephen wasn't there at the cross - he wasn't mimicking what he heard Jesus share.

A)Although the story had been passed down through the years

B)Stephen is full of the Holy Spirit -

1)the Holy Spirit of God in Stephen is superseding the hate of these religious leaders - **with the LOVE OF GOD**

C)The Bible declares in Romans 5:5 - **The Love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit**

1)Poured into us in order to be poured out of us

D)The Love and grace of God is being poured out in this moment - through Stephen - he cries out "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."

I believe that it was these words that haunted Saul of Tarsus - the young man they laid their coats down at his feet

A)Saul of Tarsus is what we would call a religious zealot - he would later say he did it in ignorance - literally thought he was doing the right thing

B)He was so zealous for Judaism - he was going to try and single handedly put an end to the followers of Jesus

C)Acts 9 – Saul, Saul **why are you persecuting Me - hard to kick against the goads** - the sharp stick - get the donkey moving

D)The goad was Stephens sermon and Stephen's prayer -

1)Stephens - love - haunted Saul until it broke him

So we see this Amazing contrast - Stephen and these religious leaders

A)Talking about being the church in a broken world

B)This is what the Lord is wanting to produce in our lives - as the world around us gets darker - more hostile toward the things of God

C)God wants to shine in us in the same way - He was shining through Stephen!

Now we can read this account of Stephen and see this remarkable contrast and think -

A)Stephen was an incredible - special guy- one of a kind

B)And I will say that I think Stephen had a special anointing on his life -

C)But Stephen is really no different from us -

Stephen's reaction was directly connected to his relationship to Jesus and his VIEW of Jesus -

A)AND where he saw Jesus

B)Stephen Saw Jesus in glory at the right hand of the father.

C)This is significant: We are told at least 23 times in scripture that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the father in Glory.

In fact this is the only time that it mentions that Jesus was standing at the right hand of the father.

A) Why was this time different? - STANDING ?

B) Standing to give ovation - Standing O - well done good and faithful servant -

1) Standing to Welcome home this faithful servant

C) Makes me wonder if Jesus stands every time that a believer dies and enters into glory and heaven -

1) Bridegroom stands waiting to welcome his bride at the Altar -

D) Let's talk about Jesus place at the right had of the father

It is significant that the Bible says that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the father

A) The Writer of the book of Hebrews makes this beautiful case in scripture for Jesus being our High Priest -

We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Hebrews 8:1

After He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10:12-14

B) The priest in the OT never sat down when in the temple. Their work was never done -

1) there was always another sacrifice to make

C) But Jesus offered one sacrifice - Once and for all - All people - Once and for all - not need of another one.

1) Cross He cried - FINISHED - THE WORK OF REDEMPTION IS DONE

D) The Writer of Hebrews - running the race - run with endurance

let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

Jesus endured for us - Hupomeno - He was conquering death - sin - shame

A) We are to run the race keeping our eyes on Jesus our High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the father

B) Knowing this - He conquered so we can endure

C) He conquered so that we could be more than conquers through him who loves us

D) That is what it means for us that He is seated at the right hand - the work is FINISHED -

1) He conquered and his conquering power is available to us

Seated at the right hand:

A) The Right hand is the place of Honor - Lordship - His Kingship

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Psalm 110:1 ESV

B) HE is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords - every knee is going to bow and tongue confess - 1) TODAY is the day of Salvation

C) Don't wait it will be too late - Q "what did you do with my son?"

D) Can't be neutral with Jesus - **For me or against me - with me or you are my enemy!**

E) Jesus is seated at that right hand - but he is not just chilling - feet up kicking back waiting for that day.

The Right hand is the place of Power:

You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. Psalm 89:13 ESV

"God's power not only surpasses our power of expression, it surpasses our power of comprehension! Take all the dictionaries of the world, exhaust all the vocabularies and when you have added them all together you have still not begun to describe the greatness of God's power" Martin Lloyd Jones

That Power is in Jesus who is at the right hand of God

The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. Psalm 110:5 ESV

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. Psalm 63:8 ESV

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 ESV

All of these references to the right hand of God are a reference to Jesus and who He is and what he is able to do in our Lives

A)His arm is mighty - he strength is unsurpassed -

B)his ability to uphold us is greater than anything this world can throw at us

C)The strength of Jesus was upholding Stephen in this moment

D)Your view of Jesus is going to radically affect the way you approach life and view your difficulties

1)if you see him at the Right hand of the father in that place of honor and Glory and power and MIGHT

E)Every difficulty becomes an opportunity for Him to show up

We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as impossible situations. Chuck Swindoll

F)That becomes even more true when you realize that Jesus is in the place of power at the right hand of God

1)ready to empower your life through his HS

G)Paul said several times that the same power that brought Jesus out of the grave is available to us!

1)The right hand is the place of power

The Place of Provision

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11 ESV

A)The Holy Spirit is the seal of promise in our hearts of God's presence in our lives

B)And it was only when Jesus went back to sit at the right hand of the Father that the way was made for the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives.

“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.” (Acts 2:32-33)

C)The Holy Spirit is made available to us as our Helper and Empowerer because Jesus is at the right hand of the father

D)The Place of Honor - the place of Power - the place of Provision

The place of Intercession:

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:23-25

Such a great phrase: He is able to save to the uttermost = save completely in other words -

A)Because he lives to intercede for us

B)Here is what this means: Jesus doesn't save you and say -

1)ok now you are on your own -hope you make it to the end

C)No it means he is always praying for you and seeking to come to your aid -

1)all the way to the end - Save to the Uttermost

D)Save Completely - Fully - He is by your side every step of the way

³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Romans 8:33-34

Amazing to think -Jesus is not only with you and for you through his Holy Spirit

A)He is praying for you - Amazing - interceding on your behalf

B)Part of that work of intercession is he is our advocate

And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation (**satisfaction**) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

1 John 2:1-2

C)Advocate = Defense attorney - Satan comes to condemn / look....

1)True guilty - but the price has already been paid in full by me!

D)Paul would go on to say - Nothing can separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

My friends it is glorious! Jesus at the Right hand for us

So as we close today: Everything hinges on where and how you see Jesus!

A)Unbeliever - He is still dead and in the grave.- Big problem - tomb is empty -

B)You need an explanation for why?

C)Remember - Can't be neutral on Jesus -

1)Turn from your sin - embrace the one who paid the price for your sins - Made a way - Heaven/ Eternal Life

D)Professed - walked away - come home today -

1)Jesus your High Priest is waiting for you - welcome you

Believer: LOOK UP! Jesus is SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND

A)FINISHED - no striving for God's favor

B)Place of Power - help you - uphold you

1)Provision: HS is in you - able to empower

C)MAKING INTERCESSION FOR YOU

1)Rejoice

D)Your advocate:

Respond in Worship -

Respond in Surrender - Bow

Respond: Salvation