

Acts of Jesus, Lesson 17: Martyrdom

- Do you realize that we are coming off the worst century in Christian history as far as Christians being martyred for their faith is concerned?
- Martyrdom is not some bygone issue for the Church; it is a current issue and it has always been to a greater or lesser degree for the Church since the beginning.

1. Today we're going to be looking at a person named Stephen - a believer, a deacon, and the first martyr of the Church.

➤ **Acts 6:8-15**

- First of all, what is a martyr?
- Our word comes from the Greek word martus, which means simply - witness.

➤ **Acts 1:8** "and you will be My martyrs..." is the actual Greek of that verse.

- In time, it came to apply solely to those who witnessed for the Savior in their deaths.
- Technically, "Martyr" is not special classification among believers but a categorical one!!

2. What constitutes a martyr? We have an excellent example in this man called Stephen.

1. First of all, a martyr is a person full of faith. **V. 5**

- What does it mean that Stephen was full of faith?
- I think that the right interpretation of this lies with the other thing he was filled with "full of faith and the Holy Spirit."
- Can't have more of the Spirit, but you can be more under His control
- Similarly, it's not a matter of more faith, necessarily, but it's of a matter of being controlled by faith.
- "Walk by faith and not by sight" is not a matter more faith in the sense of measure but more faith in sense of control.
- There is no real power in faith itself only in the object of faith.
- If your faith is something that has no power or is known to fail, then your faith is worthless.
- Faith is powerful when the object of faith is God and His Word because God is powerful!!
- Faith is walking in the will of God confident in the sustaining power of God.
- Does faith control your life?

2. Secondly, a martyr is a person who knows the Book.

- Notice: Stephen proceeds to give a lengthy and pinpoint accurate Bible lecture to the Sanhedrin who have the equivalent of doctor degrees in theology (the longest speech in Acts).

3. Finally, a martyr is a person who is dead already!!

- Which is harder: To die for Christ or to live every single day for Him?
- The price of living every single day for Him is often much higher!!
- In either case, its martyrdom: **Rom. 12:1**
- Paul writes this about his life lived for Christ: **Gal. 2:20**