SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON
The New Testament Church

THE STONING OF STEPHEN
Acts 6:8-7:60
Elementary Lesson
Year Two, Quarter Four, Lesson Four
Sunday, October 28, 2018

AIM: to use the story of Stephen to teach my students to stand for what they believe in

OBJECTS TO HAVE: An American flag
A rock
Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: How many of you have every said “The Pledge of Allegiance”? It goes like this:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America,
And to the republic for which it stands,
One nation under God, indivisible,
With liberty and justice for all.

Sometimes, if we are not careful, we will rush through words like that without taking the time to carefully think about what they mean. What do those words mean? When you say The Pledge of Allegiance, you are saying, “I promise to stand for what that flag stands for.”

Yes, it is true that this flag is made out of cloth, just like your clothes are made out of cloth. But when you see these 13 red and white stripes, and the 50 white stars on the blue background, you are seeing much more than just cloth. You are seeing the colors that represent the freedom that we enjoy in America. When you say The Pledge of Allegiance, you are saying, “I stand for freedom!”

This flag represents things that I believe in. It is very important to know what you believe in, and to be willing to stand for it.

When I see the flag, I think of the people who were willing to risk their lives so that our nation could be born in 1776. I think of the great men who wrote the United States Constitution, the amazing document that has given us the freedom to vote, freedom of speech, freedom to worship God the way we believe is right, freedom to arm and protect ourselves, freedom to work and earn money, and so many other wonderful freedoms, for over 200 years. I am willing to stand for the things that this flag represents.

Even more than the American flag stands for things I believe in, my Bible stands for the things that I believe in—That God created the universe, that Jesus is the Son of God, that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, that Jesus rose from the dead, and so many other life-changing truths. My Bible is more important than any other book. It’s not just a Book to be read, it is a Book to be lived. I want to stand for everything that my Bible says.

Today I am going to tell you the story of a man who stood for what he believed in.

STORY: There was a man in the church in Jerusalem named Stephen. Stephen was a deacon. As I told you last Sunday, a deacon is a man in the church who is chosen to help the pastor do the work of the church. Stephen was a good teacher, a good preacher, and a good soul winner. Stephen cared about people, and he was always helping people. Stephen told people about Jesus. Stephen brought visitors to church. Stephen was a hard worker, and he loved Jesus and he loved his church.

Stephen spent much of his time telling people how to be saved, and teaching God’s people how to be more like Jesus. He loved to teach the Bible, and he loved to help people grow in their faith. Stephen was a servant-leader, he was a teacher and he was an encourager.

Of course, not everyone agreed with the things that Stephen taught. In fact, there were some men who, when they saw Stephen teaching the Bible, would go and start arguing with him, trying to tell him that what he was teaching was not true. Stephen did not argue back. He would simply show them from the Bible why everything he was teaching was absolutely true. Those men would always go away from Stephen feeling ashamed that he had proven them wrong, that he knew what he believed and why he believed it.
By the way, we should always be able to tell people what we believe and why we believe it, and we should be sure to show them the love of Christ as we do it. Arguing and fighting about what we believe does not please God. Knowing what the Bible says, sharing what the Bible says and living what the Bible says DOES please God. That’s what Stephen did, and that is what each of us should do.

Once these men realized that they could not persuade Stephen to stop preaching about Jesus, they decided that they must find some other way to stop him. But what could they do? Soon one of them came up with an idea. Since they could not prove that what Stephen was teaching was wrong, they would LIE about what Stephen was preaching. So they found some men on the street, and they said to them, “See that guy Stephen over there? We will pay you money if you will go before the religious leaders with us and tell a bunch of lies about him.” Then they told them exactly what lies to tell. The men on the street wanted to get some money, so they agreed to tell lies about Stephen. They went with them to the religious leaders, and said, “This guy Stephen was preaching a bunch of dangerous, ungodly, wicked lies. We want him arrested!” They sent some men out and had Stephen arrested immediately.

Soon Stephen was brought before the high priest, who was like a judge in a courtroom. Stephen’s enemies told the high priest all of the lies about Stephen. Stephen just stood there silently listening to their words, knowing that they were telling a bunch of lies about him. Then the high priest looked at Stephen and said, “Are these things true?”

What would Stephen say? Would he point at those men and whine and complain and say, “That’s not fair! They’re just a bunch of liars!”? Or would he be a coward and say, “I’m sorry. If you’ll let me go, I won’t ever preach about Jesus again!” Or would he just lie and say, “I don’t know what you’re talking about! I’m not a preacher!” No, Stephen didn’t do any of those things.

Stephen stood up in front of all of the people and began to speak. But he did not tell them that those bad men were liars. He did not scold all of the people for arresting him. He did not try to defend himself. No, Stephen stood up and spoke from the Bible, and told all of those people...how to be saved! He started way back in the Old Testament, and told everyone there about the faith of Abraham, and how that faith had been passed down through the generations, through Moses and David, until it got to them. Then Stephen told them that they were wicked because they had crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They needed to get right with God, and be saved.

When those men heard Stephen tell them that they needed to get saved, they got so mad that they wanted to kill him. They grabbed Stephen and dragged him outside. They dragged him down the street and out of the city gate, outside the city of Jerusalem to the place where criminals were executed. Then they picked up rocks to throw at him. A rock hit him in the stomach, then another one hit him in the head, then some rocks hit him in the shoulder, and in his ribs, then again in the head. Stephen looked up to the sky and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” That made the men even madder, and they threw stones at Stephen as hard and as fast as they could. Stephen fell down to the ground, as stone after stone struck him. Stephen knew that he was going to die, and he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he cried out, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Then Stephen died and went to heaven.

This story sounds like it has a terrible ending. It doesn’t sound like it would make us want to stand for Jesus. The fact is, sometimes standing for Jesus makes good things happen for us; but sometime when we stand for Jesus, it makes people mad at us, and bad things happen. Good or bad, we still must stand for Jesus.

Let me tell you a few important things about standing for Jesus that we learn from the story of Stephen.

1. Many times you will be the only one standing for Jesus. It takes courage to stand alone.
2. Any time you stand up for Jesus, someone will get mad. You should stand anyway.
3. When you stand for Jesus, God can use you to bring other people to Him. Next week I am going to tell you how one of the meanest men in town got saved just a little while after Stephen was stoned. Why did he get saved? Because of the way that Stephen stood for Jesus.

You and I must stand for Jesus every day—at home, in our neighborhood, at school, at work, even in church. We must always stand up for Jesus.

Let’s learn our memory verse: Ephesians 6:13 – Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON
The New Testament Church

THE STONING OF STEPHEN
Acts 6:8-7:60
Teen and Adult Lesson
Year Two, Quarter Four, Lesson Four
Sunday, October 28, 2018

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

I. SERVING GOD WILL OFTEN REQUIRE YOU TO STAND ALONE. It can be a great deal of fun to serve God, especially when we have friends who serve with us. Teaching, singing, soulwinning, working in a ministry are all opportunities that provide great joy and blessing to God’s people. But we should not count on always serving God in a crowd. There will of necessity be times when we must serve God alone. Enjoy serving with friends and fellow-believers; but be prepared for the times when you must stand alone and serve God.

II. THE MORE ZEALOUSLY YOU SERVE GOD, THE MORE OPPOSITION YOU WILL ATTRACT. Stephen seems to have been the most zealous of the seven deacons, and he certainly stirred up the most opposition. There are many enemies of the Gospel, who don’t seem to mind when Christians keep to themselves; however, when God’s people are actively spreading the Gospel message, these enemies come out in strong opposition. You must choose whether you love peace so much that you are willing to let the Gospel have no effect, or whether you love Christ so much that you are willing to face whatever opposition may come.

III. TO STAND FOR GOD YOU MUST KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE AND WHY YOU BELIEVE IT. Stephen would have looked quite foolish, if when he was called upon to answer for his faith he stood there stuttering and stammering. But when he boldly, eloquently and accurately answered for his faith, he showed himself a worthy representative of Christ. To stand for Christ in ignorance is to be a poor representative of the faith.

IV. STANDING FOR GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS END THE WAY WE WANT IT TO. If we could choose, we would want all persecution to end as it did for Daniel, or for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, with great victory, deliverance and vindication. It is dangerous to think that great deliverance means success, and that pain and death means failure. Some of the great advances of the Christian faith in history have come at the price of great sorrow and loss of life on the part of God’s people. If you are going to stand for God you must be prepared for the fact that your stand may mean great pain and sacrifice.

V. YOU HAVE NO IDEA THE INFLUENCE YOU ARE HAVING WHEN YOU STAND FOR GOD. In the middle of this whole ordeal was a man named Saul of Tarsus, a great persecutor of Christians. As Stephen passed on into eternity, Saul watched his amazing faith. It was just a short time later that Saul himself turned to Christ, and became a great warrior for the faith, known as the Apostle Paul. Stephen died, not knowing the influence he was having on Saul; but he certainly would have rejoiced to know that his death led to the salvation and the ministry of the great Apostle Paul.
The Stoning of Stephen  
Acts 6:8-7:60  
Sunday, October 28, 2018

Church: the Place to Stand with Jesus

I. ACTS 6:8-15 Stephen’s Accusers  
   8-10 They could not defeat him honestly  
   11-14 They resorted to scheming and lying  
   15 They didn’t care that they were opposing a godly man

II. ACTS 7:1-53 Stephen’s Message  
   A. Stephen preached a bold message  
   B. Stephen preached a Scriptural message  
   C. Stephen preached a convicting message

III. ACTS 7:54-60 Stephen’s Death  
   54, 57-58 Conviction drove Stephen’s enemies to anger  
   55-56 Stephen kept his eyes on Jesus  
   59-60 Stephen died forgiving

Adult Bible Class
God used Stephen because Stephen knew what he believed and was willing to stand for it. It is important for all of us to know what we believe and to stand for what we believe.

\[\text{Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.}\]

Ephesians 6:13
THE STONING OF STEPHEN
Acts 6:8-7:60
Sunday, October 28, 2018
Unscramble the key words and phrases from today’s Bible lesson.

PHENTES  __  __  __  __  __  __  __
CANDOE  __  __  __  __  __  __
CCRUHH  __  __  __  __  __  __
SURJAMEEL  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __
RAGPINCHE  __  __  __  __  __  __  __
GILISOURE  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __
SELDEAR  __  __  __  __  __  __  __
NARGY  __  __  __  __
SOCKR  __  __  __  __
EDONTS  __  __  __  __  __  __
VANEEH  __  __  __  __  __  __

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
EPHESIANS 6:13
THE STONING OF STEPHEN
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The answers to today’s puzzle

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