

# The Cost of Following Jesus

Acts 5:17-8:3

## MAIN IDEAS

- The Holy Spirit enables believers to follow and obey Jesus in a radical way
- Obedience to God matters over obedience to man
- Using spiritual gifts within the church helps the church to grow
- There is a daily cost that must be counted to following Jesus
- God will use every cost to advance His kingdom

Read Acts 5:17-42. What response do the apostles give when charged with ceasing to teach the gospel? See verses 29-32.

Discuss the significance of the apostles' response after being beaten in Acts 5:41-42.

Read Acts 6:1-7. What do these verses reveal about managing and encouraging church growth? What process went into choosing and commissioning the seven men? What would their role be in the church? How is this a precursor to what scripture teaches in verses such as 1 Corinthians 12:4-31, Romans 12:4-8, and Ephesians 4:11-16?

What accusations are brought against Stephen in Acts 6:8-15? What parallels do you notice the accusations brought against Jesus?

Read Acts 7:1-53. How does Stephen respond to his accusations? What is the significance of each Old Testament reference he makes? Consider how each relates to the accusations made against him.

In Acts 7:54-60, what parallels do you notice between Stephen's death and Jesus' death? What is Stephen's reward for his faithful obedience?

What happens directly following the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1-3)? Consider the significance of this in light of Acts 1:8. What does this tell us about the ways God's kingdom can be advanced?

What enables the apostles in their boldness to share the true gospel? Consider the preceding events of Pentecost.

## PERSONAL RESPONSE

Reflect on your discussion about Acts 6:1-7. What implications does this have for us as believers and as a church today? In what ways are you using or could you use your spiritual gifts to serve and build up the church and kingdom of God?

Consider your earlier discussion on the apostles' response to opposition. How do you respond when faced with opposition to sharing the gospel message? Is your response Biblical? In addition, consider John 15:18-16:4, Mark 6:11.

With his persecution, Stephen became the first of many Christian martyrs. In the United States, it may be challenging to be able to honestly answer the question, are you willing to die for Jesus? What if we rephrase the question as, are you willing to fully live for Jesus? How is this playing out in your life? Consider additional scripture such as Luke 9:23-27 and Luke 14:28-33.

In David Platt's *Radical*, he poses two key questions. The first is, do you believe Jesus? The second and perhaps more challenging is, will you obey Jesus? How would you respond to these two questions?

What enables us as believers to radically obey Jesus? Acts 1:8.

What is the reward of following Jesus? James 1:12, Colossians 3:23-24, Matthew 5:12

## GROUP RESPONSE

Is everyone in your group aware of their spiritual giftings and/or using those giftings to serve in kingdom work? How can you encourage one another to discover and use your spiritual gifts more fully?

As a group, how can you encourage and exhort one another to fully live for Jesus?

## REPRODUCE

When it comes to spiritual gifts, take steps to discover what your gift is. If you know what your gift is, what can you do to further use and/or develop it?

What is one thing you can do to be more obedient to Jesus? Ask someone to hold you accountable for this.

## KEY VERSES

From the sermon:

- Acts 5:17-8:3

Additional verses from the study:

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-31
- Romans 12:4-8
- Ephesians 4:11-16
- John 15:18-16:4
- Mark 6:11
- Luke 9:23-27
- Luke 14:28-33
- James 1:12
- Colossians 3:23-24
- Matthew 5:12