

## A Quality Dude (Acts 6:8-15)

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**Intro:** We are all full of something (self, deceit, pride, lust, greed, envy, it... whatever it is, surprises, joy, fear)

- But, as God's people, we are actually supposed to be full of better things!
  - Imagine a different quality of life... (What ought we to be full of and how can we get there?)
- Our text reveals the quality of this man named Stephen—what he was full of...
  - The Quality of Stephen:
    - Full of the Holy Spirit (v. 5)
    - Full of faith (v. 5)
    - Full of wisdom (v. 3)
    - Full of grace (v. 8)
    - Full of power (v. 8)

What a guy! An example! Before we look at the guy, let's see a bit of what happens to him—the narrative that introduces us to Stephen

You'll remember last week...

- Stephen was clearly a godly guy (chosen with other godly people for special service) (see **verse 3**)
- A regular guy (layperson)
- Moved in power (see **verse 8**) (Miracles were not just for the Apostles)

You would think life would be good for Stephen: **full of...** ; chosen by peers; serving; walking in miracles; quality

- Remember: **2 Timothy 3:12**, NASB
- See **verse 9**
  - Here was a guy making an impact = spiritual **opposition** (Story of Acts = Kingdom advancing—enemy responding) (cf. **verse 8**)
  - There are legitimate arguments, discussions and conversations (this was ⊗ one—see v. 11-13a)
    - This was evil opposition to a godly person and godly work
  - Stephen, being full of **wisdom**, could handle himself (see **verse 10**)
- After failing to silence Stephen with debate, they try to silence him with the Jewish law
  - Trumped up charges (see **verses 13-14**)
  - The reason they brought false charges about the temple was because: "When Judea became a Roman province in A.D. 6, capital punishment was allowed only by the decree of the Roman governor, except for offenses by **word or deed against the sanctity of the temple**. In such situations, the Sanhedrin was allowed to pronounce and execute the death sentence. They had tried to convict Christ in this way and failed. As a result they took Him to Pilate. With Stephen, however, the succeeded."<sup>1</sup>
    - Spoiler alert: At the end of **Chapter 7**, Stephen dies (not necessarily a happy ending)
- But I want you to notice a couple of things here:
  - **Notice** in **verse 14** the opposition admits that Jesus is alive! (Positive testimony from a hostile source)
  - **Notice**, they all see Stephen with **the face of an angel**
    - What does that mean?
    - When we think of angels we think of proximity to the glory of God
    - Think of Moses in **Exodus 34** = "When Moses came down from Mount Sinai... his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord"
    - **Face of an angel** = a description of someone whose communion with God is such that the divine glory is reflected in her or him<sup>2</sup>
    - In other words... it was obvious that Stephen had been with God
      - Cf. **Acts 4:13**, NIV
      - This is the key that unlocks the quality of the person of Stephen

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<sup>1</sup> Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary: Acts*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 246.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### The Quality of Stephen:

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- Full of faith (v. 5)
- Full of wisdom (v. 3)

- Full of grace (v. 8)
- Full of power (v. 8)

I want us to return to this idea of being full of the Spirit (bec. I believe the others are connected—or derivatives)

- Explicit = **wisdom** in verse 10
- **I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!** –Jesus to His disciples in Luke 21:15
  - Jesus had promised them this—but notice how the work is done in and through them! (**the Spirit**)
  - **Faith, wisdom, grace**, and **power** are worked in and through us by the Spirit
  - But, **faith, grace**, and **wisdom** are also gained through God's Word
    - But, these (Spirit and Word) are not pit against one another (**either, or—but both, and**)
  - The Spirit works **in** and **through** and **with** God's Word in us (E.g. Stephen's defense) (**Col 3:17**)
  - **The HS will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I said to you.** –Jesus in Jn 14:26

### God wants us to be full of these things... So He gives us the means:

E.g. **Faith** is (1) **from** the Lord; (2) comes **through** God's word (**Rom 10:17**); (3) and is also a **gift** of the Spirit

- Stephen believed God, took Him at His word and acted on it (implications)

God wants us to have **wisdom**: **James 1:5**, NIV; **Proverbs 2** = Quality of Stephen; **Proverbs 3:5-8**; **James 3:13-17**, NIV

- We need to be full of this! (from God; His word; gift of Spirit)

Stephen was also **full of grace**—what does that mean?

- **Grace** = the undeserved kindness of God (to receive and extend grace) (a real quality)
- These things got Stephen killed! (Cf. Jesus) ("**Lord, do not hold these things against them**" -Acts 7:60)

### Again, this is all connected to the work of the Holy Spirit

- **Full of the Spirit** = Constantly being filled (**Ephesians 5:18**); walking in the Spirit (**Gal 5:16**); fruit (**Gal 5:22**)
- Living a life that does not **quench** or **grieve** the Spirit

### The Holy Spirit will bestow or withdraw blessing according to whether or not He is pleased with the situation

- Jesus was completely without sin and so the Spirit "remained on Him" (**John 1:32**)
- But, the Spirit can be **grieved** (**Eph 4:30**), **quenched** (**I Thess 5:19**), **resisted** (**Acts 7:51**), **insulted** (**Heb 10:29**), and **lied to** (**Acts 5:3**) by us, and so not bring blessing to a situation

Conversely, when our conduct is pleasing to God the Holy Spirit will be more present and bring much blessing

- "**To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with the immediate presence of God Himself, and it therefore will result in feeling what God feels, desiring what God desires, doing what God wants, speaking by God's power, praying and ministering in God's strength, and knowing with the knowledge which God Himself gives**" –Wayne Grudem

We can know **close fellowship and partnership** with the Spirit (**2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1**)—**Through surrender, ob., seek**

- Which brings **comfort, joy, peace and hope** to the life of the believer

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and **in the comfort of the Holy Spirit**, it continued to increase. (**Acts 9:31**)

And the believers were **filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit**. (**Acts 13:52**)

Now may the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace** in believing, so that you will abound in **hope by the power of the Holy Spirit**. (**Romans 15:13**)

I believe that by being full of the Spirit Stephen knew **comfort, joy, peace and hope**

- So, when he was opposed he was full of **faith** and **grace** and **wisdom**
- His face like an angel and His words like Jesus ("**Lord, do not hold these things against them**")
- May we also, reflect the goodness and beauty of Jesus in every way