



# Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

Pastor Michael Cranford

Copyright © 2024 Michael Cranford

# Schedule

|          |                      |
|----------|----------------------|
| April 7  | The Holy Spirit      |
| April 14 | Acts 1:1-9           |
| April 21 | Acts 1:10-26         |
| April 28 | Acts 2:1-13          |
| May 5    | Acts 2:14-47         |
| May 12   | BREAK (Mother's Day) |
| May 19   | Acts 3:1-26          |
| May 26   | Acts 4:1-21          |
| June 2   | Acts 4:22-5:11       |
| June 9   | Acts 5:12-42         |
| June 16  | BREAK (Father's Day) |
| June 23  | Acts 6:1-15          |



# God's Power Moves Outward

- I. As the Jerusalem church grew, a complaint arose among the Hellenistic Jews that their neediest people were being overlooked. The need inspired the Hebraic Jews to appoint new leadership among the Hellenistic Jews to care for the poor.

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1)



# God's Power Moves Outward

- a) The ministry of the church is and has always been to care for people who suffer in this life. Love is a tangible, active expression of God's character in and through his people.



# God's Power Moves Outward

- b) Responding to needs doesn't stand on its own but occurs in a context where the word of God is being proclaimed and disciples are being created. Our service is a confirmation of the reality of new life in Christ and not simply a humanitarian response. In this way, God is glorified. The eternal is always his focus and therefore ours.

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4)

# God's Power Moves Outward

*Diakonos* – Table servant. This term is used of Christ (Rom 15:8) and Paul uses it of himself (2 Cor 11:23; Eph 3:7; Col 1:23, 25). It is therefore a general word for a servant (or minister), not a technical title.

For I tell you that Christ has become a **servant** of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. (Rom 15:8-9a)



# God's Power Moves Outward

2. Needs inspire opportunities to serve. Needs are opportunities for the Spirit to work and for people of character to become heroes in God's plan.

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:5-6)



# God's Power Moves Outward

Lay hands on them...

So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. ... Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses. (Num 27:18, 22-23)

Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses. (Deut 34:9)





# God's Power Moves Outward

Lay hands on them...

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Tim 4:14)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (1 Tim 1:6-7)



# God's Power Moves Outward

3. Our ministry is validated by our active service and ministry to others.

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)



# Hero #1: Stephen

I. We were previously introduced to Stephen as a man full of the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 6:5). Now we can see where this leads.

They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit... (Acts 6:5)

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8)



# Hero #1: Stephen

a) God's grace and power are available to people who are sold out for him. He Spirit fills those who trust him completely. They share his heart (grace) by the presence of the Spirit. God's grace is tied to the outworking of his power.

Trust > Spirit > Grace > Power



# Hero #1: Stephen

b) The Spirit gives wisdom (real-time) to guide speech to his ends.

Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. (Acts 6:9-10)

*Side note: The Synagogue of the Freedman has members who are refuted. Saul of Tarsus?*



# Hero #1: Stephen

2. Satan has the ability to create adversity in culture through lies.

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”

So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.” (Acts 6:11-14)



# Hero #1: Stephen

2. Satan has the ability to create adversity in culture through lies.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” Yet even then their testimony did not agree. (Mark 14:55-59)



# Hero #1: Stephen

3. The message the Spirit inspires is one that exposes people who claim to follow God but live faithless, disobedient lives. People like this naturally oppose God's appointed (and empowered) representatives.

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" (6:15, 7:1)

