**16/02/20 RCF - Acts 6:8-15 NLT**

Who remembers where we got to in Acts? Hopefully someone remembers beginning part of Acts 6.

Credit Pete’s intro - recap - appointing food stewards (including Stephen) so that the apostles could focus on prayer and teaching the word.

Questions to discuss:

What is God’s grace?

What does it mean to be full of God’s grace? NB. Jesus was described as this in John 1

*Feedback*

Further question:

What do you see as your part/role in the life and mission of God’s Church?

Challenge: says who? - You or God? On what do you base your answers?

Read: Acts 6:8-15

Example of Stephen - much more than a food distribution supervisor!

By the time we get from verse 5 to verse 8 he is now a powerful miracle worker and evangelist.

(We need to understand that there is a time lapse here).

So, what has happened to Stephen? He has grown…

Grown in maturity and experience - see Matt 25:22-23 (parable of the talents) - Stephen has proved himself.

Grown in annointing. God has further plans - he is not destined to be a food distributor forever.

Comment - not that this is ‘beyond him’ - we should always be ready to serve (Jesus washed feet).

God may anoint you and I for life (long term) and then sometimes for a season - example…

early in life and ministry, I was primarily a teacher now am primarily apostle/evangelist.

however, sometimes teacher, sometimes, prophet, sometimes even shepherd!

Question all my life about getting a ‘proper job.’ ie. pastoring a church.

I always said, ‘no, I’m called to youth & children’s ministry’ but now say, ‘God is God. He can do whatever He likes.’

Recommend APEST test - show link <https://www.fivefoldministry.com/>

- take test, ask God about it, begin to explore/operate.

So, Stephen is called and anointed in this (new) season, to a different ministry (miracle worker and evangelist). He probably has no concept that this will lead to his martyrdom - but He’s willing to be obedient - to serve.

He is not operating in his own strength or by his own will. See vs10 Holy Spirit giving wisdom - irrefutable.

NB. This filling of the HS was nothing new - he needed that for the food job too - see vs3.

So thinking back to our question about your part in life and mission of God’s Church. Here are a series of very challenging questions:

* Have you grown any?
* Is it different today to the past?
* Is it time for you to step up or move on?
* Are you limiting what God may do by your willingness to settle only for what has gone before or unwillingness to embrace what may be yet to come.
* Are you limiting what God might do through you by a lack of belief that He could use YOU? It’s a lie!

Be reassured, it doesn’t depend on you or your abilities - anointing of HS required.

Scriptures (in case you’re still believing the lie):

Spirit’s presence manifest in all for the common good - 1 Cor 12:7

As He determines - 1 Cor 12:11

God is God - it is not for us to try and limit Him, to underestimate His purposes.

1904 young Evan Roberts & Sidney Evans - ex miners, too uneducated for ministry, had been in a pre-seminary for just 1 month when touched by the Holy Spirit and then used in powerful revival! 100,000+ people came to faith in 6 months. *(think I ran out of time for this when speaking)*

Back to the passage - what happens as Stephen ministers? Opposition.

Like Stephen - expect opposition - the Gospel/the truth/righteousness is challenging to those who don’t live this way - even offensive!

We are called to shine the life of Jesus in a dark world - see vs15 - in the power of the HS.

What’s God got next for you? Time to consider and to pray for one another.

Remember the words of Jesus in the garden, ‘not my will Father, but Yours.’