**Series: ACTS: Spirit. Mission. Drama**

**Title: A Hero Named Stephen**

Speaker: Ronnie Norman Senior Minister

***Acts 6:8-15***

*8Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. 9Opposition 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. 10But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.*

*11Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”*

*12So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. 13They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. 14For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”*

*15All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.*

1. Our faith is priceless, but it is not price-less.

***Acts 7***

*51“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— 53you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”*

*54When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”*

1. The message of Jesus brings both conviction and comfort.

*57At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

*59While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

1. The death of a Christian is the crowning moment of their life.
2. We never know the impact of our testimony before others.
3. We never know what God can use to advance the gospel.

***Acts 8***

*1And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria… 4Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*