

**Full of Faith, Grace,
Power, and, most
Importantly, the
Holy Spirit**

Background Leading Up to Acts 6

- Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- The Christians grow to over 5,000, they share with the needy, and the apostles perform many miracles.
- The disciples were arrested multiple times and told repeatedly not to speak in the name of Jesus.
- After the disciples indicated, again, they'd follow God instead of Jewish leadership, Gamaliel steps in.

Acts 6:1-4 (HCSB) ¹ In those days, as the number of the disciples was

Are you serving God with your spiritual gifts?

Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² Then the Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching about God to handle financial matters. ³ Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry."

Those overlooked were likely not coincidental nor was it that those about to be put in charge had Hellenistic names.

Prayer and preaching go hand in hand and are primary roles of anyone who serves in an elder or evangelistic role.

God has equipped the Body to have differing spiritual gifts that allow for many ways to serve the church community.

Acts 6:5-8 (ESV) ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. ⁸ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

The role had prerequisites of good reputation, full of the Spirit, and wise. Note Stephen as the stand-out.

Stephen was quickly becoming prominent in the community, yet God allowed his ministry to be short.

Notice something powerful happening within the priestly community!

Do you mistakenly view all short lives as cursed?

Acts 6:9-12 (NIV₂₀₁₁) ⁹ 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.

¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. ¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

Know that Godly success never goes unopposed by the power of the enemy.

It's sad that the leadership of 70 that God appointed back in Moses' time had turned into a tiny minority of those who were faithful to Him.

But know that the Power of the Spirit is always greater!

Do you receive your wisdom from the same person as Stephen?

Acts 6:13-15 (NKJV) ¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

¹⁵ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Stephen did NOT blaspheme, but it was likely true that he spoke of the destruction of the temple.

Regardless of the accusations, Stephen was a righteous follower of Jesus, and was about to give them a lesson many wouldn't forget.

Are you ready to be faithful in your walk with Christ, wherever it may lead... for God's glory?