

UNSTOPPABLE

THE CHURCH JESUS INTENDED

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, May 24, 2026

Teaching: *The Real Power of Pentecost*

Key Scripture: Acts 6–7

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Acts 18:23-19:20

Tuesday: Acts 19:21-41

Wednesday: Acts 20:1-16

Thursday: Acts 20:17-38

Friday: Acts 21:1-26

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY VERSE:

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Often, life is hard, and following Jesus can make it even harder. Jesus never promised an easy life. In fact, He said the opposite. He tells us to count ourselves blessed when we are persecuted for His sake. But the good news of Pentecost in Acts 2 is that God has equipped His Church with the power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6–7, Stephen's story gives us a powerful picture of what a Spirit-filled life looks like. Stephen was full of grace, power, and faith. Even when he was falsely accused, rejected, and ultimately killed, he reflected Jesus because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Life pressed hard against him, but the Spirit proved greater than the persecution he faced. Stephen didn't simply believe in Jesus; he became like Jesus. And the same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus, Stephen, and the early believers is available to us today. The Spirit is greater than life is hard.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What's something small that tends to bring out the worst version of you—traffic, long lines, slow Wi-Fi, group texts, etc.?

1. Read Acts 6:1–7 together as a group. Why was it important that the early church chose leaders who were "full of the Spirit and wisdom"?
2. Read Acts 6:9–15. Why do you think Stephen faced opposition even though he was faithfully serving and speaking truth?
3. In Acts 7, Stephen walks through Israel's history. Read Acts 7:51–53. Stephen accuses the leaders of resisting the Holy Spirit just like their ancestors did. What does it mean to "resist the Holy Spirit"?

4. What similarities do you notice about Stephen's experience and response with persecution in Acts 6:9-15 and 7:54-60 and Jesus' death? (see Matthew 26:59-68 and Luke 23:34)
5. In Acts 7:55-56, Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God. What encouragement do you think this gave Stephen in the middle of suffering? (See Digging Deeper)
6. How can you rely on the Holy Spirit more in your own life? Take some time to share where you need the Spirit to strengthen you.
7. Read the memory verse for this week together—Ephesians 3:14-16. Pray these words over one another to close your time together.

DIGGING DEEPER

The idea of Jesus "sitting at the right hand of God" comes from Psalm 110:1 which is regarded as a Messianic psalm. Psalm 110:1 says, "

*The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
until I humble your enemies,
making them a footstool under your feet."*

In the ancient world, the concept of "sitting at the right hand" was a position of honor and favor. It represents someone who has ultimate authority and sovereignty. The fact that Jesus "sits down" at God's right hand (Matthew 22:43-44) emphasizes the finished work of Christ with his death and resurrection. The phrases "son of man" and "the glory of God" in Acts 7:56 echo Daniel 7:13-28. The bringing together of the phrases "glory of God" and Jesus as the "son of man" suggest that Jesus is the manifestation of the glory of God and His work provided access to the presence of God.

But here in Acts 7:55, Stephen sees Jesus "standing at the right hand of God." Why "standing" instead of "sitting"? Is this significant? The most compelling interpretations for "standing" are:

- 1) standing suggests Jesus' welcome of Stephen's martyrdom, or
- 2) the emphasis is on the idea of "witness." F. F. Bruce says, "Stephen has been confessing Christ before men, and now he sees Christ confessing His servant before God. The proper posture for a witness is the standing posture. Stephen, condemned by an earthly court, appeals for vindication to a heavenly court, and his vindicator is that supreme court is Jesus, who stands at God's right hand as Stephen's advocate, his "paraclete."

—Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1988.